

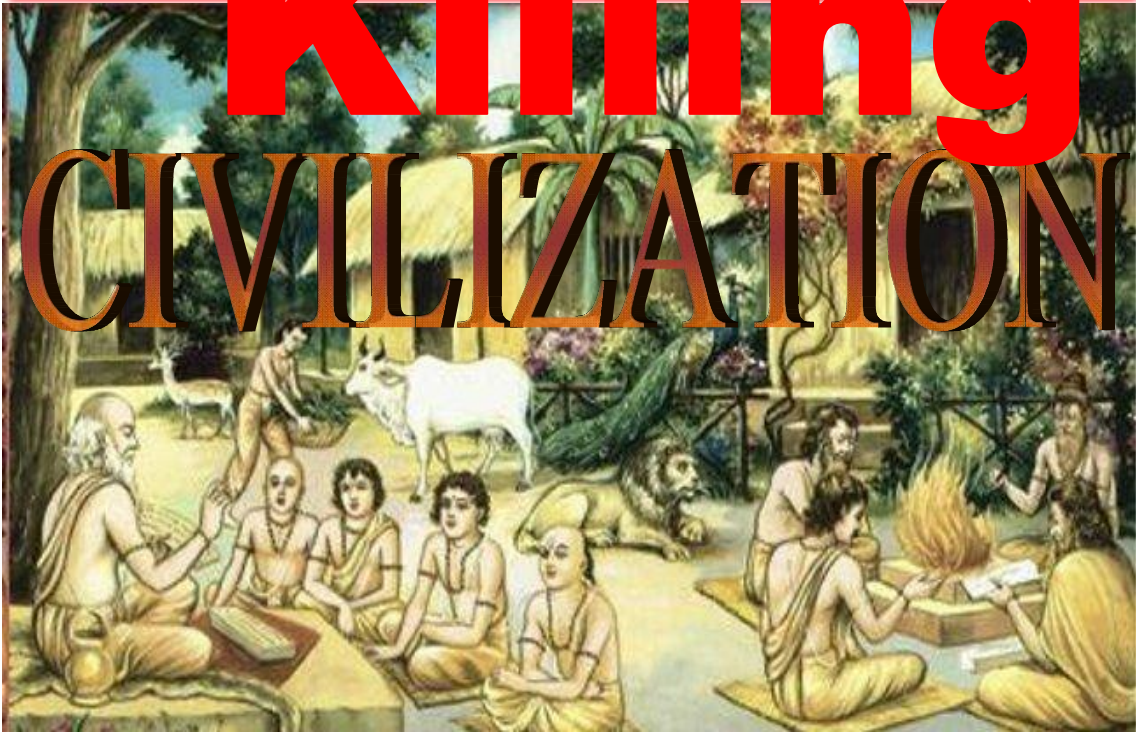
MODERNITY

IS



**Killing**

CIVILIZATION



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## PREFACE

“A civilization of polished cats and dogs”...<sup>1</sup> “a soul-killing civilization”...<sup>2</sup> “a vulture civilization...,”<sup>3</sup> these are indeed harsh words and they will not sit well with many people. Yet, the truth must be spoken. Well known Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin<sup>4</sup>, appalled at the degraded social condition of his times, published a series of books in the mid twentieth century, describing the deep social crisis and unrest unfolding in the United States of America. He also warned of dire consequences if these were not abated. Compared to Sorokin’s era, the second decade of our twenty first century has reached depths of degradation beyond the wildest imagination.

That we have become a killing civilization should be obvious to all. The number of unborn children killed daily through legal and illegal abortions, the number of animals and aquatics slaughtered in thousands by the minute, the number of trees uprooted every day, the number of global daily suicides (in India alone a farmer takes his life every thirty minutes), and the list goes on, it is simply mind staggering to say the least. With the help of modern technology, we are now keeping on-line second by second statistics of these ever-rising figures for the whole world to witness, known as the “Kill Counter” page<sup>5</sup>. Yet the killing business continues!

This book is not about splashing shocking statistics with the help of flashy color tables and diagrams to graphically depict to the reader what is unfolding under our very eyes. That would be redundant and simply duplicating the obvious as everyone can see much more vividly and in more details on their

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<sup>1</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.8.5 Purport

<sup>2</sup> *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, Mantra 3, Purport

<sup>3</sup> Journey of Self-Discovery, A slaughterhouse Civilization, 6.5

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitirim\\_Sorokin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitirim_Sorokin)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.adaptt.org/about/the-kill-counter.html>

computer screens. This book aims at going to the heart of the matter by demonstrating where and how we have strayed as a civilization finding ourselves at crossroads on an obvious path to global self-destruction. There is some deep philosophy involved in this book and my hope is that at least a few sober minds and intellects will take the time to methodically go through the book's contents and see the light before total darkness sets in. The subject matter of this book may not appeal to all, yet it is meant for all.

May 20, 2018, will be a historical day for me as the author of this book, *Modernity is Killing Civilization*. This day will most likely see the very first public conference entitled "Cow Culture" in North America, sending possibly an uneasy message, or to paraphrase Al Gore, an "Inconvenient Truth"<sup>6</sup> to the American people and to the world at large. In addition to the book inauguration, the organizers of the "Cow Culture Conference" are also launching the iOS version of the earlier Android version released in India on January 15, 2018 called Sri Surabhi Mobile App, all connected with cow care and cow culture. On this date, at age 71, I will be one day short of my seventy-second birthday and one day short of my Golden Jubilee graduation with my Bachelor of Arts degree from the Ottawa University, May 21, 1968. That same day I also took up my very first professional job as a Social Worker for the Children's Aid Society in the town of Timmins, Northern Ontario, Canada. Fifty years has come and gone.

Life takes us through many adventures and brings us (hopefully) many realizations. With age, one is meant to increase in wisdom. For me, some of that wisdom came late in my life. I was already 25 when I first encountered the ancient teachings of the *Vedas*, the most ancient literatures dealing with both metaphysical and material stuff. Little did I know that during my seven years in a French speaking Catholic Minor

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<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An\\_Inconvenient\\_Truth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Inconvenient_Truth)

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Seminary, le Petit Séminaire Saint Michel de Rouyn-Noranda in the French Province of Québec, «*la belle province*», I was following the ancient traditional system of *Gurukula*. Little did I know that up to the age of twenty-two, having been protected in that holistic environment, I had followed strict celibacy, what I later came to know was *brahmacarya* life, or more precisely *naistika brahmacarya* life. Alas, due to worldly association, the modern civilization taught me differently, but to my great fortune and relief by coming in contact with this *Vedic* knowledge after five years I was again on the proper path.

How to bring sanity, happiness, harmony and prosperity both individually and collectively to a suffering humanity is what this book is all about. Some important “secrets of life” will be revealed in the pages to come for those serious about addressing the real problems of life. I originally undertook this work as a Doctoral Research under the Department of Sociology at the Osmania University in Hyderabad, India. Actually, I am writing a version of my first two chapters of the book “before” completing my Ph.D., most unlikely way of doing things. Nevertheless, due to the urgent need to get this message across, here it is.

Even after studying *Vedic* literatures for the past 45 years, I uncovered some jewel of wisdom that actually makes up the essence of this book. We have all received natural gifts of nature, in particular this human form of life which, if properly utilized, can help us resolve the mysteries of life, and if misused will have the exact same opposite effect. I came across a revelation that I attempt to share in this book. If we can accept the wonderful truth behind these simple yet most profound *Vedic* teachings, we can change the face of the earth.

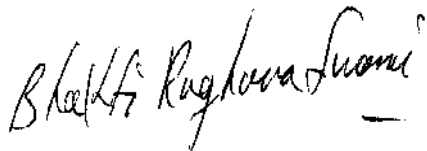
My humble appeal, therefore, to all thoughtful souls is that you kindly give aural reception to the contents of this book. We are all but one big human family. We all have a main purpose in life although it may be expressed differently, being all

individuals. If we come to a common platform, we can revive our common sense of living and stop this abhorring killing civilization. All it requires is a little understanding, a little determination and a little cooperation, all in the spirit of true love.

I wish to thank you the reader for taking the time to read these few pages. Kindly reflect on the subject matter with all sobriety. These are not simply my words; this is not simply my message. It is an eternal message, an eternal call for peace, happiness and freedom both in this life and the next. What I discovered 45 years ago, while attending my first lecture at a Hare Krishna temple, continues to inspire me even today. The knowledge in this book stems from what is described as the Emperor of *Vedic* texts, the King of all knowledge, the revealer of great treasures, the *Grantha Raj*, the sacred *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.<sup>7</sup>

*"The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Śrī Īsopaniṣad* <sup>8</sup> *provide insight into the culture of India in a way which ordinary textbooks cannot do for sociologists. These books provide insight in sociology of religion, stratification, and control without ever needing to use those particular words. The books are not only beautiful, but also relevant to our times, as we as a nation search for new cultural patterns for our way of life."*<sup>9</sup>

Author



(R.P. Bhakti Raghava Swami)

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<sup>7</sup> Bhaktivedanta, A.C. (1987). *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Singapore: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

<sup>8</sup> Bhaktivedanta, A.C. (2011). *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, Los Angeles: *The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust*

<sup>9</sup> Dr. C. L. Spreadbury, Prof. of Sociology, Stephen F. Austin State University

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### *Invocation*

*jñānaṁ te 'haṁ sa-vijñānam idaṁ vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ  
yaj jñātvā neha bhūyo 'nyaj jñātavyam avaśiṣyate*

*I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge,  
both phenomenal and numinous. This being known,  
nothing further shall remain for you to know.<sup>10</sup>*

### 1) BACKGROUND

This first section analyzes some key concepts that have generated quintessential discourses within human society since time immemorial. In particular, I will focus on two ideologies that have often confronted one another, at times creating conflict and disunity within society while at other times these very same ideologies have complimented one another to help bring peace and harmony. Eastern philosophy is founded on the dialectic of Spiritualism and Materialism, while its counterpart dialogue in western philosophy is Idealism and Humanism.

After elaborating on these two fundamental philosophical concepts and their ramifications, for both individuals and general society, I will then briefly explain the role of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) as agents of social change. In the context of religious stakeholders, I will highlight one such organization, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), as it attempts to blend its dual role as an agency for spiritual and social development, in particular in its mandate to revive the ancient system of *daiva varṇāśrama dharma*. As one closely

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<sup>10</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, A.C., *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is*. Los Angeles: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1994. (Bg. 7.2)



connected with various rural outreach programs in India, I will introduce an established Ministry within ISKCON India that is focused on promoting rural development, the ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry, referred to as IDVM-India. I will conclude this portion by explaining my personal role, position and motivation in developing this particular narrative.

## 2) THE QUEST OF KNOWLEDGE

*Modernity is Killing Civilization – A Vaiṣṇava Vedic Sociological Perspective* is an honest attempt to highlight the serious dichotomy between the worldview of eastern philosophy and western philosophy on one side and the need and merit of resolving some of their major differences. Only with an in-depth understanding of both constructs will that be possible.

There is something unique to be said about eastern philosophy and the acknowledgment of traditional concepts such as *sanātana dharma*. This has been pointed out by a number of sociologists and scholars such as R. N. Saxena:

.... *An Indological or culturological approach has been the hallmark of several sociologists. They have hammered against the acceptance of theoretical and methodological orientations of the western countries. These scholars emphasize the role of traditions, group rather than individual as the basis of social relations, and religion, ethics and philosophy as the basis of social organizations. R.N. Saxena (1965), for example, stresses on the role of the concepts of Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa....*<sup>11</sup>

In his book *Social Philosophy of the Mahābhārata and the Manu Smṛti*, two well-known classics of India literature, Professor Verma explains the intimate connection between the material and spiritual dimensions of life:

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<sup>11</sup> Article. *Sociology in India: An Issue for Indian Sociology, Universal vs. Specific Sociology for India* by Puja Mondal, 1950.  
<http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/sociology-in-india-an-issue-for-indian-sociology/35027>

The sages of ancient India visualized human life as a connected whole of both material and spiritual aspects. Social, economic and political aspects of life were not considered separate from its spiritual aspect in ancient India. Both the Mahābhārata and the Manu Smṛti have emphasized the intimate connection between the material basis of human life and its spiritual flowering and have, for that reason, given us a value-based social philosophy, the prime-facie object of which was to make morality the keynote of the empirical life in all its manifestations. Indeed, it is only a fearless, confident and positive pursuit of socio-moral values of life that can generate human beings in a socially useful manner and can also create an atmosphere fit for scattering the glow of peace and love, life and happiness.<sup>12</sup>

If there is any culture or civilization that has pondered over perennial questions and written so profusely on the subject matter, if there is any culture that has provided humanity with such profound insights and shared such deep realizations into both the physical and metaphysical, it is, according to Max Muller, the land of India, known as the land of *dharmā*.

*If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which will deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant - I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only but a trans- figured and eternal life - again I should point to India.*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Verma, Prativa. *Social Philosophy of the Mahābhārata and the Manu Smṛti*, Classical Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1988. (Preface p.1)

<sup>13</sup> Muller, Max. *India, What Can It Teach Us* (1882) Lecture IV. [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Max\\_Müller](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Max_Müller)

Over the centuries, many renowned philosophers, scientists, scholars and intellectuals have praised the land of India for its contribution to humanity especially in the field of religion and philosophy. Varma opines that there is much to discover in the philosophy of the *Vedas* that is intimately connected with and cannot be separated from both education and religion:

*In considering the Indian point of view therefore, we must consider the nature of religion as such and its relation to its philosophical and ethical counterpart in a rational construct as a theory of the universe and of man. From these views it would appear that contrary to western practice, philosophy and religion have been close allies with us and we shall be safe in treating religion in India as the application of philosophy to personal life.*<sup>14</sup>

*Both from the ontological and epistemological points of view the nature and mind of man are of interest to the philosopher. Indian philosophy has contributed a profound analysis of the human personality which is of great interest to education and modern psychology. The Sankhya system, Patanjali and the *Bhagavad-gīta* offer parallel and largely similar accounts of the human personality and its place in the scheme of things.*<sup>15</sup>

Vedic knowledge, being the most ancient knowledge written in Sanskrit, the mother of all languages, forms the essence of the *Vaiṣṇava* Vedic philosophy having as its primary seminal texts the *Bhagavad-gīta* and the *Bhagavat Purana* referred to as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. However, we should not conclude that such knowledge is for Indians only. Many great personalities outside of India have read and revered the *Bhagavad-gīta* as one of the most profound books of wisdom for all of humanity. As eloquently spoken by the famous American Naturalist Philosopher, Henry David Thoreau:

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<sup>14</sup> Varma, M. *The Philosophy of Indian Education*, India, Prakash Printing Press, 1969, (p. 36)

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 49)

*In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-gīta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions.*<sup>16</sup>

The ancient knowledge of the Vedas remained intact for many centuries. Unfortunately, for the last 2,000 years, the Indian culture suffered greatly due to having been maligned by foreign rulers especially under the British rule as documented by Tharoor<sup>17</sup>. Many of the original and pure teachings were either distorted or lost. Even before the advent of invaders, however, a rift had occurred among the followers of the Vedic knowledge that led to a disintegration of the original seminal Vedic teachings as can be seen today in the frowned upon caste system of varṇāśrama. One of the foremost Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura, remarks in this connection:

*“The principles of varṇāśrama had been purely followed in India for a long time. Thereafter in due course of time, when sage Jamadagni who was a Kṣatriya, and his son Parasurama, were illegally converted into Brahmins, they then, according to the characteristics opposed to their own nature and selfishness broke peace among the Brahmins and Kṣatriyas. The seed of quarrel that was planted among the Brahmins and Kṣatriyas as a result of this resulted in ascertaining one’s varṇa according to one’s own birth. In due course of time when this unnatural rule was included in the literatures of the Manu etc., the Kṣatriyas, being hopeless of attaining higher varṇa, began to create means to ruin the Brahmin by inventing the system of religion known as Buddhism. It is a fact that every action*

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<sup>16</sup> <http://pluralism.org/document/excerpts-from-the-writings-of-henry-david-thoreau/>

<sup>17</sup> Tharoor, Shashi. *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*, Hurst & Co. Ltd., United Kingdom, 2017.

has an equal and opposite reaction. That is why determination of varṇa according to one's birth became prominent.”<sup>18</sup>

Essentially, two basic concepts of life have always co-existed side by side, and, although they are often at opposite ends philosophically, there have been constant attempts to accommodate them during the unfolding hard struggle of human existence. I refer here to the duality between spirit and matter, the sacred and the mundane, the divine and the human; and for the purposes of this essay, Idealism (spiritual *sva-dharma*) and Humanism (material *sva-dharma*). As history has amply demonstrated, similar to the proverbial pendulum swing, at times, one or the other has pulled towards one extreme, thus triggering reaction that generally led in the opposite extreme.

We are experiencing the same dilemma in our present day Twenty First Century world situation of a highly sophisticated, industrialized, technology-based and consumer-oriented materialistic society. As observed by Brown:

*Throughout the ages, philosophers and religious leaders have denounced materialism as a viable path to human fulfillment. Yet, societies across the ideological spectrum have persisted in equating quality of life with increased consumption... Because of the strain on resources it creates, materialism simply cannot survive the transition to a sustainable world.*<sup>19</sup>

The effects of pluralism, secularism and consumerism, prompted by modernization and globalization, have brought unprecedented changes in the lives of countless individuals and societies, putting into question long established norms, values, cultures, beliefs and traditions. In his address at Harvard, entitled “A World Split Apart”, writer and Nobel Laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn, supporting Varma's earlier statement

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<sup>18</sup> Bhaktivinoda Thakura, *Caitanya Shikshamrita* 2/3

<sup>19</sup> Brown, Lester R., Christopher Flavin and Sandra Postel. *Earth Day 2030*, excerpt taken from *World Watch*, The Light Party, 1996.  
<http://www.lightparty.com/Visionary/EarthDay2030.html>

guarding against our over fixation on materialism, questions his young audience:

*As humanism in its development became more and more materialistic, it made itself increasingly accessible to speculation and manipulation... Even if we are spared destruction by war, our lives will have to change if we want to save life from self-destruction. We cannot avoid revising the fundamental definitions of human life and human society. Is it true that man is above everything? Is there no Superior Spirit above him? Is it right that man's life and society's activities have to be determined by material expansion in the first place? Is it permissible to promote such expansion to the detriment of our spiritual integrity?*<sup>20</sup>

Reports from UNESCO<sup>21</sup> identified the two major problems confronting humanity at the turn of this new century as globalization and sustainability. According to these reports, education will be the main key factor to help resolve the dilemmas brought about by these two areas of concern. However, one must ask: what kind of education? Again more education devoid of in-depth analysis of *who we are* and *what are our essential and long-lasting needs*; again increased and more advanced technology to help reduce the level of illiteracy around the world? As British historian Trevelyan aptly points out: "*Education... has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading.*"<sup>22</sup> Do we want simply more of the same?

It is obvious that the notion of wisdom must be added to the equation for we seem to be sadly lacking this important

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<sup>20</sup> Solzhenitsyn, A. *A World Split Apart, Humanism and its Consequences*, Harvard Address taken from [www.columbia.edu/cu/augustine/arch/solzhenitsyn/harvard1978.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/augustine/arch/solzhenitsyn/harvard1978.html) on May 24, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO From [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=31483&URL\\_DO=DO\\_PRINTPAGE&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31483&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>22</sup> Trevelyan, G. M., *English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries*, New York: Longmans Green, 1942. (Quote from website) <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/1234.html>

component. Although modern society prides itself with scientific advancement in numerous fields, including higher levels of education and global plans to provide education for all, the fact remains that our present modern civilization is on the brink of destruction due to lack of proper insight and knowledge. In *The Ecological Monster Will Not Stay in Shadows*, ecologist advocate Sara Parkin remarks:

*Our numbness, our silence, our lack of outrage, could mean we end up the only species to have minutely monitored our own extinction. What a measly epitaph ...: 'they saw it coming but hadn't the wit to stop it happening.'* <sup>23</sup>

Most of us live in unsustainable environments (cities), which could crumble at any moment [see Kunstler's "*The End of Suburbia*", 2004 <sup>24</sup>, Al Gore's "*Inconvenient Truth*", May 2006 <sup>25</sup> and Leonardo DiCaprio's "*Before the Flood*", October 2016 <sup>26</sup>]. Today's modern cities and suburbs cannot function without highly complex network systems, sophisticated bureaucracies, and a total dependence on the power grid and petroleum industries. Even with the support of such technologies, our cities remain dangerously polluted and a cause of mental stress and anxiety for all its residents. Within seconds, and at any given time, with the unexpected collapse of any one of these vulnerable systems, or lack of such natural resources such as crude oil, the lives of thousands immediately become endangered. Modern society, allured by immediate gains and profits, is thus dangerously and irresponsibly gambling away the lives of its millions of citizens.

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<sup>23</sup> Parkin, Sara, quoted in *The Tech Online Edition, Article: Students Should Awaken to the Dangers of Our Modern Industrial Society*, by Rev. Scott Paradise, Episcopal Chaplain, 1992.

<http://tech.mit.edu/V1112/N3/paradise.03o.txt.html>

<sup>24</sup> *The End of Suburbia* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYFPx6nMOXU>

<sup>25</sup> *An Inconvenient Truth* <https://www.algore.com/library/an-inconvenient-truth-dvd>

<sup>26</sup> *Before the Flood* <https://www.beforetheflood.com>

The *Vedic* culture, on the other hand, is based on principles of thoughtful and long range planning, giving emphasis to simple living, cultivation of knowledge, self-sufficiency, sustainability, mental peace, morality, character formation, respect of all life and social harmony. Such a pure and simple mode of living is most ideal and congenial within a village environment, where one's livelihood comes primarily from cow-based natural agriculture, without practically having to step out of the village. The village remains an entity of its own, harmonious and complete in itself. As stated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister:

*This system of village self-government was the foundation of the Aryan polity. And it was this that gave it strength. So jealous were the village assemblies of their liberties that it was laid down that no soldier was to enter a village except with a royal permit.*<sup>27</sup>

Local governance and local economy form the first principles of self-sufficiency. They foster yet another principle, sustainability. As late as 1890, a British Governor in India, Sir Charles Metcalfe, describes the village communities in India as follows:

*The village communities are little republics having everything they want within themselves and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts.*<sup>28</sup>

Gandhi himself further underlines this point:

*The experience of mankind testifies to the fact that collective life is more congenial, varied and fruitful when it is concentrated in small units and simpler organizations. It is only small units which have had the most intense life.*<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Vyas, H.M. *Gandhi on Village Swaraj*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1962. Preface.

<sup>28</sup> Vyas, H. M. *Ibid*, (p. xii)

<sup>29</sup> Vyas, H. M. *Ibid*, (p. xii)



We can thus observe a major contrast with today's ever expanding, and increasingly complex mega metropolis. How could such so-called modern advancement in knowledge and education bring about this type of disquieting result one may ask? The answer lies partially in the words of Lawrence Kubie: *Without self-knowledge in depth, we can have dreams, but no art. We can have the neurotic raw materials of literature but not mature literature. We can have no adults, but only aging children who are armed with words and paint and clay and atomic weapons, none of which they understand. And the greater the role in the educational process which is played by unconscious components of symbolic thinking, the wider must be this ancient and dishonorable gap between erudition and wisdom.*<sup>30</sup>

Wisdom, or lack of it, forms an important theme in ancient *Vedic* culture and social organization. As the reader will rightly conjecture by now, the subject matter of this book is intimately connected with India's ancient teachings that are based on the *Vedas*, a treasure house of eternal knowledge. The philosophy behind *Vedic* social organization cannot be properly understood, without probing into the often unknown or forgotten dimensions of our planet's most ancient civilization, the *Vedic* society, where philosophy, tradition, culture, customs and religion have played crucial roles in the lives of all its citizens. I am not referring here to what is generally termed as "Hinduism", which is today understood as India's main religion. The *Vedas* advocate a culture and a civilization far beyond sectarian religious beliefs and deals with these concepts with exactitude and science, and this in their broadest and most universal dimensions. This seminal culture originating from the vast treasure house of the *Vedas* is known as the culture of *varṇāśrama dharma* or *sanātana dharma*. Bhaktivedanta Swami, one of the most prominent advocates of the *Vedic* teachings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, explains as follows:

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<sup>30</sup> Van Tassel-Baska. *Comprehensive Curriculum for Gifted Learners*. U.S.A.: Allyn and Bacon, 1998. (p. 265)

The real Vedic dharma is sanātana-dharma, or varṇāśrama-dharma. First of all, one has to understand this. Now that sanātana-dharma, or Vedic dharma, is being disobeyed, distorted, and misrepresented, it has come to be misunderstood as "Hinduism." That is a false understanding. That is not the real understanding. We have to study sanātana-dharma, or varṇāśrama-dharma. Then we'll understand what the Vedic religion is.<sup>31</sup>

Today, in this second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we find ourselves confronted with seemingly insurmountable global problems such as climate change and desertification that threaten the very lives of not only humans but indeed all species of life as well as the very survival of Mother Earth due to unprecedented and increasing ecological exploitation. Biologist and scientist Allen Savory believes that Holistic Management of the soil and animals through Holistic Planned Grazing is the only solution to our present world crisis. In addressing his audience at his well-received TED Talk in the year 2013 he argued:

*What we had failed to understand was that the seasonal humidity environments of the world, the soil and the vegetation developed with very large number of grazing animals. And these grazing animals developed with ferocious pack-hunting predators. The main defense against pack-hunting predators is the get into herds and the larger the herd, the safer the individuals. Now large herds dung and urinate all over their own food and they have to keep moving. And it was that movement that prevented the over grazing of plants while the periodical trampling ensured the good covering of the soil...There is only one solution, only one solution left to climatologists and scientists. And that is do the unthinkable, and to use livestock, bunched and moving, as a proxy for former herds and*

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<sup>31</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, A. C. "Civilization and Transcendence", CAT 3: *Concocted Religion*, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1999.

*predators and mimic nature. There is no other alternative left to mankind.*<sup>32</sup>

Allen Savory was actually touching on a core principle of the *Vedic* culture, that of scientific cyclic soil replenishment through natural grazing of large animal herds. Scientists have confirmed that cow dung and urine provide the best natural fertilizers for the soil by the simple method of “animal impact” whereby the movement of their hooves helps the soil generate natural nutrients. In his paper, “*Dung is a Gold Mine*”, Late Shri Venishankar M. Vasu “boldly” wrote:

*THE ONLY SOLUTION to problems of shortage of food grains, water, fuel, shelter, good health, nutrition, eradication of poverty, and unemployment - DUNG, DUNG AND ONLY DUNG !!*<sup>33</sup>

The constitution of India provided designated areas for grazing of cows called *gochara bhumi*. However, with the advent of industry and urban development, the natural way of rearing and maintaining cows was disrupted to such an extent that today one can hardly find suitable grazing land for cows. It is for this reason that the *Vedic* culture favored an agrarian mlifestyle for the vast majority of its people to more easily meet the needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicines, through “dung economy”, all coming from the land. “*sarva-kama-dugha-mahi*”.<sup>34</sup>

### 3) ROLE OF FBOs IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE

With the increased disparities in general society, especially within the rural sector, there is an urgent need for

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<sup>32</sup> Savory, Allen. *How to Fight Desertification and Reverse Climate Change*.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/allan\\_savory\\_how\\_to\\_green\\_the\\_world\\_s\\_deserts\\_and\\_reverse\\_climate\\_change](https://www.ted.com/talks/allan_savory_how_to_green_the_world_s_deserts_and_reverse_climate_change)

<sup>33</sup> Vasu, V. M. *Dung is Gold Mine*, Viniyog Parivar Trust, Mumbai, 2016.  
<http://dahd.nic.in/hi/related-links/annex-v-ii-6-dung-gold-mine-paper-shri-vm-vasu>

<sup>34</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, A. C. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* . Mumbai: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1999. (SB 1.10.4)

more stakeholders to take part and help alleviate the various problems lurking throughout rural communities. Various government agencies and international organizations such as the United Nations have been in dialogue with religious institutions to understand how they can and also should be involved in the fight against social oppressions and disparities. Many discourses have taken place in recent years inviting dialogue and partnership with Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to consider the positive role they can play in helping the secular world resolve issues.

One such exchange entitled “*Religion and Development Post-2015: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Guidance*” was hosted by UNFPA in its capacity as Convener of the UN- IATF- FBO and co-sponsored by George Mason University, City University London and Digni, a religious umbrella organization from Norway. The roundtable event took place on 12-13 May 2014 in New York. The nexus of religion and development concerns both faith-based organizations (FBOs) as well as so-called secular ones. Here are a few comments made by the organizers of the conference:

*Strategic thinking about religion and development requires a transformational shift in the attitudes of secular development actors — starting from simple stakeholder analysis undertaken from a presumed position of secular predominance, to considerations of a level playing field based on complementarity and parity between actors. The work of development has always been the domain of faith-based entities. The ‘intruders’ may well be so-called secular organizations.*

*FBOs provide perhaps as much as 50-60 per cent of health care, social services and education in rural areas of the developing world. So they are embedded in their communities in geographic*

areas where national governments are unlikely to provide much support.<sup>35</sup>

As stated above, FBOs have traditionally played a major role in providing health care, education and various social services to large numbers of needy persons. Having substantial numbers of followers, they have also played a significant role in fund raising. For these and other reasons, governments should recognize and welcome their participation. The *Vedic* perspective, however, is that religious leaders, *brahmanas*, were meant to serve as Advisors or even Ministers to the Heads of States ensuring that the King/Prime Minister would rule based on the principles of *dharma*. This should actually be the primary reason why FBOs should be connected and involved with government institutions since the government itself is first and foremost meant to take up welfare activities in the area of health, education and social services. From *Vedic* literatures we learn that the three main areas of concern in *Vedic* governance are 1) protection, 2) administration and 3) welfare.

As pointed out by UN officials, religious organizations are not meant to directly be involved in political affairs and surely not meant to take over governments. In the context of *Vedic* culture, there is a distinct separation of power between the *brahmanas* and the *Kṣatriyas*. *Brahmanas* teach and guide individuals and society. In particular they are meant to guide those who head up nations. The typical example we find in Indian history is the well-known moralist and philosopher, Canakya Pandita. Being a very qualified *brahmana* well versed in political affairs he was able to train Chandra Gupta to become the next king. The writings of Canakya, in particular

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<sup>35</sup> THE UNITED NATIONS, *Religion and Development Post 2015*, SUMMARY, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2016/religion-development-post2015.pdf>

his *Kautilya's Arthashastra*<sup>36</sup> and *Niti Shastra*<sup>37</sup>, are often quoted and relied upon to underline key fundamental instructions.

#### 4) ISKCON, THE VAIṢṆAVA TRADITION AND THE BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST (BBT)

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, ISKCON, is one such Faith Based Organization belonging to the long-standing school of *Vaiṣṇavism*. The *Vaiṣṇava* cult is one of the primary cultural, spiritual, educational and social movements (*sampradāyas*) descending from the ancient *Vedic* tradition of India, going back many millenniums. Such teachings have been transmitted through an unbroken chain of preceptors, called *Ācāryas* or Masters, whose main goal and purpose has been to preserve the *Vedic* knowledge intact and transmit such culture through the system of disciplic succession (*guru parampara*), from teacher to disciple.

The most prominent and recent preceptor who brought these teachings outside of India is His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (referred to as Śrīla Prabhupāda), the Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) known colloquially as the Hare Krishna movement. Now for the first time in history, people from all walks of life, from all different religious backgrounds, people who had absolutely no connection with the *Vedic* culture have been brought within the fold of *Vedic* life and are seriously involved not only in their own personal daily practices of devotional service but also very much involved as

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<sup>36</sup> Canakya Pandita. *Kautilya's Arthashastra*, Translated by R. Shamasastri, 1915.  
<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00litlinks/kautilya/index.html>

<sup>37</sup> Canakya Pandita. *Niti-Sastra – The Political Ethics of Canakya Pandita*, translated by Miles Davis (Patita Pavana das), January 1981.  
[http://www.khamkoo.com/uploads/9/0/0/4/9004485/sri\\_chanakya\\_niti-sastra\\_-\\_the\\_political\\_ethics\\_of\\_chanakya\\_pandit.pdf](http://www.khamkoo.com/uploads/9/0/0/4/9004485/sri_chanakya_niti-sastra_-_the_political_ethics_of_chanakya_pandit.pdf)

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well in spreading the teachings of the *Vedas* throughout the world.

In many ways, transplanting from scratch the *Vedic* culture on a global scale was and continues to be a revolutionary, unparalleled and unprecedented cultural and social phenomena. Many scholars have extensively praised Śrīla Prabhupāda during the short twelve-year period (1965 to 1977) of his spearheading the movement for his writing and publishing some 60 volumes of scholarly *Vedic* texts, the most ambitious being the classical *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This he did through the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT), the publishing house he established in 1972 that has become the world's largest publisher of books concerning Krishna and philosophy, religion, and culture of the Gaudiya *Vaiṣṇava* tradition of India. And this he did during the advanced age of 70 when he arrived in America, while travelling around the world 14 times, opening over 100 temples and guiding and managing a worldwide federation of some 10,000 new practitioners.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave clear directives that the society he established is not only meant to be a religious organization but also a cultural, educational and social institution destined to help bring major positive changes in general society. To this end ISKCON has the mandate of introducing the social system of *varṇāśrama dharma* and this can more easily and more fully be implemented in rural areas where natural economy based on land and cows is evident.

ISKCON has received many reviews from scholars and intellectuals from different countries attesting their appreciation and praise of the works published by Śrīla Prabhupāda through his Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Appendix 1).

The work of ISKCON has also been appreciated by the Prime Minister of India, Honorable Narendra Modi in the

context of ISKCON's Golden Jubilee celebrated in 2016. (Appendix 2)

The standard teachings being disseminated by the school of *Vaiṣṇavism* are referred to as *sanātana dharma*, or the eternal principles or standard laws of mankind. In addition to providing spiritual guidance and training society at large, the *Ācāryas* also give practical instructions on how society should be organized and how its members should be educated. In other words, the training and education of individuals and the methodical organization of society form an integral part of the teachings that are also called *varṇāśrama dharma* and encompass both the spiritual and material dimensions of life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the Founder-*Ācārya* of ISKCON, has chalked out Seven Purposes (Appendix 3) for developing his spiritual organization. The sixth of these seven purposes, deals directly with the need “*to bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.*” For most members of ISKCON this clearly means establishing rural communities, villages, where one can more easily introduce the concepts of “simple living and high thinking”, something truly in line with the *Vedic* culture, in particular an agrarian cow-based culture. And although ISKCON has established some farm communities over the years, this dimension of the mission has still largely been undeveloped throughout the larger ISKCON family. There are various aspects to this and I will more elaborately explain these in Chapter Two when reviewing various *Vedic* literatures.

#### 5) IDVM-INDIA AS AN AGENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

IDVM is the acronym for ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry. The spiritual leaders of ISKCON India, on the recommendation of a special committee appointed by them in the year 2007, based on a Position Paper written by this same committee in the year 2008 entitled “*Promoting Vrindavan Village Development in India*” (Appendix 4), agreed to establish



the Varṇāśrama Ministry in the year 2009 with a very specific mandate (Appendix 5) to develop outreach programs in the villages of India.

Although the objectives of the Ministry are clearly defined, for various reasons the Ministry has not made significant inroads and after eight years of existence finds itself re-evaluating its mandate. There seems to be reluctance and/or confusion on the part of some ISKCON India leaders to promote or implement the aims and objectives of the Ministry. One of the main reasons is that most ISKCON leaders and temples are firmly entrenched in the cities and mainly focused on their immediate urban congregation. Some have outreach programs in the villages, but only a few. Another reason seems to be the influence from western as well as eastern views to avoid introducing the *varṇāśrama* ethos due to many unresolved problems, especially as they relate to gender issues both in general society and in particular within the ISKCON society, in addition to manpower and financial concerns. Although aware of these controversies, the Ministry remains determined to introduce individuals and congregational members to the dual principles of spiritual *sva-dharma* (Idealism) and material *sva-dharma* (Humanism), a core concept of the *Vedic* philosophy and culture. This effort is especially directed to villages, promoting a return to an agrarian lifestyle, the foundation of which is a cow-based natural agriculture and a cow-centered culture and economy supported by various spiritual practices. The Ministry is simultaneously very much aware of the need to develop traditional education through programs identified and formulated by the Founder-*Ācārya* Śrīla Prabhupāda, in particular in the matter of setting up *Gurukulas* and Varṇāśrama Colleges.

#### 6) THE RESEARCHER

As the author of this book, I must explain that I am a full-time practitioner of the tenets of Gaudiya *Vaiṣṇavism* since the last 44 years after joining ISKCON at the age of 27 in

Ottawa, Canada. Coming from a Roman Catholic family, and having been exposed to boarding school training in a minor seminary for 7 years, I could readily assimilate the basic teachings of the *Vaiṣṇava* culture when I first came in contact with its members in 1973, after completing 3 years of Social Work as a Field Worker and Counselor.

After being an active member of ISKCON for 11 years, 9 of which were lived in W.Bengal, India, from 1976 to 1985, I accepted the renounced order of life in 1985, which in the Sanskrit language is called *sannyāsa*, one of the four *āśramas* (spiritual orders) within the *varṇāśrama dharma* social system. According to the *Vedic* teachings, it is the duty and the main activity of *sannyasis* to cultivate *Vedic* knowledge and to help propagate it throughout the world.

During my service career within the ISKCON, I was centered largely in Asian countries, especially in India. My area of concentration has been the villages where with the help of various fellow-workers I helped develop and establish rural projects in both India and Indonesia. In the year 2009 when the ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry was established I was asked to become the Minister to help spearhead ISKCON rural development in India, in particular attempting to introduce the well established concepts and principles of *daiva varṇāśrama* as outlined in our various *Vedic* literatures. To this effect, again, with the help of others, I have been involved in organizing seminars, in visiting villages and in promoting the setting up of *Gurukulas* and Varṇāśrama Colleges. Various books and articles have also been published to highlight the cause of *varṇāśrama dharma*. The ministry has also established two dedicated website promoting IDVM-India, [www.iskconvarnāśrama.com](http://www.iskconvarnāśrama.com) and also promoting the OM Sri Surabhi Campaign, [www.srisurabhi.org](http://www.srisurabhi.org), one of the more recent initiatives of the Ministry.

## 7) THE CORE PROBLEM

Modernism, through planned and accelerated industrialization, urbanization and globalization [see Kant's *Farewell to Modernism*] <sup>38</sup>, fuelled by an ever increasing consumer oriented society, and sustained by an excessive, unnatural, destructive and highly irrational exploitation of natural resources, has disconnected individuals and society from land, cows, culture, tradition and spirituality. This has resulted in creating a continuous culture shock by imposing an artificial and unsustainable lifestyle causing massive global educational, political, economical, social, and health problems, coupled with life-threatening ecological disasters. In short, we find ourselves today with huge numbers of frustrated and alienated individuals all over the world many of whom are leading unproductive and unsatisfactory lives.

Fundamental to understanding the problems brought about by modernism is a clear understanding of the *Vedic* worldview that is based on four main sciences that have been the guiding principles and pillars of *Vedic* society since time immemorial. These four sciences are amply described in the ancient *Vedic* scriptures like *Bhagavad-gīta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and can be summarized as follows: 1) the Science of Philosophy, 2) the Science of Education, 3) the Science of Politics and 4) the Science of Economics. The *Vedic* teachings unequivocally affirm that all the basic needs of mankind can best be met when the principles of *dharma* are followed. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find the following statement made by one of the famous sages Śrīla Nārada Muni:

*dharmamulam hi bhagavan sarva-vedamayo harih  
smrtam ca tad-vidam rajan yena catma prasidati*

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<sup>38</sup> Kanth, Rajani, *Farewell to Modernism, On Human Devolution in the Twenty-First Century*, Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers; New edition, 2017.

*The Supreme Being, the Personality of Godhead, is the essence of all Vedic knowledge, the root of all religious principles, and the memory of great authorities. O King Yudhisthira, this principle of religion is to be understood as evidence. On the basis of this religious principle, everything is satisfied, including one's mind, soul and even one's body.* <sup>39</sup>

These four Vedic sciences encompass both the spiritual and material dimensions of life. They foster simplicity, clarity of thought and a peaceful and serene lifestyle. However, our excess fixation on gross materialism in modern day society, due largely to lust, anger and greed is blinding our vision and understanding of both the spiritual and material dimensions of life. As mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gīta*:

*tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ  
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet*

*“There are three gates leading to this hell—lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul.”* <sup>40</sup>

This holistic approach to life is what is lacking in our present modern day world centered largely on gross material pursuits falsely thinking that we will become happy in this way. It is interesting to note that some scientists are seeing beyond the external problems and beginning to recognize some of their root causes. For example, environmental lawyer and advocate James Gustave Speth makes the following observation: *“Materialism is toxic to happiness, and we are losing our connection to the natural world.”* <sup>41</sup> He goes on to explain:

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<sup>39</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, A. C. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Mumbai: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1999. (SB 7.11.7)

<sup>40</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, A.C. *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is*. Los Angeles: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1994. (Bg 16.21)

<sup>41</sup> James Gustave Speth, Quotes  
[http://www.azquotes.com/author/54497-James\\_Gustave\\_Speth](http://www.azquotes.com/author/54497-James_Gustave_Speth)

*“I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science, we could address those problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy and to deal with those we need a cultural and spiritual transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that.”*<sup>42</sup>

In essence, we find ourselves at the peak end of the humanistic pendulum swing, with our excessive passionate material obsessions fuelling a severe imbalance in society at all levels. This ever-existing struggle between Idealism and Humanism has again reached its apex and needs to be curbed to once again rediscover its healthy balance.

Idealism (Spiritualism) and Humanism (Materialism) need not conflict with one another if understood properly. While the promotion of the more idealistic view of life may lead to spiritual pursuits at the neglect of material needs and while the promotion of the more humanistic views may lead to material pursuits at the neglect of spiritual needs, there is a need to practically demonstrate how both can and should coexist.

This book will attempt to demonstrate to individuals and communities how to balance the spiritual and material dimensions of life (spiritual and material *sva-dharma*). This can be done by addressing the spiritual, mental, intellectual, social and physical needs of individuals and society as advocated in the *Vedic* system of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. This can best be accomplished in a rural, village environment, thus advocating the implementation of *Vedic* Eco Villages.

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<sup>42</sup> James Gustave Speth, Quotes  
<http://winewaterwatch.org/2016/05/we-scientists-dont-know-how-to-do-that-what-a-commentary/>

## CHAPTER 2 VAIṢṆAVA VEDIC PERSPECTIVE

### INVOCATION

*tratavyah prathamam gavas  
tratas trayanti ta dvijan |  
gobrāhmaṇa paritrane  
paritratam jagad bhavet ||1-55-31*

*“First of all cows should be protected.*

*Cows thus protected, will in turn protect thebrāhmaṇas.  
Thus when protection of cows and brāhmaṇas is achieved, then  
the whole world is protected.”<sup>43</sup>*

### INTRODUCTION

*Modernity is Killing Civilization* seeks to unravel the plight of modern man’s current narrative by scientifically presenting the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* perspective of society (*Vedic Sociology*). I address three pressing problems commonly found in most developed and developing countries, with a special focus on India. These three main areas of interest relate to three *Vedic* sciences described in *Kautilya’s Arthashastra*<sup>44</sup>, namely 1) *Varta* (the Science of Economics, 2) *Danda-Niti* (the Science of Politics) and 3) *Trayi* (the Science of Enlightenment), as they negatively affect the socio-economic and cultural condition of communities when managed irresponsibly. I will highlight the impact of neglect affecting all of society with special focus on 1) the cows, 2) the farmers and 3) the students, as they relate respectively to what the great Statesman of the *Mahābhārata*, affectionately referred to as “Grandfather Bhishmadeva”, describes as the three GIFTS of NATURE to mankind, gifts that should actually never be sold, never be abused, never misused nor exploited, namely cows, land, and knowledge.

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<sup>43</sup> [http://mahabharata-resources.org/harivamsa/hv\\_1\\_55\\_mpr.html](http://mahabharata-resources.org/harivamsa/hv_1_55_mpr.html) //1. 55.31

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.hinduism.co.za/kautilya.htm>, Book I, Chapter 2, 3 and 4.

*Bhishma said, 'There are three gifts that go by the same name and that are productive of equal merits. Indeed, these three gifts confer the fruition of every wish. The three objects whose gifts are of such a character are kine (cow), earth, and knowledge. That person who tells his disciple words of righteous import drawn from the Veda acquires merit equal to that which is won by making gifts of earth and kine. Similarly are kine praised (as objects of gifts). There is no object of gift higher than they. Kine are supposed to confer merit immediately. They are also, O Yudhishthira, such that a gift of them cannot but lead to great merit. Kine are the mothers of all creatures. They bestow every kind of happiness...'*<sup>45</sup>

I will argue that modernity has robbed humanity of these three natural gifts, three treasures that epitomize the real wealth of a nation, especially an agrarian-based society. More specifically, since the Era of Indian colonization by the British and the Era of Western industrialization and mechanization by Europe and America, modernity has been plundering and desecrating what the *Vedic* culture reveres as three of mankind's Sacred Mothers, 1) Mother *Surabhi* (the sacred cow), 2) Mother *Bhumi* (the sacred land) and 3) Mother *Sarasvati* (the sacred knowledge). These three "Mothers" can best be understood and appreciated in a society that values the age-long occupation of natural agriculture. Thus, the book underscores the importance, value and absolute necessity of preserving an agrarian-based society, the foundation of which are traditional villages in keeping with the *Vedic* principles of self-sufficiency, sustainability, local governance and human development through the preservation of the sacred family nucleus with cow care at its basis, a symbiosis that is meant to culminate in the highest level of perfection- spiritual emancipation.

Such original *Vedic* villages, the archetype for simple living and high thinking, can best be described in our modern times as "*Vedic Eco Villages*". In the past few decades there has

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<sup>45</sup> *Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva, Chapter 69 called "Dana Dharma Parva"*

been an emergence of Eco Villages in various parts of the world. One of the well-established organizations, *Global Eco Network* (GEN)<sup>46</sup>, has achieved substantial success in promoting and helping re-establish such communities. There is an urgent need to encourage and assist local villagers to preserve, or in many cases to revive and re-establish such ideal rural communities that are regarded in the *Vedic* teachings as essential to maintain and enhance human development with emphasis on the three fundamental areas of 1) cow protection, 2) natural agriculture and 3) traditional education, all being the basis of a culture that will lead to healthy, progressive and prosperous nations.

Historically, agriculture has been accepted as the noblest of all professions. Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America states:

*“There seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth. The first is by war, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors. This is robbery. The second is by commerce, which is generally cheating. The third by agriculture, the only honest way, where a man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor as a reward for his innocent life, and his virtuous industry.”*<sup>47</sup>

Yet another Founding Father of the Nation, Thomas Jefferson concurs:

*“I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries; as long as they are chiefly agricultural.”*<sup>48</sup>

One of the foremost agrarian crusaders in India since the last three decades has undoubtedly been Indian scholar, environmental activist, food sovereignty advocate, and anti-globalization author Dr. Vandana Shiva<sup>49</sup>. She has travelled

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<sup>46</sup> <https://ecovillage.org>

<sup>47</sup> <https://modernfarmer.com/2013/07/the-founding-fathers-on-farming/>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.navdanya.org/site/>



widely highlighting the plight of our farmers around the world, and she addresses key global problems such as climate change, peak oil and food crisis. It is most revealing how she relates these problems to a major deviation from a central theme that I will be introducing in the section on Vedic Epistemology and Ontology, *dharma* (that which sustains). She makes the following profound observation:

*“Climate chaos and peak oil are converging with a third crisis – the food crisis. The food crisis results from the combined impacts of the industrialization and globalization of agriculture....The real solution must be to search for right living...right living is “dharma”... Ecological balance and social justice are intrinsic to right livelihood, to dharma. “Dharanath dharma ucyat” – that which sustains all species of life and helps maintain harmonious relationships among them is “dharma”. That which disturbs the balance and her species is “adharma”.<sup>50</sup>*

A similar spiritual message is also echoed by one of ISKCON’s scholars, Micheal Cremo, co-author of *Divine Nature*,<sup>51</sup> *Forbidden Archeology*<sup>52</sup> and author of *Human Devolution*<sup>53</sup> who makes the following statement:

*“The current civilization with its emphasis on ever increasing production and consumption is destroying our planet. The material production of consumption is poisoning the air, is poisoning the land and the water.... Why do we have this problem? It is because of the greed that’s in the human heart. People want to consume more and more material things and in doing that they are destroying their own environment, destroying the foundation for their own happy life. So the solution is you have to go into the heart, you have to change the hearts of people and get them to live lives of voluntary simplicity with a spiritual purpose.”<sup>54</sup>*

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/media/view/184096/original/Soil-Not-Oil-Article-and-questions.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1746119>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.mcremo.com>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.humandevolution.com>

<sup>54</sup> Cremo, Micheal, Interview

Unless scientists, educators, scholars, Heads of State, private agencies and Faith Based Organizations recognize our present lacuna, the on-going decadence in the matter of economy, social governance, and education will continue to spiral downwards to unimaginable and irreversible chaotic levels.

Therefore, it is imperative to first clearly understand the basis upon which the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* perspective is grounded 1) by becoming familiar with its Epistemology, 2) by studying its Ontology, 3) by understanding the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* Sociology, 4) by knowing and realizing the four standard *Vedic* sciences (*Char Vidya*), and 5) by looking closely at the *Vedic* Hierarchy of Human Needs, an interesting resemblance to Maslow's<sup>55</sup> Hierarchy of Human Needs.

Once having been introduced to the *Vedic* corpus, as seen through the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* vernacular, readers will more easily comprehend the three main areas under study, namely 1) the neglect and desecration of cows, 2) the neglect and desecration of land, and 3) the neglect and desecration of knowledge, all three inconspicuously engraving their stupendous and horrendous devastating effects on individuals and society all over the world.

Although I use the *Vedic* terminology and ideology as the basis and reference to support my premise that villages are and must remain the very foundation and backbone of a nation, and inseparable to that understanding, so are natural agriculture and animal husbandry, in particular indigenous cows, readers should clearly understand that this applies to any village regardless of its religious adherence or geographical location. As I intend to demonstrate in my presentation, the principles that govern village life in India are essentially the same as those in any country around the world.

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.managementstudyguide.com/maslows-hierarchy-needs-theory.htm>

The readers' challenge, to more clearly understand both the problems at hand and their proposed remedies, will lie in their ability to discern the major conceptual differences I will identify between the *Vedic* and Western approach to Sociology. That ability will be determined by how well, at least theoretically, one understands some of the basic differences in these two approaches, in particular, in *Vedic* dialect, as it pertains to balancing the spiritual and material *sva-dharma*, or in Western terminology, as it pertains to balancing Idealism and Humanism. Idealism, in this context, refers more to the spiritual dimension of life as opposed to Humanism, the more material dimension of life.

The *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* Perspective will best be understood by briefly explaining the following concepts: 1) *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* Epistemology, 2) *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* Ontology, 3) *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* Sociology, 4) Four *Vedic* Sciences (*Char Vidya*), and 5) Hierarchy of Human Needs.

#### 1) VAIṢṆAVA VEDIC EPISTEMOLOGY

Out of many processes for acquiring knowledge, *Vedic* philosophers accept three as being most valid. One is known as *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* or proof through direct sense perception, another as *anumāna pramāṇa* or proof through reason/inference/logic/ hypothesis and the third as *śabda pramāṇa*, or proof through aural reception from higher authorities.

Since both material perception through the senses (*pratyakṣa*) and the mental perception through the mind (*anumāna*) are material, these two processes cannot ascertain the spiritual reality claimed by transcendentalists, a reality which is beyond the material realm. Hence, the *Vedic* philosophers and the scriptures themselves declare that among these three processes, only *śabda pramāṇa* or sound perception from authorized sources is the best and ultimately the preferred one upon which to be relied.

“So there are three kinds of processes to receive knowledge: *pratyakṣa*, *aitihya* and *śabda*. *Pratyakṣa* means by direct perception, experimental knowledge. And *aitihya* or *anumāna*. *Anumāna*, hypothesis, "It may be like this," "Perhaps like this." Just like modern scientists say, "Perhaps it is like this." That is called *anumāna*, hypothesis. And another process is *śabda-pramāṇa*. *Śruti-pramāṇa*. *Śabda* means sound vibration, and *śruti* means aural reception. So out of three processes, the *śabda-pramāṇa*, or receiving vibration, sound vibration from authorities by aural reception, that is considered to be the perfect.”<sup>56</sup>

The source of Vedic knowledge are the *Vedas* themselves as they are accepted as *apaurusheya*, independent and faultless, devoid of any mundane origin.

Since the text of the original *Vedas* is written in *vaidika* (classical) Sanskrit, as opposed to *laukika* (common) Sanskrit, it becomes very difficult to ascertain its meaning as few qualified *brāhmaṇas* are trained in the classical Sanskrit language. "... the Vedic traditions are under assault from a school of thought whose fundamental assumptions are dismissive of the sacred dimension. If, out of naivety, we hand over the keys to our institutions and allow outsiders to represent our legacy, then any chance of genuine dialogue will be lost. Furthermore, because of the enormous prestige and power of Western universities, a view of the Sanskrit will become accepted by the public.”<sup>57</sup>

The *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are said to be the fifth *Veda*, being both *apaurusheya* in nature and an extension of the original *Vedas*.<sup>58</sup> Within the *Mahābhārata* we find the

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<sup>56</sup> Vedabase 2017, Lecture, SB 1.5.14 – June 18, 1969, New Vrindavan.

<sup>57</sup> Malhotra, Rajiv (2016), *The Battle For Sanskrit. Is Sanskrit political or sacred, oppressive or liberating, dead or alive?*, Harper Collins India;  
[Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Battle\\_for\\_Sanskrit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Battle_for_Sanskrit)]

<sup>58</sup> *Sri Tattva-sandarba* 12-14

*Bhagavad-gīta*, the foundational theme of this great epic summarizing the seminal teachings of the Vedic knowledge. Among the *Purāṇas*, the *Bhagavat Purāṇa*, also known as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is recognized as the *summum bonum* (supreme) of all *Purāṇas*.<sup>59</sup>

The very first verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* clearly explains how the Vedic knowledge was received and what is its ultimate purpose:

*om̐ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya  
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāt  
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ  
tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā  
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmahi*

O my Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Sri Tattva-sandarba* 21

<sup>60</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.1

Hence, followers of the *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava Sampradaya* accept these two *Vedic* literatures, the *Bhagavad-gīta* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as their main source of knowledge and strictly observe the process of *śabda pramāṇa* as has been followed by all the great *Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*.

## 2) VAIṢṆAVA VEDIC ONTOLOGY

The fundamental principles that govern *Vedic* ontology are given in the perennial teachings of the *Bhagavad-gīta*, as spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa and further elaborated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The five core principles introduced in the *Bhagavad-gīta* are: 1) *īśvara* (controller), 2) *jīva* (the spirit soul), 3) *prakṛti* (the material energy), 4) *kāla* (the time factor) and 5) *karma* (the law of action and reaction). The first four principles are eternal while the last one is not eternal.<sup>61</sup> It is essential to understand these five principles in order to enter into the meaning of the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* philosophy, especially as presented in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The science of *Sanātana Dharma* is herein introduced in the teachings of *Bhagavad-gīta*.<sup>62</sup>

### 1- ĪŚVARA

The first concept, *īśvara*, refers both to the supreme *īśvara*, God, described in *śāstra* (scriptures) as *param īśvara* (supreme controller) and to the living entity, *jīva*, a limited *īśvara*, never to attain the level of *param īśvara*.

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ  
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

*Kṛṣṇa who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin and He is the prime cause of all causes.*<sup>63</sup>

In the *Bhagavad-gīta* itself, the Lord declares Himself to be the compiler of *Vedānta* and the object to be known in the *Vedas*:

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<sup>61</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* Introduction (p. 9-10)

<sup>62</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* Introduction (p. 16)

<sup>63</sup> *Brahma Saṁhitā* 1

sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo  
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca  
vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo  
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham

*I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.*<sup>64</sup>

## 2- JĪVA

The concept of *jīva* is clearly defined in the *Bhagavad-gīta* as being the eternal spiritual part and parcel of God. The *jīva*, being under the influence of the material senses and the mind, is struggling very hard in this material world:

mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ  
manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati

*The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.*<sup>65</sup>

The material body is described as the *deha*, while the spirit soul is the *dehi*, the dweller of this body. The same is conveyed in the words *kṣetra* (the field of activity, the body) and *kṣetrajña*, the knower of the field of activity, the spirit soul.

<sup>66</sup> One who knows that he is different from this body does not lament when the body dies:

dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā  
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati

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<sup>64</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta* As It Is 15.15

<sup>65</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta* As It Is 15.7

<sup>66</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta* As It Is 13.27

*As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.*<sup>67</sup>

### 3- PRAKṚTI

The concept of *prakṛti* refers to material nature composed of 24 material elements from which various forms of life are created among the 8,400,000 species of life described in the *Vedic* literatures. All species of life are made up of five gross material elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) and three subtle material elements (mind, intelligence and ego).

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca  
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

*Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—all together these eight constitute My separated material energies.*<sup>68</sup>

Above these material elements is the superior energy, the spirit soul:

*apareyam itas tv anyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parāṁ  
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat*

*Besides these, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is another, superior energy of Mine, which comprises the living entities who are exploiting the resources of this material, inferior nature.*<sup>69</sup>

What is most crucial is to understand how *prakṛti* is intimately connected with the three *guṇas* or the modes of material nature that are themselves governed by the law of *karma* (activity). The three modes of material nature are 1) *sattva* (goodness), 2) *rajas* (passion) and 3) *tamas* (ignorance). The *jīva* soul who comes in the material world is conditioned by these modes of material nature and is referred to as *baddha jīva*, conditioned soul. The whole system of *varṇa* (four social

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<sup>67</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 2.13

<sup>68</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 7.4

<sup>69</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 7.5



classes) and *āśrama* (four spiritual classes) that define *Vedic Sociology* has been created by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself to help the conditioned souls become freed from these modes of nature by adopting the process of *bhakti-yoga*. The *varṇāśrama* system is not, as some falsely claim, a system created by man.

*cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ  
tasya kartāram api mām viddhy akartāram avyayam*

*According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable.<sup>70</sup>*

One who is more influenced by the mode of goodness will tend to take up the occupation of a *brāhmaṇa* (intellectual class); one more influenced by the mixed modes of goodness and passion, that of a *kṣatriya* (administration class); one more influenced by the mixed mode of passion and ignorance, that of a *vaiśya* (agriculture, cow protection and trade); and one more influenced by the mode of ignorance will take the position of *sūdra* (laborer class). However, the *varṇa* is not determined by birth but by *guṇa* (quality) and *karma* (activity) as mentioned in the same verse cited above (Bg. 4.13). By performing good activities, one can rise from the lower modes of nature to the higher modes with the aim of totally transcending these modes of nature and regaining one's eternal constitutional position as liberated soul, *mukta jīva*.

#### 4- KĀLA

*Kāla* (time) is the fourth eternal principle. In the material world it is experienced as past, present and future but in the spiritual realm, time is eternal. According to *karma*, we take on different material bodies until we no longer remain influenced by the *guṇas*.

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<sup>70</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 4.13

## 5- KARMA

*Karma* (activity), the fifth principle, determines our fate or destiny in this material world. Just like in a country, if one remains a good citizen and obeys the laws of the State, he does not suffer the reactions of the criminals who do not follow. There are three types of *karma* described in the *Bhagavad-gīta* and they all give a different result. Ordinarily *karma* means following the injunctions of the *śāstra* and gradually advancing from a lower to a higher position. This is the fate of fruitive workers; they may get a better birth on this planet or may be elevated to the planets of demigods. Such a person will reap good *karma*. The second type is called *vikarma*, going against the injunction of *śāstra* for which one will be punished by taking birth in one of the 8,400,000 species of life. The third type is called *naiskarma* or *akarma* for it does not incur any kind of *karmic* reaction and enables one to get out of the cycle of repeated birth and death called the wheel of *samsara* (material existence).<sup>71</sup> The path of *akarma* is known as *bhakti-yoga* or devotional service, the natural activity of the spirit soul. *Karmic* reaction to past sinful activities is what binds one in the material world. Therefore, the need to know the difference between authorized (*pravritti marga*) and non-authorized (*nivritti marga*) activities as described in the *Bhagavad-gīta*:<sup>72</sup> “Those who are demoniac do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. Neither cleanliness nor proper behavior nor truth is found in them.”

Some of my readers may find these descriptions somewhat stale, dry and possibly dogmatic. Different from most modern discourses, one of the specialties of the *Vedic* narrative is to substantiate all statements by authorized verifiable sources, in this case the ancient *Vedic* texts themselves. This practice has been followed, honored and upheld since time immemorial through the scientific system of disciplic succession called *guru parampara*. The subject matter is indeed profound and

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<sup>71</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 9.3

<sup>72</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 16.7



Lord Caitanya, “*acintya-bhedabheda-tattva*” (inconceivable oneness and difference).

The philosophy of the *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava Sampradaya* is summarized by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the following three levels of knowledge: 1) *sambandha jñāna* (knowledge of relationships), 2) *abhidheya jñāna* (knowledge of activities) and *prayojana jñāna* (knowledge of objectives). These three cover all the different levels of *tattva* (truth).

One of the foremost *Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura, has analytically explained in his book *Dasa Mula Tattva*, the various levels of truth as they correspond to the three levels of knowledge. He begins by establishing:

1. The *pramāṇa* or proof as being the *Vedas* themselves, the source of all knowledge. After establishing the source of all knowledge, he explains the first three aspects of *īśvara*.

2. *Param-tattva*, *Kṛṣṇa* as the supreme absolute truth in three features of (i) *Brahman* realization (the impersonal, all-pervading aspect of God), (ii) *Paramatma* realization (the localized aspect of God seated in everyone’s heart as Supersoul), and (iii) *Bhagavan* realization (the personal aspect of God, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord *Kṛṣṇa*).

3. *Shaktiman*, *Kṛṣṇa* as the source of three main energies:

- *antaranga shakti* (internal potency exhibiting variegatedness in the transcendental spiritual world of *Vaikuntha* or *Hari dham*),
- *bahiranga sakti* (external potency exhibiting variegatedness in the material world or *Devi dham*) and
- *tatastha shakti* (marginal potency, the living entities called as *jīvatma*),

4. *Rasa samudra*, *Kṛṣṇa* as the ocean of sweet mellows of which there are five primary mellows:

- *santa rasa* (relationship in neutrality or awe and reverence),
- *dasya rasa* (relationship in servitude),
- *sakya rasa* (relationship in friendship),
- *vatsalya rasa* (relationship in parental affection)
- *madhurya rasa* (relationship in conjugal love) the topmost being expressed as *parakhya rasa*, (relationship as paramour). There are also seven secondary *rasas* known as (i) anger, (ii) wonder, (iii) comedy, (iv) chivalry, (v) mercy, (vi) dread, and (vii) ghastliness.

5. Next Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes the position of the living entities, the *jīva*, as *aṁsa*, (part and parcel of God),

6. as *nitya baddha* (eternally conditioned),

7. as *nitya mukta* (eternally liberated) and

8. The last two *tattvas* are described as *bedha and abheda* (simultaneously same in quality with *Kṛṣṇa* but different in quantity with *Kṛṣṇa*).

9. *Nava vidha bhakti*, the nine processes of devotional service, the level of *abhidheya*, those nine activities known as

- *sravanam* (hearing),
- *kirtanam* (chanting),
- *Vishnu smaranam* (remembering Lord Vishnu),
- *pada sevanam* (serving the lotus feet),
- *arcanam* (worshiping),
- *bandanam* (offering prayers),
- *dasyam* (serving),
- *sakhyam* (befriending) and
- *atma-nivedanam* (surrendering everything to the Lord) and the tenth *tattva*

10. *Prema*, pure love of God, the level of *prayojana*. These are the basic levels of *tattva* one studies to get into deeper levels of *tattva*.<sup>74</sup>

Another *Vaiṣṇava sampradaya* is the *Lakṣmi Sampradaya* (also referred to as *Ramanuja Sampradaya*, *Sri Sampradaya* or *Sri Vaiṣṇava Sampradaya*). Sripad Ramanujācārya (11<sup>th</sup> century) is the *Ācārya*, the *Vedānta* commentary being *Sri-bhāṣya* and the *tattva* expounded “*visistadvaita-vada*” (specific monism).

Then there is the *Siva Sampradaya* (also known as the *Rudra Sampradaya*, the *Viṣṇuswami Sampradaya* and the *Vallabha Sampradaya*), the *Ācāryas* being *Viṣṇuswami* and *Vallabhācārya*, the *Vedānta* commentary being *Sarvajña-bhāṣya* and the *tattva* being “*suddhadvaita-vada*” (purified monism).

Lastly there is the *Kumara Sampradaya* (also referred to *Nimbarka Sampradaya*, and *Sanakadi Sampradaya*), the *Ācārya* being *Sanaka Kumara* (13<sup>th</sup> century), the *Vedānta* commentary being *Parijata-saurabha-bhāṣya* and the *tattva* expounded “*dvaitadvaita-vada*” (monism and dualism).<sup>75</sup>

Although the four *Vaiṣṇava sampradayas* differ slightly in *tattva*, they all accept the individual living entity (the *jīva* or soul) as subordinate to the Supreme Lord and follow the principle of worshiping the Lord. They are also at odds with the impersonal school established by Sripad *Adi Shankarācārya* known as the *Māyāvāda Sampradaya* whose commentary on *Vedānta Sūtra* is known as “*Sariraka-bhāṣya*” and the *tattva* they espouse is called “*Advaita-kevaladvaita*” (monism). Needless to say that all the four *Vaiṣṇava* sects as well as the *Māyāvāda*

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<sup>74</sup> *Dasa-mula-tattva* by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Chapter 1, *Dasa-mula-tattva*, *The Ten Esoteric Truths*, Section: *Kartika*, *Explanatory Verse*.

<sup>75</sup> [www.harekrsna.com/philosophy/gss/sadhu/sampradayas/sampradayas.htm](http://www.harekrsna.com/philosophy/gss/sadhu/sampradayas/sampradayas.htm)

*Sampradaya* are all opposed to non-theistic schools of thought as propounded by Charvaka in India who represents in many ways the Western ethos of a secular and atheistic narrative.

## 2- VEDA

The expressions *Vedic* knowledge, *Vedic* teachings, *Vedic* culture, *Vedic* villages, etc., are all connected with the word *Veda* which broadly speaking means the original knowledge, according to *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy, revealed to the first created being Lord Brahma. The knowledge revealed to Lord Brahma is said to be *apaurusheya*, not from a human source but a divine source.

*Apaurusheya* (Sanskrit: अपौरुषेय, *Apauruṣeya*), literally means "not of a man" and "superhuman". The term is used to describe the *Vedas*, the earliest scripture in the World.

*Apaurusheya* is a central concept in the *Vedānta* and *Mīmāṃsā* schools of philosophy. These schools accept the *Vedas* as *svataḥ pramāṇa* ("self-evident means of knowledge").<sup>76</sup>

The four *Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas* are referred to in the *Garga Saṁhitā*.<sup>77</sup> The *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy has been propounded by prominent *Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas* over the centuries in the form of *tiki* or commentaries on what constitutes the essence of the *Vedic* literature, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

In the *Brahma-Madhava-Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya*, as mentioned above, Lord Caitanya is accepted as the *Yuga Avatāra* (the main incarnation for the Age of Kali) and his main contribution was to revive the *Bhakti* cult by empowering his immediate associates, the Goswamis of Vṛndāvan, to extract

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<sup>76</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apauruṣey>

<sup>77</sup> *Garga Saṁhitā*, 10:61:23-26. <http://www.Kṛṣṇa.com/blog/2016/07/17/four-sampradāyas-garga-Saṁhitā>

from the *Vedic* literatures the essence of *dharma*. This brings me to define more clearly what is meant by *Vedic* literatures.

According to the *Brahma-Madhava-Gaudiya-Vaiṣṇava Sampradaya*, as taught by Lord Caitanya, the compiler of the *Vedic* literatures, Śrīla Vyasadeva, has summarized the essence of the *Vedic* knowledge, culminating in the *Vedānta Sūtra*. This was further elaborated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that is described as the ripened fruit of all *Vedic* knowledge.

nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ  
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam  
pibata bhāgavataṁ rasam ā-layaṁ  
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ

*O expert and thoughtful men, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls.*<sup>78</sup>

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is described as the post-graduate study of the *Bhagavad-gīta*, deals extensively with the subject matter of *dharma*. I will discuss more in detail about the dual nature of *dharma* in the up-coming section dealing with the four *Vedic* sciences as mentioned above.

### 3- VEDIC SOCIOLOGY

When discussing *Vedic* Sociology, we must keep in mind the *Vedic* background and refer to the primary texts found in the *Vedic* writings that refer to and elaborate on the topic of sociology. Although interest in sociology as a science in itself is quite recent in the Western hemisphere, we learn from *Vedic*

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<sup>78</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.3



literatures that the organization of society was a fundamental concept and focus of statesmanship governing villages, states, nations and the entire world. The *Vedic* science of polity, the domain of *kṣatriyas* or *Vedic* rulers, deals amply with both administration and organization of society.

As with the science of *Vedic* economy, social organization is based on well-established scientific principles and concepts that have their basis and origin in the *Vedic* literatures. For a practicing *Vaiṣṇava*, social organization is the scientific arrangement of four social orders (*varṇas*) and four spiritual orders (*āśramas*) referred to as *varṇāśrama dharma*. As mentioned earlier, *varṇāśrama dharma* is very much part of *sanātana dharma*. In as much as the very concept “*sanātana dharma*” refers to the eternal spiritual occupation or duty of mankind, similarly, *varṇāśrama dharma* is also an eternal material arrangement meant to guide human beings towards both material as well as spiritual well-being.

The *varṇas* are intimately connected with the concept of *guṇas* or modes of material nature that I will cover more in detail later. The fundamental and preliminary principles of this science of *varṇāśrama* can be found in the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gīta* and further elaborated upon in such texts of *Kautilya's Arthashastra* and other major *Vedic* writings such as the *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. As stated by Bhaktivedanta Swami:

“Sociology is already given by Kṛṣṇa. [*Bhagavad-gīta* 4.13] This is perfect sociology. If you try to create some system, that system will be imperfect because you are imperfect.”<sup>79</sup>

#### 4) FOUR VEDIC SCIENCES (CHAR VIDYA)

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<sup>79</sup> *Dialectic Spiritualism, IX, Utilitarianism & Positivism, Auguste Comte (1798-1857)] VedaBase*

The four *Vedic* sciences briefly outlined in the introduction to the *Kautilya's Arthashastra*<sup>80</sup> very clearly form the basis of and give the framework to the well-structured and organized scientific social system of *varṇāśrama dharma*.

## 1- ĀNVĪKṢIKĪ

By order of importance, Canakya begins by describing the science of philosophy, *Ānvīkṣikī* that he divides in three specific areas, namely a) *Sankhya*, b) *Yoga* and c) *Tarka*.

### 1. *Sankhya* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

*Sankhya* can best be thoroughly described in the pages of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* wherein Lord Kapila expounds his *Sankhya* philosophy to his mother Devahuti, the essence being *bhakti-yoga* or devotional service to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* stands as the supreme scripture for the *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas*. Indeed, it is described as “*grantha raja*”, the king of all scriptures, and the emperor of *pramāṇas* (proofs). Why this is so is explained by one of the foremost philosophers of the *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava* tradition, Srīla Jīva Goswami, in his *Sri Tattva-Sandarbha*.<sup>81</sup>

### 2. *Yoga* (*Bhagavad-gīta*)

*Yoga* of course can best be understood through the pages of the *Bhagavad-gīta* where Lord *Kṛṣṇa* Himself explains the various levels of *Yoga* beginning with *karma-yoga*, then *jñāna-yoga*, *astanga-yoga* all leading to *bhakti-yoga*, the topmost *Yoga* system that teaches one the science of devotional service to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. Although there are various levels of *Yogas*, the *Bhagavad-gīta* stresses especially *bhakti yoga*:

*yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā  
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*

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<sup>80</sup> *Kautilya's Arthashastra*, Chapter 2

<sup>81</sup> *Sri Tattva-sandarbha* 18.3

*And of all yogīs, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion.*<sup>82</sup>

Yoga is the spiritual discipline meant to reconnect our consciousness to the Supreme Consciousness, Lord Kṛṣṇa who is known as Yogesvara, the supreme master of all mystic powers. This is an eternal science that Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke to his friend and disciple Arjuna 5000 years ago just before the Battle of Kuruksetra. Therein, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna that He spoke this same knowledge millions of years ago to the sun-god, Vivasvan:

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
imam vivasvate yoga proktavān aham avyayam  
vivasvān manave prāha manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt*

*The Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.*<sup>83</sup>

### 3. Tarka

*Tarka* is the supportive science of logic and debate to help establish and defend the ethos of the *Vedic siddhanta* or conclusions of *śāstra*. Debates through logic, arguments and counter arguments, have a long-standing tradition in the ancient Indian culture. These would often be held in the royal courts between erudite scholars and propounders of differing philosophies. In her paper “*Logic, debate and epistemology in ancient India medicine and philosophy – an investigation*”, Karin Preisendanz opines that the ancient

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<sup>82</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 6.47

<sup>83</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 4.1

science first originated in medicine before entering the field of philosophy or the teachings of Ānvīkṣikī:

*Logic and debate are considered to be important characteristics of a philosophical tradition. Concerning the Indian tradition of philosophy, much attention has been paid to these issues as they appear in early classical Ayurveda, specifically the Caraka Saṁhitā. Satischandra Vidyabhushana argued that the relevant passages in this earliest work present us with summaries or expositions of the ancient teachings of Ānvīkṣikī, the “investigating science”, logical, dialectical and eristic teachings....”<sup>84</sup>*

According to historian Max Mueller *"The sciences of Logic and Grammar were, as far as history allows us to judge, invented or originally conceived by two nations only, by Hindus and Greeks."*<sup>85</sup> This is further corroborated by Augustus De Morgan who wrote in 1860: *"The two races which have founded the mathematics, those of the Sanskrit and Greek languages, have been the two which have independently formed systems of logic."*<sup>86</sup>

## 2- TRAYI, DANDA NITI AND VARTA

Only armed with this foundational knowledge of 1) Ānvīkṣikī can one then more easily understand, embrace and apply the three remaining sciences of

- 2) Trayi (the Science of Knowledge),
- 3) Danda Niti (the Science of Politics) and
- 4) Varta (the Science of Economics).

The crux of my book centers on the neglect of these three sciences and indeed they will serve as the basis to my premise

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<sup>84</sup> [www.insa.nic.in/writereaddata/UpLoadedFiles/IJHS/Vol44\\_2\\_8\\_KPrasendanz.pdf](http://www.insa.nic.in/writereaddata/UpLoadedFiles/IJHS/Vol44_2_8_KPrasendanz.pdf)

Indian Journal of History of Science, 44.2 (2009) 261-312,

<sup>85</sup> Mueller, Max *"Of Indian Logic"* Appendix To Thomson's Laws of Thought, London:

Longmans Green and Co 1853 online at <https://archive.org/details/anoutlinenecess03thomgoog>

<sup>86</sup> De Morgan, Augustus *"Syllabus of a proposed system of logic"*, London : Walton and Maberly 1860; online at <https://archive.org/details/syllabusofpropos00demoiala>

that due to gross misunderstanding and deviation from this foundational *siddhanta* of *Ānvikṣikī*, the science of philosophy, since the days of “*cognito ergo sum*” (I think, therefore I am), the Western world has been plunged in a vicious descending spiral of ever increasing social and moral turpitude. In the name of fraternity and equality, “every year” we are slaughtering 90 billion marine animals and 53 billion land animals for food<sup>87</sup> and since 1980 1.4 billion lives have been mercilessly taken under the legal tenet of abortion.<sup>88</sup> When looking closely at these three areas of neglect, we will become stunned to witness the severe deviation from what was meant to be a more simple, natural and scientific way of living.

I have therefore identified modernity (and all its nomenclatures such as Positivism, Marxism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, etc.) as the root conflicting factor causing major disruption in the very principles of *dharma* in India and all over the world. However, I must also acknowledge that the culprits for India’s downtrodden situation are not only from the West.

Since many years, indeed since many centuries, from within the land of India, from among those who proclaim to represent the *Vedic* teachings, the *brāhmaṇas*, there have been many malpractices and misunderstandings, some going back practically since even before the advent of Buddhism. As mentioned earlier in the book, the rift created between the *brāhmaṇa* class and the *kṣatriya* class has been the root cause of great unrest and disruption in the matter of applying the principles of *sanātana dharma*, in particular *varṇāśrama dharma*. The matter has further been complicated with the creation of the vitiated caste system wherein one claims to be a *brāhmaṇa* based on birth only. This resulted in the creation of outcasts and untouchables, the *Dalits* in particular, groups that were shunned from *Vedic* practices and rituals due to their not being born within the *varṇāśrama* system. This social uneasiness and

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<sup>87</sup> <http://www.adaptt.org/archive/killcounter.html>

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.numberofabortions.com>

discrimination led to a great debate between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar centered on the former's "undelivered speech" entitled "*The Annihilation of Caste*"<sup>89</sup>.

### 3- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar--*The Annihilation of Caste*

The subject matter relating to outcaste, *varṇāśrama*, the untouchables, etc., is highly sensitive and volatile, but because of its relevance to one of the main themes I address in my book related to *varṇāśrama*, I feel obliged to offer a few comments guarding myself not to digress from the main theme of the book.

Dr. Ambedkar makes many pertinent points in his paper, *The Annihilation of Caste*, particularly in section 24, "A true priesthood should be based on qualification, not heredity". In his rebuttal to Mahatma Gandhi's initial response to his paper, Dr. Ambedkar summarized his six principal points as follows, claiming that Gandiji had not addressed them properly.

#### 1. *That Caste has ruined the Hindus.*<sup>90</sup>

From the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* perspective, it would be more accurate to state that the misuse of caste or the misuse of the *varṇāśrama* system (by introducing caste by birth) has ruined the Hindus. In his essay on *Gita Nagari*, Bhaktivedanta Swami explains this point as follows:

*Mahatma Gandhi did not approve of the system of birthright castes as prevailing in India, and there is ample support for this movement of casteless society in the Bhagavad-gītā in its own way. Casteless society does not mean that there will be no section or subsection of social division. Without such division of social order no living society can be conceived but there may not be any such section or subsection simply for the matter of birth right accident. A brāhmaṇa's son has the right to become a brāhmaṇa provided he has the rightful qualifications of a brāhmaṇa otherwise he cannot be*

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<sup>89</sup> *The Annihilation of Caste* at:

[http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/mmt/ambedkar/web/readings/aoc\\_print\\_2004.pdf](http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/mmt/ambedkar/web/readings/aoc_print_2004.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> *The Annihilation of Caste*, Section 24.1

placed in the exhaled position of a brāhmaṇa. That is the verdict of all revealed scriptures.<sup>91</sup>

He further acknowledges the abuse of the caste system but warns against its destruction:

*The vitiated caste system of present India is never sanctioned by the scriptures. But the caste system is made by God according to quality and work of the subject and it was never designed for the benefit of accidental birth right. Thus whatever is made by God cannot be destroyed by man. Destruction of the caste system, as contemplated by some exponents, is therefore out of question. By the modes of nature different persons are imbued with different qualities and the scientific way of division of human society, from the qualitative aspect, by the caste system is quite natural.*<sup>92</sup>

2. *That the reorganization of the Hindu Society on the basis of Chaturvarṇya is impossible because the Varṇavyavastha is like a leaky pot or like a man running at the nose. It is incapable of sustaining itself by its own virtue, and has an inherent tendency to degenerate into a Caste System unless there is a legal sanction behind it which can be enforced against everyone transgressing his varṇa;*<sup>93</sup>

The Vedic literatures abound with history of the Vedic culture having been governed by the system of varṇas and āśramas under qualified brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas. No one will deny that we find few such examples within recent times, especially since the advent of Kali Yuga. For various reasons, the land of India has also undergone several invasions and has been subjected to foreign rules for many centuries. We have also pointed out how since many centuries now, the rift created between the brāhmaṇa community and kṣatriya community has helped to create such an unstable situation. We should first and foremost acknowledge the fact that the system of varṇa is

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<sup>91</sup> *Gita Nagari Essay, On the Principles of Gandhi*, Section 4, Vedabase

<sup>92</sup> Letter to Ho. Sardar Dr. Vallabhai Patel, Febraury 28, 1949, Vedabase

<sup>93</sup> *The Annihilation of Caste*, Section 24.2

directly mentioned in the *Vedic* scriptures, beginning from the *Bhagavad-gīta* itself:

*cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ  
tasya kartāram api mām viddhy akartāram avyayam*

*According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable.*<sup>94</sup>

If we accept Lord Kṛṣṇa as authority, and the *Bhagavad-gīta* as *śāstra* (authorized scripture), then how can we accept that Lord Kṛṣṇa created an untenable system? Hence, the conclusion arrived at by Dr. Ambedkar should be seen as premature and inaccurate.

3. *That the reorganization of the Hindu Society on the basis of Chaturvarṇya would be harmful, because the effect of the Varṇavyavastha would be to degrade the masses by denying them opportunity to acquire knowledge, and to emasculate them by denying them the right to be armed;*<sup>95</sup>

There are two points being made here, one claiming that the system of *varṇāśrama* aims at suppressing and disfavoring the general mass of people while the other deals with the denial of the right to be armed. This refers to the *brāhmaṇas*' monopoly of knowledge as they are seen as the custodians of the *Vedic* teachings while the *kṣatriyas* are the recognized protectors of society. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains the purpose of the *varṇāśrama* system as follows:

*ataḥ pumbhir dvija-śreṣṭhā varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśaḥ  
svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya samsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam*

*O best among the twice-born, it is therefore concluded that the highest perfection one can achieve by discharging the duties*

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<sup>94</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 4.13

<sup>95</sup> *The Annihilation of Caste*, Section 24.3



*prescribed for one's own occupation according to caste divisions and orders of life is to please the Personality of Godhead.*

In the Purport to this verse, Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

*Human society all over the world is divided into four castes and four orders of life. The four castes are the intelligent caste, the martial caste, the productive caste and the laborer caste. These castes are classified in terms of one's work and qualification and not by birth.*

*This institutional function of human society is known as the system of varṇāśrama-dharma, which is quite natural for the civilized life. The varṇāśrama institution is constructed to enable one to realize the Absolute Truth. It is not for artificial domination of one division over another. When the aim of life, i.e., realization of the Absolute Truth, is missed by too much attachment for indriya-prīti, or sense gratification, as already discussed herein before, the institution of the varṇāśrama is utilized by selfish men to pose an artificial predominance over the weaker section. In the Kali-yuga, or in the age of quarrel, this artificial predominance is already current, but the saner section of the people know it well that the divisions of castes and orders of life are meant for smooth social intercourse and high-thinking self-realization and not for any other purpose.<sup>96</sup>*

Both knowledge (śāstra) and weapons (astra), when in the hands of unqualified people can be dangerous. The Vedic system is such that education is imparted to those students who meet certain criteria and should only be awarded by teachers who possess certain qualifications. I will elaborate more on this point in the upcoming section on the Neglect and Desecration of Modern Education. Unfortunately, in modern day society, education is seen as everyone's right whereas according to Vedic

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<sup>96</sup> Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.13

psychology, education, or the acquisition of knowledge, is a privilege meant to be shared only to deserving and tested candidates, not at all a right.

The same can be said for arms or weapons. Unless one has been trained as a qualified *kṣatriya*, he should not handle weapons. Training and education therefore play a crucial role in the *Vedic* culture for both those who are meant to become *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas*.

4. *That the Hindu Society must be reorganized on a religious basis which would recognize the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity;*

The principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which have become the foundational principles in modern day “Declarations of Rights” can best be honored and respected when governed by the eternal four pillars of *dharma* known as a) *satyaṃ* (truthfulness), b) *dayā* (compassion), c) *tapah* (discipline) and d) *saucam* (cleanliness).<sup>97</sup> The *Vedic* literatures fully support the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity but only when these principles conform to the principles of *śāstra*. Left in the hands of unscrupulous people these noble principles will but lead to corruption. In practically all the countries where these principles have been adopted as the guiding light of the nation, the result has been quite the opposite as pointed out by Rajani Kanth in his book *Farewell to Modernism: On Human Devolution in the Twenty-First Century*:

*“... Modernism destroys real, anthropic humans, tied to each other by close-knit, affective ties, and turns them into Post-Human Reptiles: cold, canny, uncaring, and calculating. In contrast, our traditional forbears were all simple, tribalist Mammals, warm-blooded, emotive, and familial. As a First Strike, Modernism sunders the delicate tapestry of the reciprocal ‘social economy of affections’ which is the hallmark of anthropic Being, and substitutes*

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<sup>97</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.11.8

the cold, concrete, implacable jungle of vested, asocial, amoral, self-interest.

As I have written elsewhere, the European hegemony, thereby, is not yet ascended to civilization: indeed, he has not reached the ladder yet. Indeed HE (the male voice is inescapable: it is the 'paradigm of masculinity' that informs the Modernist straitjacket) went, catapulting, straight from barbarism to decadence.<sup>98</sup>

5. That in order to achieve this object the sense of religious sanctity behind Caste and Varṇa must be destroyed;

Dharma we must know is not man-made. "Dharmam tu saksad bhagavat pranitam."<sup>99</sup> The same can be said for varṇa. We must always keep in mind also that dharma is different from religion. Dharma refers to the natural laws of nature, laws of God. It is only due to lack of proper knowledge that one concludes that the varṇāśrama system is man-made. Its misuse is certainly man-made but its creation is God-made. One has yet to understand the simple and logical connection of the mode of material nature (guṇas) to the system of varṇa and how varṇas are controlled by these modes of material nature. To reject varṇa is to reject the reality of the modes of nature. To deny the reality of the guṇas is to reject the workings of material nature, prakṛti. To those who reject the *Bhagavad-gīta* Lord Kṛṣṇa states:

āsraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāśya parantapa  
aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyu-saṁsāra-vartmani

Those who are not faithful in this devotional service cannot attain Me, O conqueror of enemies. Therefore they return to the path of birth and death in this material world.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Kanth, Rajani, *Farewell to Modernism*: Introduction, ii

<sup>99</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 6.3.19

<sup>100</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 9.3

This means that the basic teachings of the *Bhagavad-gīta* are yet to be understood. To understand this preliminary spiritual knowledge one must accept a bona fide spiritual master.

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

*Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.*<sup>101</sup>

And this was very much the case not only for Dr. Ambedkar but also for Mahatma Gandhi, that both did not undertake the necessary discipline to accept a spiritual master.

6. *That the sanctity of Caste and Varṇa can be destroyed only by discarding the divine authority of the śāstras.*

Those who reject the authority of *śāstra* are described as “*nastik*” or atheists. Every living entity has the freedom to accept or reject the concept of God and that is what Dr. Ambedkar chose to do by rejecting the authority of the *Vedas*. It is unfortunate that Dr. Ambedkar offered many practical suggestions on how to rectify the system of *varṇāśrama*, or the caste system. But clearly, he did not believe the system could be reformed. For those who have a proper understanding of the *Vedic* knowledge, an integral part of which is the scientific system of *varṇāśrama dharma* and *sanātana dharma*, Dr. Ambedkar’s conclusion is not acceptable.

*Sanātana dharma* means activities or duties based on eternal knowledge. According to the Śrīla Jīva Goswami, the foremost philosopher during the period of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu 500 years ago, the original *Vedas* cannot be

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<sup>101</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 4.34

understood in our present times. Therefore, he has advised to accept both the *Itihāsas* and the *Purāṇas* as correct evidence of the *Vedas*:

*“We should consider: The authorities sound of the Vedas is impossible for anyone in present times to study completely, its meaning is difficult to construe, and even the sages who have explained it in commentaries disagree among one another. For these reasons we would be well-advised to turn our attention to the Śabda-pramāṇa of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, which are substantially non-different from the Vedas and which definitely explain what the Vedas mean. Since the Vedic texts whose purport is not self-evident can be deciphered by reference to the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are the appropriate sources of correct knowledge for our times.”*<sup>102</sup>

I must remind my readers again not to misconstrue my reference to *dharma* as simply some religion or faith. *Dharma* refers to the essence of something, its intrinsic quality or nature. For those who recognize and accept as reality the stuff above matter, whether one refers to it as mind, consciousness, spirit, soul or anti-matter, whatever name one may chose, the entire *Vedic* corpus speaks of two levels of reality, the spiritual and the material. Thus, there are two levels of *dharma*. One is called “spiritual *sva-dharma*”, defined as one’s own spiritual identity and spiritual duties or occupation. This is also referred to as *Bhagavat-dharma*, or *atma-jñāna*, the science of the spirit soul, both the individual spirit soul, the *jīva* or *atma*, and the supreme soul, the *param-atma* or God. Lord Caitanya has defined our spiritual *sva-dharma* in the following simple phrase “*Jivera svarupa haya-kṛṣṇera nitya dasa*”.<sup>103</sup> For matters of simplicity, I equate this to Spiritualism in the East and Idealism in the West, both having multitudes of philosophical shades.

The second level is referred to as our material *dharma*, technically known as “material *sva-dharma*”, defined as one’s

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<sup>102</sup> *Tattva-sandarbhā* (2013) 12

<sup>103</sup> *Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya Lila* 20.108

own material identity (based on the *guṇas* or modes of material nature) that hence defines one's own material duties or occupation within the system of *varṇāśrama dharma*. Again, for matters of simplicity, I equate this to Materialism in the East and Humanism in the West, with both having multitudes of philosophical nuances.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes what is the *param-dharma* for all of humanity should be in order to fully satisfy one's physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs.<sup>104</sup>

The science of *sambandha-jñāna*, (identity and relationships), the science of *abhidheya-jñāna* (activities) and the science of *prayojana-jñāna* (the goal or perfectional stage) apply to both levels of *Bhagavat-dharma* and *varṇāśrama dharma* although the same objective is present for both the spiritual *sva-dharma* and the material *sva-dharma*, developing love of God.

Before developing the central theme of the book, I will first represent the *Vedic* Hierarchy of Human Needs and compare it to the modern rendering of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs.

#### 5) VEDIC HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS

As embodied spirit souls, we all have needs to satisfy. These are identified in a very broad sense as the needs of body, mind and consciousness. The following chart will help the reader grasp the depth of these three divisions on both an individual and social level.

### VEDIC HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS

#### SELF-IDENTITY & SELF-NEEDS

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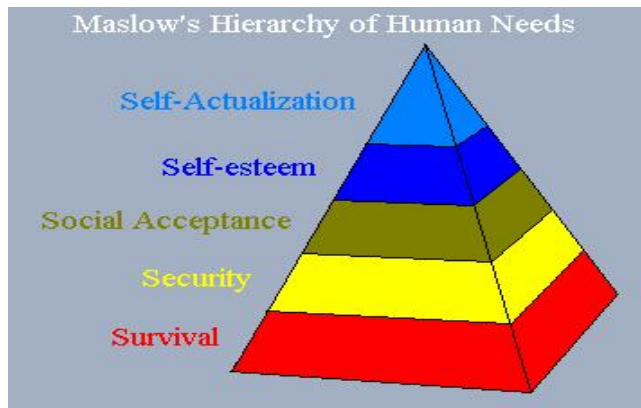
<sup>104</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6 and 7.11.7

Gross Matter	Subtle Matter	Subtle/Anti-Matter
Body	Mind	Consciousness
Five Material Elements	Three Material Elements	One Spiritual Element
Earth Water Fire Air Ether	Mind Intelligence Ego	Spirit Soul/Atma
Physical Needs	Emotional Needs Cognitive Needs Social Needs	Spiritual Needs
Cow Protection	Brahminical Culture	God Realization
Land	Leadership	Love & Devotion
Land cultivation and cow protection provide for physical needs.	The varṇāśrama system provides for emotional, cognitive & social needs.	Devotional service helps one develop pure love of God, self-realization.
Sambandha	Abhidheya	Prayojana
Knowledge of Identity	Knowledge of activity	Knowledge of goal

The above *Vedic* chart has been prepared as per the *Vedic* conception of the self. At the lower level, the needs address the perception of the material self, while at the higher level, the needs address the perception of the spiritual self. These are compatible with the modern concept of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs that he classifies as: 1. Biological and physiological needs, 2. Safety needs, 3. Belongingness and Love needs, 4. Esteem needs, and 5. Self-actualization needs. We can compare the two models.

## VEDIC MODEL

■ Meeting 4 Needs



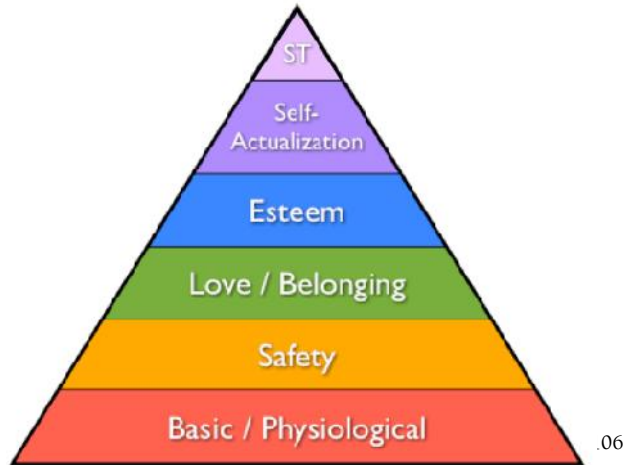
Maslow's self-actualization level in this above model became subservient to yet another level that he developed later and that he identified as "self-transcendence":

*The textbooks usually portray Maslow's hierarchy in the shape of a pyramid with our most basic needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualization at the top. Note how the iconic pyramid ignores self-transcendence:*<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup><https://reasonandmeaning.com/2017/01/18/summary-of-maslow-on-self-transcendence/>





### Love/Belongingness

In this second model, we can observe the changing natures of philosophies when we rely on our limited mental perceptions, in comparison to the *Vedic* model that is unchanging. The very expression “self-transcendence” brings us closer to the *Vedic* conception of accepting a reality beyond our limited sensual and mental perceptions.

Having been exposed to the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* Perspective of Sociology, the readers should now be in a better position to understand the neglect of our three foremost natural mothers, namely 1) Mother *Surabhi*, through the on-going exploitation and abuse of cows and other animals, 2) Mother *Bhumi*, through the abuse of land by the modern practices of agribusiness and by the exploitation of natural resources of nature, and 3) Mother *Sarasvati*, through the misuse of knowledge in our modern educational systems.

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<sup>106</sup><http://personalityspirituality.net/articles/the-hierarchy-of-human-needs-maslows-model-of-motivation/>

As I analyze these three areas, I will also formulate ways and means in which our present modern society can best remedy the situation by adopting various corrective measures.

## 6) THE NEGLECT AND DESECRATION OF HOLISTIC VALUES

I will argue that modernity, in its zest and zeal to free individuals and society from the bourgeois exploitation and ecclesiastic ascendancy prevalent 400 years ago in Europe, in its new found credo of freedom, fraternity, liberty and equality for all, has in fact neglected and severely exploited the basic fundamental rights and values related to 1) animal rights, especially the cows, 2) agriculture, and 3) education, all three being intimately related to three clearly defined *Vedic* sciences meant to help societies develop into holistic, balanced, peaceful and prosperous nations. Can we honestly say that we have evolved since the days of the French Revolution? Author Rajani Kanth opines the opposite in his book *Farewell to Modernism: On Human Devolution in the Twenty-First Century*:

*It is the European, Modernist, Governors that have brought the ecological world to the very brink of existence, the societal world to breakdown, and the economic world to collapse. The world is suicidally nuclear today because of their venomous invention(s)... As such, it is the European Modernist- in particular the Anglo-Am set of forces -that is squarely responsible for where we are today: in the Greatest Crisis in the History of Our Species.*<sup>107</sup>

Never before in the history of mankind has there been such rampant and unscrupulous exploitation among the human species, other species of life and of natural resources. Never before have we seen such degradation in the character, morality and ethics of leaders and the general mass of people. The three

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<sup>107</sup> Kanth, Rajani, *Farewell to Modernism* (p.vi).

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fundamental *Vedic* sciences meant to protect, nourish and give security to all, namely the Science of Economics (*Varta*), the Science of Governance (*Danda Niti*), and the Science of Knowledge (*Trayi*), have practically been destroyed in modern day society. When we grossly neglect these fundamental principles of *dharma*, we can only but expect deterioration and corruption that results in ever increased suffering for all. And that is our unequivocal gloomy reality in this second decade of the Twenty-First Century.

## CHAPTER 3



# THE NEGLECT & DESECRATION OF COWS

### 1) THE VEDIC PERSPECTIVE

Traditionally, cows were considered as members of the family. How could one ever think of selling away a family member, what to speak of killing such a member? Practically, every householder kept many cows in a *Goshala*, (cowshed) close to home. In some villages the cows were kept in the house itself, so close was the relationship between the family members and the cows. It was also the tradition to give a personal name to every cow. Not only were the cows given such respect and affection, they were worshiped by the family members. It was the custom that the ladies would bath the cows in the morning and offer them a lamp. In the Kautilya's *Arthashastra* it is mentioned that every day before attending the Assembly, the king would visit the cowshed to take *darshan* of the cows. Even Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself worships Mother Cow daily as exemplified in the following prayers from the *Vishnu Purāna* 1.19.65:

*namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca  
jagat-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ*

“I offer repeated obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the protector and well-wisher of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas*. He is also the protector of the entire society. Unto that Lord, who is always satisfying the senses of the cows, I offer my obeisances again and again.”<sup>108</sup>

The words *go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya* indicate that the Supreme Lord is especially concerned with the welfare of the cows and

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<sup>108</sup> <http://www.blog.gomataseva.org/relation-Krsna-cows-why-worship-cow/>

considers them before even the *brāhmaṇas* (spiritual teachers). The *brāhmaṇa* (spiritual teachers) are dear to the Lord because they worship him, as indicated by the words *brahmaṇya-devāya* (the Lord of the *brāhmaṇas*).<sup>109</sup>

The spiritual world of Goloka Vṛndāvan is the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa and all those who are liberated souls. In *the Śrī Brahma-Saṁhitā* prayers composed by Lord Brahma, the first created living being, we find the following wonderful prayers glorifying mother cow:

*cintāmani-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vṛkṣa-  
lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam  
lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyāmanam  
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

“Lord Kṛṣṇa is situated in the spiritual abode made of transcendental gems. In that abode he is surrounded by millions of desire fulfilling trees (*kalpa-vṛkṣa*), and he takes pleasure in tending the divine cows. He is always being served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of devotees. To that Supreme Lord, who is always trying to satisfy the senses of the cows, and who is the original person, I offer my worship.”<sup>110</sup>

The cows were considered beneficial not only for the miracle food that they produced (milk) but for the many uses of their cow dung and cow urine. It was and still remains the custom in Indian villages to clean the home with cow dung by mixing water with the cow dung and washing both the floor and the walls. Cow dung is extremely antiseptic and wards away ghosts and spirits as well. *Sādhūs* would traditionally bath with fresh cow dung as it leaves the skin moist and shining. The cow dung serves as a wonderful cooking medium both as dry cow cakes that villagers make daily and also as *gobar* gas, both of which can be used as safe and economical for cooking.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> *Śrī Brahma-Saṁhitā* 5.29

1- VEDIC REFERENCES

We find many references in the *Vedic* literatures themselves describing the importance of cows, clearly prohibition the killing of all forms of animals, especially the cows:

*Brīhimattam yavamattamatho māshamatho tilam  
Esha vām bhāgo nihito ratnadheyāya dantau mā hinsishtam  
pitaram mātaram ca*

O teeth! You eat rice, you eat barley, you eat gram and you eat sesame. These cereals are specifically meant for you. Do not kill those who are capable of being fathers and mothers.<sup>111</sup>

*Anumantā vishasitā nihantā krayavikrayī  
Saṁskartā copahartā ca khadakashceti ghātakāḥ*

Those who permit slaying of animals; those who bring animals for slaughter; those who slaughter; those who sell meat; those who purchase meat; those who prepare dish of it; those who serve that meat and those who eat are all murderers.<sup>112</sup>

*Anago hatya vai bhīma krite  
Mā no gāmaśvam puruṣam vadhīḥ*

It is definitely a great sin to kill innocents. Do not kill our cows, horses and people.<sup>113</sup>

*Aghnyā yajamānasya paśūnpahi*

“O human! animals are *Aghnya* – not to be killed. Protect the animals”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Atharvaveda* 6.140.2

<sup>112</sup> *Manusmṛiti* 5.51

<sup>113</sup> *Atharvaveda* 10.1.29

<sup>114</sup> *Yajurveda* 1.1

*pashunstrāyethām*

Protect the animals.<sup>115</sup>

*dwipādava chatuṣpātpāhi*

Protect the bipeds and quadrupeds.<sup>116</sup>

The *Atharvaveda* underlines the importance of maintaining family cows and using the bullocks for cultivating the land:

*Those ill advised who do not devote their time and labor utilizing the family cows, and cultivate organic crops they suffer through pests, insects, and diseases thrown by Rudra.*<sup>117</sup>

Similarly, the Ṛg Veda upholds the glories of cow dung and cow urine as they increase the soil fertility and natural pesticides against harmful pests and insects:

*Farmlands with cows retain water and maintain healthy soil organisms, with twin bounties, urine and dung of cows, which eliminate harmful microorganism and keep soil fertile like sun and rains make the land free from harmful pests make it fertile.*<sup>118</sup>

We also find in the *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* the benefits of keeping cows:

*All the demigods live in the bodies of cows. All the holy places live in the legs of the cows. Lakshmi Devi resides in the cow's heart. A person who puts tilaka on his forehead with the mud that has touched a cow's hoof at once attains the result of bathing in a holy place. He attains victory at every step. A place where cow stays is*

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<sup>115</sup> *Yajurveda* 6.11

<sup>116</sup> *Yajurveda* 14.8

<sup>117</sup> 4.1.0.51 *Atharvaveda* 12.4.51

<sup>118</sup> 1.1.3.1 *Ṛg Veda* 10.27.20

considered to be sanctified and a person who dies there certainly attains liberation.<sup>119</sup>

## 2- MOTHER COW AS NATURAL CYCLE

Mother Surabhi (said to be the origin of all cows) is the center and source of a natural cycle that all humans are meant to partake of in order to receive both spiritual and material nourishment. We have forgotten our natural dependency on cows and we have forsaken all the benefits she bestows not only to humans but also to the entire universe. In the *Gomati-vidya*<sup>120</sup> it is said: *gavaḥ pratiṣṭha bhutānām, gavaḥ swastyayanam param:* cows sustain all living entities; cows are the most auspicious of all living entities. How is that, one may ask? Traditionally and even today, the followers of the Vedic teachings would perform *yajñas* or fire sacrifices. Such fire sacrifices were especially prominent in previous ages when huge amounts of grains and ghee were poured in the fire *yajñas*. But even to perform modest sacrifices, one needs pure ghee to pour in the fire. The combination of ghee and dry cow dung in the fire produces a huge amount of oxygen and the smoke generated from the fire produces a chemical reaction in the atmosphere that helps to produce rains.<sup>121</sup> When rains are regular, then naturally there will be good crops that in turn will provide food for all species of life. So this natural cycle of 1) fire sacrifice, 2) formation of clouds, 3) rainfall, 4) good crop, 5) healthy food was all made possible due to Mother Cow.

In India, cows were especially worshiped on special days like Govardhan Puja and Gopāṣṭami. In Vṛndāvan, Lord Kṛṣṇa became a cowherd on the day of Gopāṣṭami.

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<sup>119</sup> *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* 21.91-93

<sup>120</sup> *Vishnu-dharmottara, Gomati-vidya*, Part II42/49 to 58

<sup>121</sup> <http://servecows.org/some-interesting-facts-from-research/>



### 3- NO BEEF IN THE VEDAS

The *Vedas* – the very roots of Hinduism, rather the first source of knowledge on earth – are meant for guiding the actions of human being in order to lead a blissful life.

The *Vedas* are also accused of animal sacrifice in sacrificial ceremonies popularly known as the *yajñas*. Interestingly a section of home-bred intellectuals claiming to have deep study of ancient India has also come up, who cite references from works of western indologists to prove such unholy content in the *Vedas*.<sup>122</sup>

### 4- AGRICULTURE VALUE

The grazing of cows in the field and the plowing of the bullocks bring tremendous benefit to the soil due to the action of “animal impact”. As the animals graze or plow the land, naturally urine and cow dung will fall on the soil. With their hooves the animals actually massage the land and help the soil develop the much needed ingredients. In olden days when one would find large herds of cows in the villages, the land remained very fertile largely due to the presence of the cows and bulls roaming on the land. Biologist Allen Savory<sup>123</sup> had stated in a public address that the global crisis of desertification can only be rectified if we again reintroduce this system of “animal impact” on the soil through systematic grazing. This way the animals will graze with their normal movement on the land. They will be working with Mother Nature by recycling grass into dung that goes directly to the soil where it will be processed by soil worms to perform their many beneficial functions. When cows are grazing, all the dung and urine falls on the ground. It is rapidly attacked by dung beetles, earthworms and other soil biota, taken into various depths in the soil thus bringing the sub soil to the soil surface. This in turn helps moisture retention and growth of seasonal grass.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> <http://agniveer.com/no-beef-in-vedas/>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.savory.global>

<sup>124</sup> PPT, Holistic Cow Protection by Dr. Sreekumar

## 5- TRANSPORTATION VALUE

Even today, in a country like India where close to 70% of the population lives in the countryside, farmers still rely on the bullock cart for transportation purposes. Indeed in the interior villages, bullock cart remain the only means of transportation.



Now 90 per cent of our plowing is done by bullock-drawn ploughs. Hence it is quite impossible to switch over from bullocks to tractors. Even today there are about two crores of bullock ploughs and one and a half crores of bullock carts.

They are medieval because of Gandhi's insistence on the bullock-cart economy, undermining the importance of scientific and technological development. Such remarks are uncharitable not only to Gandhi but to India and her cultural heritage. Gandhi was a practical idealist. He knew the needs of the country and also the resources it had. In fact India does not need the type of mechanical industries and large scale industries which lead to a World War II. Gandhiji's bullock-cart economy is more conducive to human welfare than the modern atom bomb economy.

The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialization is no remedy. The evil

does not lie in the use of bullock-carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbors. If we have no love for neighbors, no change, however revolutionary, can do us any good.<sup>125</sup>

#### 6- UNIVERSAL MICRO AND MACRO SYMBIOSIS OF COWS, MAN AND NATURE

Mother Nature functions through subtle fields of energies often less known to mankind. These fields of energies are all pervasive and affect both the micro and macro levels of our existence encompassing our immediate surrounding atmosphere as well as the movement of celestial forces. The science of *vastu-śāstra* gives us ample information about these subtle laws of nature. The presence of cows and our interaction with them, positive or negative, plays a most vital role in either enhancing these subtle energies or in disrupting them. Such details covering the proper keeping of cows in cowsheds are based on these laws of *vastu-śāstra*.<sup>126</sup>

When we associate with a cow by having her in our midst, simply by seeing her, by touching her, by circumambulating her, by taking her miracle food in the form of milk and various milk products, especially ghee, human beings derive immense benefit in their body, mind and consciousness. When such association is disrupted or absent, we reap negative effects.

In a similar way, when we perform regular *yajñas* using both ghee and cow dung, the effect of *yajñas* is directly beneficial to those who sit in the *yajñas*. The performance of *yajñas* also positively affects the atmosphere surrounding the *yajña* and far beyond. According to Dr. Shieowich, a Russian scientist, (i) Cow's milk contains great power of protection from atomic radiation; (ii) Houses having cow-dung covered floors

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<sup>125</sup> [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Bullock\\_cart](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Bullock_cart)

<sup>126</sup> <http://www.Krsnaleelagroup.com/top-16-vastu-tips-cowshed-dairy-planning/>

enjoy complete protection from atomic radiation; (iii) If cow's ghee is put into *yajñas* fire, its fumes lessen the effect of atomic radiation to a great extent. The medicinal fumes emanating from *yajñas* have been observed by researchers in the field of microbiology to be clearly bacteriolethal in nature.<sup>127</sup>

No other animal possesses such power and influence on the immediate and extended energy control as the cow, in particular the cows known as zebu due to her hump in the back. The cow draws solar energy from a special nerve on her back called Suryaketu Nadi that goes from that hump to the tail. The sunrays are transformed into gold dusts that enter the entire body of the cow, including her cow dung and urine. Hence, the urine and dung are both highly medicinal as well as anti radioactive. The cow is situated in the mode of goodness, as like a great sage in meditation who remains undisturbed by the environment. We have all seen how cows walk undisturbed amidst local traffic, noise or obstacles.

#### 7- HEALTH AND THERAPEUTIC VALUE OF COWS

Milk is known as the miracle food because it contains the following ingredients that make for a healthy body: 6 Types of Vitamins, 8 Types of Protein, 25 Types of Minerals, 21 Types of Amino Acids, 4 Types of Basic Phosphorus, 2 Types of Glucose, Cerebrosides, Strontyne, MDGI and Carotene with golden abstracts.<sup>128</sup>

In cow dung we find the following chemical elements: 1) Nitrogen (N7), 2) Potassium, 3) Copper, 4) Molybdenum, 5) Borex, 6) Cobalt Sulphate, 7) Phosphorus, 8) Irons, 9) Manganese, 10) Boron and 11) Sodium.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> <https://www.speakingtree.in/allslides/scientific-aspects-of-yagya-the-holy-fire-ritual/272733>

<sup>128</sup> <http://www.blog.gomataseva.org/importance-hump-Vedic-indian-cow-gir/>

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

Cow urine contains the following elements: 1) Calcium, 2) Potassium, 3) Magnesium, 4) Phosphorus, 5) Fluoride, 6) Urea, and 7) Ammonia.<sup>130</sup>

Cow therapy is being used to help children as well as adults attain levels of harmony and peace since by simple association with the cows, one receives such benefits. According to author Bente Berget of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences in Aas, West Norway, Farm therapy reduces stress, anxiety and mental illness.<sup>131</sup>

*Ayurvedic* doctors therefore highly recommend *Panchagavya* products made from the five cow elements of milk, yogurts, ghee, dung and urine.<sup>132</sup>

The influence of food grains remain in the body for 3 days, the influence of milk for 7 days, the influence of yogurt for 20 days and the influence of ghee for one month.<sup>133</sup>

It is for these reasons that the cow is meant to play an integral part of our daily lives to maintain this natural equilibrium and to maximize the good effects of her natural benefits. Our modernized lifestyle in urban centers has taking us away from mother cow and all the immense advantages she offers. We no longer associate with cows, we no longer serve cows, we no longer see cows, we no longer use cow products and we no longer cook in pure ghee. The entire world is bereft of the medicinal value of cow ghee. Instead we consume dangerous commercial oil that becomes the cause of severe diseases including cancer. To our greatest misfortune, we have foolishly and irresponsibly disrupted God's own naturally

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> <http://flipflopranch.com/farm-therapy-decreases-stress-anxiety-and-mental-illness/>

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.blog.gomataseva.org/panchgavya-manure-an-affective-alternative-to-toxic-fertilizers/>

<sup>133</sup> *Sacred Cow* (2004) (p. 56)

arranged agrarian lifestyle with cows at the center. We have done this folly that modernism imposes upon us in the name of progress, freedom and liberty. We are unaware of the severe disruptions we are directly causing to ourselves, to the environment and to Mother Nature. In as much as the cow has the power to bless humankind, she also has the ability to curse us for transgressing the natural laws of nature. Such is her potency, such is her nature. Ignorant as we are in these days of “modern progress”, we are molding our path to destruction by going against the laws of nature, especially in the matter of mother cow and all the material, mental and spiritual benefits she can bestow to the world. We have reached a peak of such disruption for which the world is presently suffering through all types of irregularities such as climate change and various ecological imbalances. Therefore, the need of cows in our lives is not simply some sentimental and religious emotional outpour. Rather it is based on scientific laws of nature that when cows are respected they bring the most benefit to us, but if they are abused and neglected, they can cause the opposite effect. Cows are meant to be closely connected with the land in order to benefit Mother Nature and to benefit all human beings.

#### 8- COW THERAPY AND PANCHAGAVYA PRODUCTS

“As a *Kaviraja*, I cannot practice *Ayurveda* without ghee” were the words of Kaviraja JayaKṛṣṇa when interviewed on the importance of cows in medicine. Both cow urine and cow dung have immense qualities and have been used extensively throughout the ages in the *Vedic* culture.

In his article “Veterinary Medicine and Animal Keeping in Ancient India,” R. Somvahshi writes: *Panchgavya* or cow therapy is a holistic approach of treatment mentioned in the holy Vedas. *Panchgavya* means five main materials received from cows including milk, curd, ghee, urine, and dung. They are known for their remedial values when consumed or applied externally or sprayed in the environment. Scientific evaluation of these elements revealed individually or collectively that they enhance

the immune responses of the body when used. The *Kamdhenu Ark* prepared from cow urine is effective in treatment of kidney disorders and diabetes mellitus. It has also been found to increase phagocytosis by macrophages and thus helpful in prevention and control of bacterial infections. The cow urine has antioxidant property and protects DNA damage due to mitomycin-C induced chromosomal aberrations. In *Ayurveda*, the cow urine is also termed as '*Sanjivani*'.

Similarly, the cow dung keeps the environment free from pollution and does not allow any radiation effect. Most of the skin diseases can be cured by its application. The cow milk, curd, and ghee are known for their high nutritive value and are effective in curing a number of human ailments. Curd and buttermilk are good appetizers and keep the digestive system normal through sustainable maintenance of pro-biotic bacteria. Cow ghee has been reported to improve memory and reduce mental tension. However, *Panchgavya* therapy is useful only when the elements of *Panchgavya* are collected from a pastured Indian native or desi cow (Zebu cattle).<sup>134</sup>

#### 9- COW DUNG AIR FRESHENER

Two teenage students from Indonesia won an award for having manufactured an air freshener made from fermented cow dung.

Yes, cow dung - as weird as it sounds, the formulation actually has a pleasant herbal smell, and has won Dwi Nailul Izzah and Rintya Aprianti Miki a gold medal at Indonesia's Science Project Olympiad (ISPO). According to Oddity Central, the young women overcame 1,000 other competitors with their surprising freshener, which was painstakingly created by collecting unused cow manure from a cattle farm and fermenting it for three days:

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<sup>134</sup><https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/551c/ed7631cef68338450e9c7684ffd7851efcc9.pdf> "Medical importance of Panchgavya or cow therapy"

“Our air freshener is not supplemented with chemicals to smell fragrant, it’s pure and smells like the natural plants fed to cows. It’s also healthier because it doesn’t contain harmful ingredients such as benzo acetan, like most air-fresheners on the market.”<sup>135</sup>

#### 10- URINE THERAPY

In *Ayurveda*, the glories to cow urine has been known since many centuries:

*Cow (Bos indicus) urine/ gomutra has been elaborately explained in Ayurveda and described in “Sushruta Samhita”, “Ashtanga Sangraha” and other AyurVedic texts as an effective medicinal substance/secretion of animal origin with innumerable therapeutic properties. Bhav Prakash Nighantu describes gomutra as the best of all types of animal urine (including human) and enumerates its various therapeutic uses. Persons who drink gomutra regularly are said to live a healthy life, remaining unaffected by the vagaries of old age, even at age 90. Gomutra is called “Sanjivani” and “Amrita” in Ayurveda. In addition, it has applications as a biopesticide in organic farming along with cow dung, cow’s milk and other herbal ingredients.*

*Cow urine has been granted US Patents (No. 6,896,907 and 6,410,059) for its medicinal properties, particularly as a bioenhancer and as an antibiotic, antifungal and anticancer agent. With regard to the latter, it has been observed to increase the potency of “Taxol” (paclitaxel) against MCF-7, a human breast cancer cell line, in in vitro assays (US Patent No. 6,410,059).*

*These milestone achievements highlight the potential role of cow urine in treatment of bacterial infections and cancer, and demonstrate that cow urine can enhance the efficacy and potency of other drugs.*<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> <https://www.treehugger.com/sustainable-agriculture/cow-dung-air-freshener-dwi-nailul-izzah-rintya-aprianti-miki.html>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3117312/>



11- DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH “SAVE OUR COWS, SAVE OUR VILLAGES”<sup>137</sup>

In an extensive research study involving meeting and interviewing various professionals on the subject of cow culture, organic farming, health factors, decreased population of indigenous cows, Government policies allowing and promoting the slaughtering of cows and the overall importance of preserving and protecting India’s *Vedic* agrarian society, the IDVM-India Ministry in the year 2008 produced a well-documented video entitled “Save our Cows, Save our Villages”. What follows are excerpts from those interviewed.

1. Narrator speaking on "non-violence"

India, the holy land, the God’s own country, considers cow as the mother. Cow has been the center of ancient Indian civilization for many millennia, a part and parcel of the society, a well constituted progressive society. India being colonized from centuries did not lose its independence for the very reason that villages were self-sufficient and cows formed the most fundamental part of self-sufficiency living. How then something so precious be foregone, something unimaginable and repercussions beyond calculation? This very feeling earned the well-known first war of Indian independence in 1857 also known as the *Sepoy* Mutiny. The *Sepoys* were asked to use cartridges made from slaughtered cow fat and what followed was a great revolt. This very issue united India beyond religion, caste, creed and sex. Mahatma Gandhi led the nation to independence in 1947 based on non-violence: “A nation can be determined by the way it treats animals.”<sup>138</sup>

2. Dr. JayaKṛṣṇa, Senior Consultant in *Ayurveda* speaking on “*ojas*” and “*gavyas*”

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<sup>137</sup> <https://Krsnatube.com/video/1080/india-save-our-cows-save-our-villages/>

<sup>138</sup> Ibid Minutes 00.32

The cow's milk is supposed to be *ojaskara* in *Ayurveda*. What is *ojas*? *Ojas* is the *dhatu sara* (prominent tissues). The *sara* (essence) of all *dhatu*s, of all tissues, is *ojas*. And it is said that when *ojas* is destroyed, life is no more. That means it's life giving. Cow milk is equivalent to *ojas*.<sup>139</sup>

When we talk about *panchagavyas*, there are more *gavyas* like for example *dadhi*, *ghrita* (butter), *gomutra*, *gomaya*. A lot of other *gavyas* like butter, butter milk, *takra* and then cream. All various products available from the cow. As an *Ayurvedic Vaidya*, if you ask me to practice *Ayurveda* without these products, it's not possible. It's not possible for me to give advice against the prevention of diseases without the *gavyas*. And if you ask me what is the priority today, the priority is to preserve all the breeds of India and do a lot of investigations into their qualities, to do a lot of scientific research into how they are useful in order to prove how it can be useful for the society.<sup>140</sup>

3. **Dr. D.K. Sadana, Principal Scientist, National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources**

Milk from indigenous cows is therapeutically better. It has got medicinal values, it has got certain products, certain constituents, like stronchin, cerebral sides like small size fatty acids particles which are very useful because the small size of the fat globules is good because that is the kind which will reach your brain. The bid size globule from the buffalo milk are not as efficient to reach the human brain through our veins as the small size from indigenous cattle are available and are able to support us in our thinking, in our workings.<sup>141</sup>

4. **Dr. Tapan Chakrabarhi, Senior Scientist and Head of Environmental Biotechnology Division, National**

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid Minutes 02:48

<sup>140</sup> Ibid Minutes 14:50

<sup>141</sup> Ibid Minutes 03:41

Environmental Engineering Research Institute on  
“sustainable production”

I do admit that the yield will be low to begin with. May not catch up with the yield you normally get with the mechanical fertilizers, but the production is sustainable and the soil condition will never deteriorate so you can do the farming year after year which is known as sustainable farming. So here it is a sustainable consumption, sustainable production, sustainable farming... that's why if we take care of all these factors and put it into integration, then it will be possible for doing the real kind of organic farming which is in great demand not only in our own country but abroad also <sup>142</sup>.

5. Dr. Subba Rao, Professor at IIT in Delhi speaking on  
“bio-synergy”:

We at IIT Delhi have developed the technology and patented the technology. For the past three years we are producing a bio-synergy running the car in the campus and outside at IIT Delhi. <sup>143</sup>

6. Dr. C. S. Rao, Senior Economist speaking on  
“slaughterhouses”:

In fact countries like Britain have stopped giving licenses to slaughterhouses whereas India is on a sort of spree to increase their number that is, which is absolutely ridiculous. The value of the output of a cow will be around three lakhs that is equal to Rupees. 20,000 each year. That means we are forgoing a profit of two lakhs eighty thousand rupees by sending a cow to the slaughterhouse for earning foreign exchange. <sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid Minutes 08:01

<sup>143</sup> Ibid Minutes 09:12

<sup>144</sup> Ibid Minutes 12:32

7. **Dr. Sadana, Principal Scientist at National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources:**

There is a lot of increase in the population of human being and that has led to urbanization. Because of this urbanization, the grazing land of the cattle has been reduced, has been squeezed, now mostly these are not available. Or very little of the land are available. Grazing land has a very good meaning because when the grazing land was there, then the animals can eat the herbs and these come out in the form of milk. Then that goes into our diet and that gives benefits to us. This combination has been broken by urbanization. With this scenario in front of us where the number (of grazing land) is coming down, and the rate of decrease in the indigenous population is also very high. It was 5% in the years 92 to 97, and this decrease was 10% earlier but it was 10% in the next 5 years, from 97 to 2003. And the next census is presently happening and we might see the figure that might come more than 10% and if that is so, then we will really be placed in very odd situation of our indigenous cows.<sup>145</sup>

**Conclusion**

“A holistic approach to cow care eliminates environmental, social, spiritual, economic and health problems. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is for the protection of *brahminical* culture and cows.”<sup>146</sup> Those who are anxious to cultivate the human spirit must turn their attention first toward the question of cow protection.<sup>147</sup>

2) **THE MODERN PERSPECTIVE**

1- **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid Minutes 13:15

<sup>146</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, Lecture, Los Angeles, December 4, 1968. VedaBase (2017)

<sup>147</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, Light of the Bhagavat, 27

The dairy industry is one of the most cruel and exploitative industry seeing cows as but machines for business. The following information gives a picture of the pitiful condition of cows and calves.

Some 21,000,000 dairy calves are slaughtered for veal or cheap beef every year globally. Due to extensive biological manipulation, today's dairy cows produce up to 12 times more milk than they would naturally produce to feed a calf. Even so, virtually all dairy calves are stolen from their mothers within hours of birth in order to maximize profit. 97% of newborn dairy calves are forcibly removed from their mothers within the first 24 hours. (3) The rest are removed in a matter of days. On so-called humane dairy farms, cows are often taken within the first hour of birth as separation of mother and calf is considered less stressful when they have not been allowed to bond.

To keep them lactating at maximum yields, cows are artificially and repeatedly and forcibly impregnated year after year. The constant cycle of forced pregnancy and birth creates a huge surplus of calves. Over 90% of U.S. dairy cows are confined in primarily indoor operations, with more than 60% tethered by the neck inside barren stalls, unable to perform the most basic behaviors essential to their well-being.

Trapped in a cycle of forced impregnation, perpetual lactation and near constant confinement, most dairy cows' overworked bodies begin producing less milk at around 4 to 5 years of age, at which point they are slaughtered. In natural conditions, cows can live 20 to 25 years. Of the 9 million dairy cows in the U.S., 3 million are slaughtered each year at only a fraction of their natural lifespan. Their worn out bodies become ground beef and restaurant hamburgers.<sup>148</sup>

## 2- THE COW AS MACHINE AND A COMMODITY

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<sup>148</sup> <https://freefromharm.org/dairyfacts/>

Especially in the industrialized world where *Vedic* culture remains less known, cows have mainly been used for their milk production. In the pre-industrial period of Europe and America, bullocks were used to plough the land and for transportation. Most farmers kept some cows mainly for those purposes. Both in Europe and America horses were also used for tilling the land and for transportation. With the advent of industrialization and introduction of machines, the horses were soon replaced by the horseless carriage (the car) for transportation and by the tractor for plowing. The same fate was there for the bullocks that were gradually replaced by machines. As India became more and more industrialized, the same phenomena followed in the villages of India. Production of milk became more and more mechanized and both male and cows were sent to the slaughter houses in increasing numbers.

### 3- SLAUGHTERING OF COWS

Organized slaughter of cow is widespread all over the world, including India. India is the second largest exporter of leather and third largest exporter of beef in the world.<sup>149</sup>

Inhumane conditions in cow factory farming. Cows are kept in large numbers, in the thousands, being fattened and made ready for the slaughterhouse.<sup>150</sup>

### 4- GOCHAR LAND UNAVAILABLE

Although the Indian Constitution had built in provision for allotting grazing land for cows throughout the whole country, with the expansion of industry and urban centers, land previously allocated for the cows became more and more scarce to the point that today practically no such land exists. Green fodder is therefore no longer available to the cows nor is there any place for the cows to roam.

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<sup>149</sup> <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/india-third-biggest-beef-exporter-fao-report-4772389/>

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.animalequality.net/node/815>

## 5- MILK ADULTERATION

To get the maximum amount of milk from the cows those having dairy factories treat the cows in the most heinous ways. They inject the cows with special hormones, feed them fodder mixed with chemicals or even animal feed simply to increase their production of milk. Milk was never meant to be sold and cows were never meant to be used as mere commodities.<sup>151</sup>

### 3) TOWARDS REMEDIES (BEST PRACTICES FOR COW, MOTHER SURABHI)

There are many ways the villagers can be helped to become more aware and more involved regarding the importance and benefits of Mother Surabhi. Generally, all villages have at least one local temple, often more than one. Traditionally, all temples would have land and cows from whom milk was offered to the temple Deities. In addition, for the benefit of the cows, local leaders can be approached to try and secure some open land, *Gochara* land, for the grazing of the cows.

Villagers can be encouraged to form a team in their village where regular activities regarding cows will be taken up. For example, every month on *Purnima* Day, the villages can hold a special ceremony to worship some cows. This is a simple yet effective method to create awareness and to give an opportunity for villagers to serve the cows. Villagers can also be taught to place photos of cows in their homes, to offer daily a short *aratika* to the cows.

The importance and advantage of using bulls to cultivate the land as opposed to machines like tractors also needs to be stressed. Also using only natural seeds, while avoiding use of chemical pesticides and chemical fertilizers will help

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<sup>151</sup> <http://www.sustainabletable.org/797/rbgh>

tremendously. The villagers can learn how to make various cow products or *panchagavya* products that will save on having to purchase soaps and incense, for example.

Whenever possible, they may start a *Varṇāśrama Shikshalaya* for training the younger generation, starting local gardens near the house, take the pledge to protect cows, learn the prayers to Mother Surabhi.

They may also learn about on-going activities being promoted by the ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry (IDVM-India)<sup>152</sup> all of which will help cultivate proper knowledge, help improve agricultural practices and help take care and protect cows.

- 1 Keep Cow or Cow Deity (Murti or Photo) at your Home
- 2 Perform *Go Puja* Monthly on *Purnima* Day
- 3 Offer only Cow Dung incense
- 4 *Sacred Oath* to Mother Surabhi
- 5 Take only *Ahimsa* Milk (milk from protected cows)
- 6 *Ahimsa* milk to deities – Request local temple authorities
- 7 Be part of *Varṇāśrama* Research Team (VRT) if possible
- 8 Use only *Panchagavya* products (soap, tooth powder, etc)
- 9 Take devotee grown food – Grow your own vegetables
- 10 Plant only natural seeds avoiding all hybrid seeds
- 11 Cook in pure ghee, avoiding all commercial oils
- 12 Help promote the OM Sri Surabhi Campaign in whatever way possible
- 13 *Shikshalaya* and *Gurukula*/Introduce children to traditional education
- 14 Play OM Sri *Surabhyai Namah Mantra* daily in your home
- 15 Do *Go Seva* in *Goshala*.
- 16 Keep photos of *Go Mata* on the wall in your home
- 17 Request local temple to care for at least one cow

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<sup>152</sup> [www.iskconvarṇāśrama.com](http://www.iskconvarṇāśrama.com)



- 18 Visit local village and teach them these Surabhi Culture “Best Practices”
- 19 Daily recitation of “Prayer to Mother Surabhi”
- 20 Adopt a Cow
- 21 Adopt a Village
- 22 Support Global Varṇāśrama Mission
- 23 Study *Campaigner’s Guide* Booklet

The IDVM-India Ministry officially launched a 12-year campaign on January 1, 2015 called the OM Sri Surabhi Campaign to help bring global awareness about the importance of Mother Cow and close connection between cows, villages and the culture of *sanātana dharma* with a view to mobilize individuals, communities and various organizations, both private and public, towards introducing significant changes. The motto of the OM Sri Surabhi Campaign is “Save our Cows”, “Save our Villages” and “Save our Culture”.<sup>153</sup>

The long-term objectives have been listed as follows:

1. Work towards having the United Nations and countries adopt our Mother Surabhi as our universal mother/national emblem.
2. Help introduce legislation to stop cruelty to animals, especially the cows.
3. Encourage devotees/congregational members to take up important posts in the government administration in as many countries as possible.
4. Educate organizations and governments about the merits of A-2 Category Milk as found in indigenous breeds (desi cows) and the demerits of A-1 Category Milk as found in non-indigenous breeds. Encourage more in-depth study on the subject.
5. Demonstrate the benefits of an agrarian lifestyle, the superiority of a cow driven economy– Agrarian Revival

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<sup>153</sup> Website: [www.srisurabhi.org](http://www.srisurabhi.org)

- through traditional technologies for a sustainable economic growth.
6. Promote Yoga, Vegetarianism, Organic Foods, Organic farming.
  7. Teach the harmful effects of chemical pesticides, chemical fertilizers, hybrid seeds and machinery.
  8. Promote traditional occupation through traditional education.
  9. Help re-establish the concept of *gochar bhumi* providing ample grazing for cows.
  10. Assist governments in reverting the critical global problems such as desertification and climate change by promoting natural large scale grazing of animals, especially cows and showing examples of a more simple and natural way of living in keeping with the concepts of simple living and high thinking.

#### ADDITIONAL QUOTES

*“The killing of cows by human society is one of the grossest suicidal policies and those who are anxious to cultivate the human spirit must turn their attention first toward the question of cow protection.”*<sup>154</sup>

[*Light of the Bhāgavat*, 27]

*“Cow protection is the basis of a civilized society upon which food production stands and in turn the whole economy is working. Therefore, just like Lord Krsna, cow is the center of a civilized society.”*<sup>155</sup>



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<sup>154</sup> Bhaktivedanta Swami, *Light of the Bhāgavat* 27

<sup>155</sup> Bharat Chandra das, *Timeless Stories of Gomata from Purāṇas and other classics* (2015) Introduction (p. X)

## CHAPTER 4



# THE NEGLECT & DESECRATION OF MOTHER *BHUMI* (LAND)

### Introduction

Within the *Vedic* culture and lifestyle, land is intimately connected with agriculture and in turn agriculture is intimately connected with cows. As such, both land and cows form the basis of *Vedic* eco villages. Further, the very concept of village life cannot properly develop unless there are healthy and stable families, both the family nucleus and the village organization remaining core concepts and principles not meant to be changed. For those who are *Sanātānists*, followers of *Sanātana Dharma*, all the above- land, agriculture, cows, village organization and the family unit- form a natural symbiosis and are considered as sacred institutions scientifically created for the smooth functioning of society, systems that should never be forsaken or altered. Together, they help individuals and society develop their maximum potential, both spiritually and materially. These natural systems favor one's development towards the perfection of life, self-realization. When we tamper or destroy this natural synergy ordained by nature, we do the utmost disservice to individuals, to society and to Mother Nature as well. When these principles were honored and respected, societies flourished in all respects, both spiritually and materially.

To think that with the advancement of science, technology and industry, modern society has now been able to progress and advance beyond the simple (people will think

“backward”) village structure of the past in order to embrace a more progressive and advanced lifestyle in our modern day cities is the greatest folly of our times. Material growth and development are the epitome of modernity. Ironically, urban development, with its artificial and unnatural lifestyle, has caused the greatest harm in modern society by disconnecting masses of people from a more natural and simple way of living connected with Mother Nature, connected with values and traditions that were never meant to be derailed. *Vedic* seers inherently understood the dangers and pitfalls of so-called technological progress and economic development and therefore would warn against such dangerous initiatives.

To most, this way of thinking will seem most primitive and downright absurd. What’s wrong with progress one will immediately quip? The immediate reply will be, “well, what is progress?” To understand the answer to this simple question requires a sober mind and we have a penury of such in our present times. On all fronts, in the name of progress, in the name of technology, in the name of economic development, we are blindly racing on the path of our eco-systems’ destruction leading to human genocide. In *Eclipse of Man: Human Extinction and the Meaning of Progress*, author Charles T. Rubin, “by exploring and criticizing the dreams of post humanity, defends a more modest vision of the future, one that takes seriously both the limitations and inherent dignity of our given nature”.<sup>156</sup> And what is our given nature one may ask, nay, one must ask. The whole *Vedic* approach continuously and persistently stresses this very point: what indeed is our actual nature?

It is interesting to note that in reviewing Rubin’s book *Eclipse of Man: Human Extinction and the Meaning of Progress*, more than one reviewer traces the intellectual origins of these uncanny thoughts to the days of the Great Renaissance, the “birth” of modernity:

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<sup>156</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18406485-eclipse-of-man>  
(See fourth paragraph at the end)

Rubin's analysis and critique of transhumanism is excellent, from tracing its roots in enlightenment ideas of progress, through Malthus' focus on resource scarcity, to recent attempts to bridge the gap through futuristic evolution. His conclusion, that a future shaped by galactic competition is incomprehensible, is well supported by a range of elements. My reservation turn on his reluctance or inability to offer ideas on how human society should move forward in the face of so many devotees of technological determinism and take-charge evolution.<sup>157</sup>

We should be able to discern a trend here. The new ideologies generated since the days of the enlightenment that are based on man's egocentric and mawkish fixation upon himself as the doer and master of his and the world's destiny (*Man and His World*, the theme at the Montreal Olympics in 1967) are but a source of never ending destructive disparities and irregularities.

The handling and management of land and natural resources, especially by the Heads of States around the world, is therefore of utmost and crucial importance. We know from *śāstras* that all things belong to God, including our very bodies. Our mal-applied modern ideologies of liberty and freedom teach us the opposite.

The *Vedic* social system of *varṇāśrama* enjoins that *brāhmaṇas*, as representatives of God and the original caretakers of the entire land, would allow *kṣatriya* kings to protect and manage the land on behalf of the Lord. There are specific ceremonies performed by *brāhmaṇas* to enthrone a king. On behalf of the Lord in the temple, a *brāhmaṇa* priest would symbolically hand over a sword (the rod of chastisement) by chanting certain *mantras* empowering both the king and the weapon. The *mantras* explain that one receiving the weapon should not overuse nor underuse it when administrating justice.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid (See "David", third Review)

So, a king would administer the land on behalf of the *brāhmaṇa* and he, the *brāhmaṇa*, on behalf of the Lord. Hence, property would never become one's private ownership as we find in modern day society causing so many undue complexities. Private ownership induces the concept of control over property that does not belong to us and inevitably leads to exploitation of the land and its resources in so many different ways. Land is meant to be administered in keeping with the codes of *Sanātana dharma* by qualified rulers who have been trained in this understanding. The entire planet was ruled by one emperor who was recognized by all the other Heads of States. This was the case up until the event of the great *Mahābhārata* War that was fought to reestablish a rightful king, Yudhisthira Maharaja who became the Emperor of the world.

In this upcoming section, "The Neglect & Desecration of Mother *Bhumi* (Land)", I will now systematically analyze the topic of agriculture in the following three divisions: 1) the *Vedic* Perspective, 2) the Modern Perspective, and 3) Towards Remedies.

## 1) THE VEDIC PERSPECTIVE

### 1- VEDIC REFERENCES

Throughout the *Vedic* literatures, in particular the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we find numerous references to the importance of land as providing for all the necessities of mankind:

*kāmaṁ vavarṣa parjanyaḥ sarva-kāma-dughā mahī  
sīsicuḥ sma vrajān gāvah payasodhasvatīr mudā*

*During the reign of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the clouds showered all the water that people needed, and the earth produced all the necessities of man in profusion. Due to its fatty milk bag and cheerful attitude, the cow used to moisten the grazing ground with milk.*<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.10.4

“According to Vedic economics, one is considered to be a rich man by the strength of his store of grains and cows. With only these two things, cows and grain, humanity can solve its eating problem. Human society needs only sufficient grain and sufficient cows to solve its economic problems. All other things but these two are artificial necessities created by man to kill his valuable life at the human level and waste his time on things that are not needed” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.29, Purport).<sup>159</sup>

Both the *Kautilya’s Arthashastra* and the *Bhagavad-gīta* refer to the science of economics as *kṛṣi* (agriculture), *go-rakṣya* (cow protection) and *vāṇijyam* (trade):

*kṛṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyam vaiśya-karma svabhāva-jam*

*Farming, cow protection and business are the natural work for the vaiśyas.*<sup>160</sup>

This means that the *Vedic* literatures have clearly defined what is meant to be the most ideal and simple form of economic development, one that will be the most sustainable and the most harmonious for both man and nature, agriculture and cow protection. However, we have commercialized agriculture by replacing natural agriculture with agro-business. The *Vedic* maxim is that one should “*Produce Only What You Need*” and “*Use Only What You Produce*”. Production of food was meant first and foremost to maintain the family members. It was never meant to be a business enterprise for as soon as we introduce the market dimension in farming, we begin to exploit the land, to exploit the animals and to exploit mankind as well. One crop was sufficient to feed the entire family. So farming was the norm in pre-modernity era and the majority of people were engaged in this natural occupation.

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<sup>159</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.29 (Purport)

<sup>160</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 18.44

There are many references to agriculture in various sections of the original Vedic texts such as Ṛg-Veda and Atharva-Veda:

*Two entire Vedic hymns on agriculture (Ṛg-Veda IV.57 and Atharva-Veda III.17) and more than two hundred Vedic references on land farming, different agricultural implements, irrigation, farmers, fertilizers, crops, etc., are sufficient to get a clear idea on the Vedic agricultural system. The Ṛg-Veda (X.34.13) advises for land-farming as the best means of gaining wealth “kṛṣimit kṛṣasva vitte remasva bahumanyamānaḥ.” According to the Atharva-Veda (VII.10.24) the king Pṛthu Vainya, a scion of Vaivasvata Manu invented cultivation and produced crops.*<sup>161</sup>

In addition to those texts, we also find extensive information about agriculture practices covering types of lands, seed and sowing, manures, pests and their management, forecast of annual monsoon rains through such important works as Surapala’s Vrikshayurveda (*The Science of Plant Life*), Krishi Parashara (*Agriculture by Parashara*) and Kashyapiya’s Kṛṣṇasukti (*A Treatise on Agriculture*).<sup>162</sup> These texts provide ample information about agriculture, horticulture, arboriculture and plant biodiversity.

*Forests were considered very important in the ancient times. In the Vedic age, protection of forests was emphasized for ecological balance (Nene and Sadhale, 1997). In the Artha-śāstra, (321–296 BC) Kautilya mentions that the superintendent of forests had to collect forest produce through the forest guards.*<sup>163</sup>

The 50<sup>th</sup> of the 64 Arts and Sciences studied by Sri Kṛṣṇa and Balarama when attending gurukula at the Sandipani Muni Avanti Āśrama near Ujjain that contained information on rain

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<sup>161</sup> [http://ignca.nic.in/Vedic\\_heritage\\_present\\_agriculture.htm](http://ignca.nic.in/Vedic_heritage_present_agriculture.htm)

<sup>162</sup> <http://www.kiran.nic.in/Agri-Heritage.html> (See References)

<sup>163</sup> <http://theinnerworld.in/spirituality/Vedic-pathshala/Vedic-agricultural-practices/> (See Paragraphs three and four)



prediction is the book entitled *Nimitta-Jñāna, The Art of Foretelling Events*.<sup>164</sup>

What are the necessities of man? The necessities are food, clothing, shelter and medicines. All these four necessities actually come from the land itself:

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḍ anna-sambhavaḥ  
yajñād bhavati parjanyo yajñāḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

*All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of yajña [sacrifice], and yajña is born of prescribed duties.*<sup>165</sup>

Before the advent of industrialization, agriculture was the main occupation for the majority of people around the world. As we have heard many times, agriculture was also considered as the noblest professions. This abrupt change from natural farming to industrial farming was introduced in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in various countries as industrialization expanded more and more. In the early nineteenth century, farmers literally revolted as mechanization was forcefully being imposed upon them. In his *Essay New Direction in Structural Theory (Technology and Social Change)*, Henry Etzkowits explains how: “There were justifiable fears during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that industrial technology located in factories would disrupt the social structure based on craft and farming”<sup>166</sup>

## 2- FOLLOWING NATURE’S WAY

Dr. SreeKumar, a Veterinarian for the last 20+ years has scientifically diagnosed the root cause of today’s problem of soil infertility that in turn affects plants, animal and humans:

*The birth right of all living things is HEALTH. This law is true for 1) soil, 2) plant, 3) animals and 4) man. Health of these four, forms one connected chain. Any weakness or defect in the health of any earlier*

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<sup>164</sup> Bharat Chandra das, *Nimitta –Jñāna, The Art of Foretelling Events*

<sup>165</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 3.14

<sup>166</sup> Paper, *Social Change and Community Development* (p. 4).

link in the chain is carried on to the succeeding link, until it reaches the last, i.e., man. Nature dictates and conforms to her imperious demand: 1) for the return of all wastes to the land, 2) for the mixture of animal and vegetable existence and 3) for the maintaining of an adequate reserve of feeding the plant (Biodiversity).<sup>167</sup>

The widespread vegetable and animal pests and diseases are the evidence of a serious health failure in the second (plant) and third (animal) links of the chain. The impaired health of human population (the fourth link) is the result of failure in the second and third links. This general failure in the last three links is to be attributed to failure in the first link, i.e., the soil. Undernourishment of soil is at the root of all.<sup>168</sup>

He goes on to make a most vital point forgotten in modern day agriculture practice around the world, and the cause of global desertification: farming without livestock. “Mother Earth never attempts to farm without livestock”, he explains. Biodiversity, a natural characteristic of nature’s farming ways, helps maintain a healthy soil by allowing the animal and vegetable wastes to convert into humus. Hence the secret for keeping and building soil fertility is grazing of livestock through “animal impact”. Dr. Sreekumar explains as follows:

*Animal impact is everything that livestock do to the land. This includes dunging, urinating, hoof action, rubbing, salivating, etc. Animal impact is the most powerful tool to manage grassland resources. Its effective utilization reduces spot grazing, controls weeds and brush competition, improves manure distribution, and produces seed/soil contact.*<sup>169</sup>

Dr. Sreekumar goes on to explain the natural “tunnel system” when we allow cows to graze the land and the “flow-on” effect of the improved soil structure. Systematic grazing of cows on the land improves the physical structure of the soil by

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<sup>167</sup> Dr. Sreekumar, Power Point, *Mother Surabhi*, (Slide 4 and 5)

<sup>168</sup> Ibid (Slide 6)

<sup>169</sup> Ibid (Slides 5 and 11)

increasing aeration of the soil, by reducing compaction, by bringing sub soil to the soil surface (bio-turbation) and by incorporating organic matter in the soil. If done regularly, the effects will be 1) increased water infiltration and reduced soil erosion, 2) increased biological activity (micro-organisms) and earth worms, 3) stronger root growth leading to higher yields, 4) improved water holding capacity, 5) improved soil fertility because of bio-turbation and 6) reduced surface pounding.<sup>170</sup> Modern agriculture has broken the natural chain of events by introducing machines in agriculture, thus causing detrimental effects on the soil, on plants, on animals and ultimately falling on man himself and his inability to produce as nature ordains.

The ill effects of not following the laws of nature produce a domino effect on nature, man and his habitat bringing about 1) the erosion of soil, 2) the drying of wells, springs, rivers and lakes, 3) droughts and floods, 4) diseases of plants, animals and human beings, 5) poverty, social break-down, abuse of women and children, 6) drift to cities and slums, 7) petty crime, violence, blaming minorities, victimization, genocide, 8) failing crops and economies at the local, national and global levels, and 9) wars, break down of government and failure of civilizations.<sup>171</sup>

### 3- IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS

Forests play a special role for villages. In his book *Hinduism and Ecology – Seeds of Truth*, English author Ranchor Prime speaks of the importance of forests in the *Vedic* culture. Quoting Banwari, the day-editor of *Jansatta*, a Hindi daily newspaper published in Delhi:

*Hindu tradition describes three basic categories of forest. One is Shrivani, the forest which provided for your prosperity. Then there is tapovan, where you can contemplate as the sages did and seek after*

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<sup>170</sup> Dr. Sreekumar, Power Point, *Holistic Cow Protection* (Slide 39)

<sup>171</sup> Ibid (Slide 48)

truth. The third is mahavana – the great forest where all species of life find shelter. Each of these categories must be preserved.<sup>172</sup>

Ranchor further elaborates and speaks about the forest of wealth:

*Once some of the original forest was cleared, however, Vedic culture required that another kind of forest be established in its place. To remove the forest was simply not acceptable. It was the source of natural wealth such as fodder, timber, roots and herbs. Moreover, the trees guaranteed the fertility of the soil and purified the air and water. Therefore, the villages each preserved sections of forest for their own specific needs... This kind of forest was called shrivan, which literally means forest of wealth – they were the basis of the community’s prosperity.... According to tradition, it was not trees that should be in villages, but the village that should be among the trees. Villages should be planned in such a way, with dense groves and gardens, that the whole area is enshrouded by useful trees.*<sup>173</sup>

*“For example, every village must have a cluster of five great trees which represent the forest. They are called pancavati. There is a saying that these five trees symbolize the five primary elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether – the totality of everything.”*<sup>174</sup>

To this day, we find in India houses and other structures having full-grown trees going straight through the roof. The owners refused to cut the trees having such a strong belief in the need to protect trees. Such is the reverence for trees and the appreciation of their value. In the *VrikAyurveda* treatise the importance of trees is described as follows: *10 wells are equal to one pond; 10 ponds are equal to one lake, 10 lakes are equal to one son in the family and 10 sons are equal to one tree.*<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Prime, Ranchor, *Hinduism and Ecology* (p. 10)

<sup>173</sup> Ibid (p. 11)

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. (p. 13)

<sup>175</sup> *Vrikayurveda*, Chapter 11, Taru Mahima

## 2) THE MODERN PERSPECTIVE

### 1- EXTINCTION CRISIS

Modern man's holistic interaction with the land and nature, as was common in the pre-industrial era, has practically vanished. As agrarian life quickly diminishes with the exodus to the cities continuously on the rise (by 2050 it is estimated that 70% of the world population will live in urban areas),<sup>176</sup> we are losing our natural ties and relationship with Mother Nature. In the name of progress and advancement, those who are dealing with nature are exploiting and destroying our natural resources on a massive scale and at an alarming rate. Both fauna and flora are severely endangered:

*There is no doubt that human civilization has had a negative impact on biodiversity, particularly since the industrial revolution. Overfishing and hunting, the destruction of habitats through agriculture and urban sprawl, the use of pesticides and herbicides, and the release of other toxic compounds into the environment have all taken their toll, particularly on vertebrates. The World Conservation Union (IUCN; Gland, Switzerland) now includes more than 16,000 entries in its Red List of Threatened Species: 5,624 vertebrates, 2,101 invertebrates and 8,390 plants (IUCN, 2006). The number of documented extinctions since 1500 AD is now 784 species and the IUCN estimates that extinction rates are now 50 to 500 times higher than previous rates calculated from the fossil record (Baillie et al, 2004).<sup>177</sup>*

Because of our so-called progressive life, more and more of our species are becoming extinct. We fail to understand the natural interdependence between nature, man and the various species. From the Center for Biological Diversity, we read the following disconcerting report:

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<sup>176</sup> <https://www.fastcodesign.com/1669244/by-2050-70-of-the-worlds-population-will-be-urban-is-that-a-good-thing>

<sup>177</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1852758/> (Introduction)

*It's frightening but true: Our planet is now in the midst of its sixth mass extinction of plants and animals — the sixth wave of extinctions in the past half-billion years. We're currently experiencing the worst spate of species die-offs since the loss of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Although extinction is a natural phenomenon, it occurs at a natural “background” rate of about one to five species per year. Scientists estimate we're now losing species at 1,000 to 10,000 times the background rate, with literally dozens going extinct every day. It could be a scary future indeed, with as many as 30 to 50 percent of all species possibly heading toward extinction by mid-century.*<sup>178</sup>

## 2- DESERTIFICATION

Desertification has been identified as one of our major global problems. This is largely due to the excessive use of machines and chemical fertilizers that are destroying the soil. Severe land degradation is now affecting some 168 countries according to the UN.

*"Land degradation and drought are impeding the development of all nations in the world," UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja told RTCC.*<sup>179</sup>

This has also been pointed by Berry Wendell in his popular book *“The Unsettling of America. Culture and Agriculture”* wherein he warns against the dangers of urbanization, agribusiness and “crisis of modern character.”<sup>180</sup> According to the author, modern man has become disconnected with the land and through increased materialism has given up the more traditional holistic life. He goes on to argue that, *“If we do not live where we work, and when we work, we are wasting our lives, and*

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<sup>178</sup> [http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/biodiversity/elements\\_of\\_biodiversity/extinction\\_crisis/](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/biodiversity/elements_of_biodiversity/extinction_crisis/) (The Extinction Crisis: Introduction)

<sup>179</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/apr/17/desertification> (Paragraph 4)

<sup>180</sup> Berry, Wendell. (1977). *The Unsettling of America. culture & Agriculture*, (p.17).

our work too”<sup>181</sup> This is very close to Canakya’s statement that if one wants to be happy, he must become localized where one will not be separated from family members and will not have to travel long distances to earn one’s livelihood.<sup>182</sup>

Modern day industrial agriculture, with its focus on mono-crop, its increased use of tractors and other heavy machinery, its indiscriminate use of dangerous chemical pesticides and chemical fertilizers as well as its irresponsible use of hybrid seeds and GMOs, has played havoc in the field of agriculture, especially in India.

### 3- SUICIDES AMONG FARMERS IN INDIA AND USA

These four above mentioned unnatural practices, namely 1) chemical fertilizers, 2) chemical pesticides, 3) hybrid seeds and 4) machines (in particular the tractor), have been identified as the main enemies of agriculture making the plight of Indian farmers one of the most gruesome in the world with some 300,000 suicides between the years 1995 to 2015.<sup>183</sup> But such suicides among farmers are not only to be found in India. A study conducted in the USA by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that those working in agriculture take their lives at a rate higher than any other occupation. The suicide rate for agricultural workers was nearly five times higher compared to the general population.

*The US farmer suicide crisis echoes a much larger farmer suicide crisis happening globally: an Australian farmer dies by suicide every four days; in the UK, one farmer a week takes his or her own life; in France, one farmer dies by suicide every two days; in India, more than 270,000 farmers have died by suicide since 1995.*<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid (p.79).

<sup>182</sup> Canakya, *Niti Shastra*

<sup>183</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmers%27\\_suicides\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmers%27_suicides_in_India)(See Statistics)

<sup>184</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/dec/06/why-are-americas-farmers-killing-themselves-in-record-numbers>

#### 4- NATURAL RESOURCES

We are depleting our natural resources at a rate that is totally irrational and a cause of irreversible ecological disasters. The short documentary *The Story of Stuff* describes that we live in a “system in crisis” where a developed country like America, although having only 5% of the total population, uses up to 30% of the total global natural resources.<sup>185</sup> One third of the natural resources on the planet have been consumed in the last two decades.<sup>186</sup> The US has less than 4% of its original forests.<sup>187</sup> Some 40% of the waterways in America have become undrinkable.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, 80% of the planet’s original forests no longer exist.<sup>189</sup> The documentary goes on to explain how 99% of the items produced and sold in the market become obsolete within six months of being produced. The whole world practically has become a consumer-oriented society where the ultimate purpose in life is to produce and purchase more and more consumer goods. This is naturally overly taxing Mother Nature and robbing her of her natural gifts and beauty.

We are clearly living beyond our needs. As India’s Mahatma Gandhi would explain in his writing: “*The earth has enough resources for our need, but not for our greed.*”<sup>190</sup> One of the many organizations that are concerned about the serious depletion of natural resources is the well-established Swiss based World Resources Forum. Global resource extraction has increased at an alarming growth rate of 45%, from 40 billion tons in 1980 to 58 billion tons in 2005, the result being serious environmental damages, some of which are beyond repair.<sup>191</sup>

#### 5- OIL DRILLING, OIL SPILLS, AND FRACKING

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<sup>185</sup> [http://www.theworldcounts.com/counters/environmental\\_effect\\_of\\_mining/depletion\\_of\\_natural\\_resources\\_statistics](http://www.theworldcounts.com/counters/environmental_effect_of_mining/depletion_of_natural_resources_statistics) (Video: *The Story of Stuff*)

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> [http://www.mkgandhi.org/environment/env\\_crisis.htm](http://www.mkgandhi.org/environment/env_crisis.htm) (Last Paragraph)

<sup>191</sup> <https://www.wrforum.org/publications-2/publications/> (Second Paragraph)



In order to meet the needs of an ever-expanding industry that must constantly feed motor vehicles, ships, aviation, factories and day to day oil-based consumer machines, oil companies have had to innovate from land oil drilling to off-shore drilling causing at times devastating oil spills. People are mostly unaware of the uncompromising laws of nature that are responsible to keep a natural bio-synergy on the planet. When we tamper with these natural laws of nature, as we have been doing since the last two centuries, the result of energy impact on the environment takes on life threatening dimensions.

One of the active organizations fighting to protect the global environment is the long established *Greenpeace*.<sup>192</sup> Due to easy oil extraction becoming increasingly scarce, the oil industry has had to discover innovative ways to extract the oil from the earth, using methods that are even more destructive and hazardous. One of the latest highly controversial methods is called “fracking”. The fracking process involves drilling deep under the ground, that can be both horizontal and vertical, and then inserting high pressure liquids to “fracture” the rock formation in order to extract the oil previously concealed within the various rocks and minerals. *Greenpeace* has warned against the dangers of underground as well as surface water pollution:

*In order to frack, an enormous amount of water is mixed with various toxic chemical compounds to create frack fluid. This frack fluid is further contaminated by the heavy metals and radioactive elements that exist naturally in the shale. A significant portion of the frack fluid returns to the surface, where it can spill or be dumped into rivers and streams. Underground water supplies can also be contaminated by fracking, through migration of gas and frack fluid underground.*<sup>193</sup>

## 6- INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE

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<sup>192</sup> <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/global-warming/issues/fracking/environmental-impacts-water/>

<sup>193</sup> <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/globalwarming/issues/fracking/environmental-impacts-water/> (First Paragraph)

Industrial agriculture with its use of chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides, hybrid seeds, mono cropping system, tractors and similar heavy machines to increase the agricultural produce has in fact ruined natural agriculture resulting in huge amounts of land having become arid and unproductive. It is becoming more and more accepted that industrial agriculture that brought about the Green Revolution and its promises to farmers of increased production has badly failed.

*Industrial agriculture is good at feeding populations but it is not sustainable. It's like an extractive industry, said Louise Baker, external relations head of the UN body. She said the fact that a third of land is now degraded should prompt more urgent action to address the problem.*<sup>194</sup>

Land is simultaneously connected with farmers and administrators. Within a *Vedic* culture, one of the most important duties of Heads of State is protection. This protection extends to citizens, to *dharma*, to the cows, to one's kingdom and to land itself. *Vedic* kings understood that the best economy was agriculture and therefore would assist farmers by providing various water irrigations facilities including open wells, ponds and lakes.

Author Nicholas A. Fromherz argues in his paper *The Case for a Global Treaty on Soil Conservation, Sustainable Farming, and the Preservation of Agrarian Culture* that soil erosion is closely linked with cultural erosion petitioning that global legal action is needed to protect sustainable farming:

*As an extension of this failure, the international community has also failed to recognize the other problem that comes along with land degradation: cultural erosion. As we convert valuable farmland to urban sprawl and lose fertile spaces to expanding deserts, we also witness the loss of small-scale farming and the communities it supports. I reveal the link between these two crises by emphasizing a*

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<sup>194</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/12/third-of-earths-soil-acutely-degraded-due-to-agriculture-study> (Eighth Paragraph)

*common cause: the rise of industrial agriculture. With its emphasis on short-term profit margins, mechanization, product specialization, division of labor and capital, and economies of scale, industrial agriculture profits at the expense of ecology and rural communities. To save our soils and the communities that work them, I argue that a global treaty addressing soils should also address agrarian culture and — in the way of responding to both issues — should implement reforms in support of sustainable farming.*<sup>195</sup>

### 3) TOWARDS REMEDIES

It is obvious from the above that our planet is in severe peril with many irreversible changes already having taken place. Responsible government leaders who can imbibe some of the wisdom contained in the *Vedic* literatures can only enact policies on national levels. At least on the local level, various initiatives can be taken to begin correcting many of the ill practices that have been ongoing since the last century. Foremost is the need for a change of consciousness on the part of all individuals, whether living in cities or rural areas.

Natural farming has been confronted by four deadly enemies that have destroyed land and the environment very severely. These include the use of chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides, hybrid seeds and machines such as tractors. Subash Palekar has been introducing “*Zero Budget Natural Farming*” (ZBNF) to farmers since the last 4 decades with very good results. This should be supported and introduced as much as possible.<sup>196</sup>

We should encourage and assist people to grow their own food, at least some portion of their food by introducing community gardens, terrace gardening and urban farming in the cities and by encouraging those living in rural areas to grow their own food, reducing mono-crops. The land will benefit much

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<sup>195</sup> [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2135832](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2135832) (Abstract, Third Paragraph)

<sup>196</sup> <http://www.indiawaterportal.org/sites/indiawaterportal.org/files/RD%20through%20ZBNF.pdf>

more by using natural fertilizers and also returning to the use of bullocks.

Villagers should be helped to secure *Gochara* land for grazing of cows. All land should be kept clean from plastics and garbage so that cows do not become diseased by these dangerous substances.



The natural sustainable, enduring and scientific economy lies in the villages of a nation. When the village will perish, the food will also perish and mankind will find itself in dire need.

Our deviation from nature's law by introducing artificial agro-business, blindly adopting destructive machines such as tractors and thus foolishly abandoning our traditional technologies, has led to global deforestation, depletion of natural seed diversity and global desertification. Traditional technologies assured us this natural coexistence and cycle as described earlier. Farming was never meant to be a business venture as it has turned out to be simply based on sheer greediness of misguided and ill informed leaders.



## CHAPTER 5



# THE NEGLECT & DESECRATION OF KNOWLEDGE

### 1) THE VEDIC PERSPECTIVE

The whole intent of the *Vedic* teachings is to convert a crude man into a civilized, responsible and cultured human being. According to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, to be recognized as a human being one must develop thirty specific qualities:

*satyaṁ dayā tapaḥ śaucaṁ titikṣeṣā śamo damaḥ  
ahimsā brahmacaryaṁ ca tyāgaḥ svādhyāya ārjavam*

*santoṣaḥ samadṛk-sevā grāmyehoparamaḥ śanaiḥ  
nṛṇāṁ viparyayehekṣā maunam ātma-vimarśanam*

*annādyādeḥ samvibhāgo bhūtebhyaś ca yathārhataḥ  
teṣv ātma-devatā-buddhiḥ sutarām nṛṣu pāṇḍava*

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ cāsya smaraṇaṁ mahatām gateḥ  
sevejyāvanatir dāsyaṁ sakhyam ātma-samarpaṇam*

*nṛṇāṁ ayaṁ paro dharmaḥ sarveṣāṁ samudāhṛtaḥ  
triṁśal-lakṣaṇavān rājan sarvātmā yena tuṣyati*

*These are the general principles to be followed by all human beings: truthfulness, mercy, austerity (observing fasts on certain days of the month), bathing twice a day, tolerance, discrimination between right and wrong, control of the mind, control of the senses, nonviolence, celibacy, charity, reading of scripture, simplicity, satisfaction, rendering service to saintly persons, gradually taking leave of unnecessary engagements, observing the futility of the unnecessary activities of human society, remaining silent and grave and avoiding*

unnecessary talk, considering whether one is the body or the soul, distributing food equally to all living entities (both men and animals), seeing every soul (especially in the human form) as a part of the Supreme Lord, hearing about the activities and instructions given by the Supreme Personality of Godhead (who is the shelter of the saintly persons), chanting about these activities and instructions, always remembering these activities and instructions, trying to render service, performing worship, offering obeisances, becoming a servant, becoming a friend, and surrendering one's whole self. O King Yudhiṣṭhira, these thirty qualifications must be acquired in the human form of life. Simply by acquiring these qualifications, one can satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead.<sup>197</sup>

In the Purport to this verse, Bhaktivedanta Swami further elaborates:

*In order that human beings be distinct from the animals, the great saint Nārada recommends that every human being be educated in terms of the above-mentioned thirty qualifications. Nowadays there is propaganda everywhere, all over the world, for a secular state, a state interested only in mundane activities. But if the citizens of the state are not educated in the above-mentioned good qualities, how can there be happiness? For example, if the total populace is untruthful, how can the state be happy? Therefore, without consideration of one's belonging to a sectarian religion, whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist or any other sect, everyone should be taught to become truthful.*<sup>198</sup>

Vedic monarchs such as King R̥shabhadeva would instruct his sons in the following way:

gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt  
pitā na sa syāj jananī na sā syāt  
daivaṁ na tat syān na patiś ca sa syān  
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum

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<sup>197</sup> Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.11.8-12

<sup>198</sup> Ibid Purport

"One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a relative, a father, a husband, a mother or a worshipable demigod."<sup>199</sup>

The most affected in this gross neglect and desecration of knowledge are the children and youth of our nations. The Vedic culture places the highest emphasis on training and educating young people from a very early age, properly utilizing this rare human form of life to become self-realized. The very first aphorism of *Vedānta Sūtra* states “*athato brahma jijñāsa*”,<sup>200</sup> now that we have acquired this human form of life, we must inquire as to what is the ultimate goal of life. As a young five year old student, the legendary Prahlāda Maharaja, who was later to become one of the twelve *Mahājanas*, great spiritual authorities, would instruct his classmates as follows:

*kaumāra ācaret prājño dharmān bhāgavatān iha  
durlabhaṁ mānuṣam janma tad apy adhruvam arthadam*

*Prahlāda Mahārāja said: One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the very beginning of life—in other words, from the tender age of childhood—to practice the activities of devotional service, giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection.*<sup>201</sup>

The word “*arthadam*” is most significant as it indicates “full of meaning”, “full of merit”. The opportunity to cultivate spiritual life is only possible in the human form of life, of which there are 400,000 varieties among the 8,400,000 species of life as per Vedic teachings. To obtain such a human form of life is in itself very rare as explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gīta*:

*bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate*

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<sup>199</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.18

<sup>200</sup> *Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.1

<sup>201</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.1

vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ

After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.<sup>202</sup>

The Śrī Īśopaniṣad, acknowledged as one of the most important of the famed 108 Upaniṣads gives a stern warning to those who do not properly utilize knowledge. They are described as “atma-hana”, killers of the soul, and their destination is very bleak:

asuryā nāma te lokā andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ  
tāms te pretyābhigacchanti ye ke cātma-hano janāḥ

The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.<sup>203</sup>

The Sanskrit word for knowledge is vidya of which there are three types. One refers to the śruti section of the Vedas, para-vidya, one refers to the smṛiti section of the Vedas, aparā-vidya and one refers to unawareness of both śruti and smṛiti, avidya or ignorance. The same warning is again reiterated to those who, in the name of so-called knowledge, engage in nefarious activities and in imparting fallacious knowledge:

andham tamaḥ praviśanti ye 'vidyām upāsate  
tato bhūya iva te tamo yau vidyāyām ratāḥ

Those who engage in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance. Worse still are those engaged in the culture of so-called knowledge.<sup>204</sup>

As cited in the invocation to Chapter One of this thesis, according to the *Bhagavad-gīta*, the beginning of knowledge is

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<sup>202</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta* As It Is 7.19

<sup>203</sup> Śrī Īśopaniṣad 3

<sup>204</sup> Śrī Īśopaniṣad 9



understanding the difference between spirit and matter, the origin of both and the relationship between the two.<sup>205</sup> And this actually defines the first of five pillars when explaining the meaning of *Vedic* education.

#### 1- PILLARS OF VEDIC EDUCATION

*Vedic* education is based on spiritual culture, first and foremost. If the spiritual dimension is absent, such education is not considered as education. *Vedic* education can be understood in its three basic aspects of i. formal, ii. non-formal and iii. informal.

Formal education was meant for the *dwijas*, (twice-born), namely *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*. The subject matter of study would cover the first of four *Vedic* sciences, *Ānvīkṣikī*, the science of philosophy relevant to the three *dwijas*. According to *varṇa*, the students would specialize in topics related to the Science of Knowledge (*Trayi* for the *brāhmaṇas*), the Science of Politics (*Danda Niti* for the *kṣatriyas*) and the Science of Economics (*Varta* for the *vaiśyas*).

Non-formal education was meant for those not belonging to the twice-born class and was more in terms of apprenticeship, covering various manual skills such as carpentry, different forms of cottage industries, pottery, blacksmiths and the like. These were learned mainly through observation by associating with those who were already skilled in those arts and sciences.

Informal education, on the other hand, was for everyone and included knowledge acquired through our daily encounters with people, nature or things that left some positive impact on one's acquisition of learning.

Traditional *Vedic* education is governed by five fundamental principles referred to as five pillars that can be

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<sup>205</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 7.2

classified under the following five headings: 1- Definition, 2- Disposition, 3- Delivery, 4- Design and 5- Destination. Let us briefly examine each of these principles that were prominent during the *Vedic* Era and that remain relevant in modern day society as well.

### 1. Definition

The *Bhagavad-gīta*<sup>206</sup> clearly defines knowledge as being “phenomenal” (material) and “numinous” (transcendental, that which illuminates) or as defined in Wikipedia, “*arousing spiritual or religious emotion; mysterious or awe-inspiring*”.<sup>207</sup> The prerequisite to this understanding lies in yet another foundational statement of the *Bhagavad-gīta*, the presence of the spirit soul above the gross and subtle material body.<sup>208</sup> Of the two levels of knowledge, spiritual and material, the science of transcendence is considered higher and the most important. From the *Vedic* point of view, modern education has deviated from what actual knowledge is meant to encompass. “*As the emphasis shifted from internal values to external considerations, from the “why” of education to the “how” of education, the traditional values inculcated by both the earlier philosophers and religionists took on a secondary role.*”<sup>209</sup>

*“The Sophists are the first people who can confidentially be labeled professional educators... They would undertake the entire post-elementary education of a youth for a fee, concentrating largely on useful knowledge and all-around education for life and for political leadership. Speculative and metaphysical questions did not greatly concern them... they might also be termed the first educational technologists. While the contributions of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to the philosophy of education was profound, Sophists such as Protagoras and Isocrates, in the long run, probably had more influence on the development of Western education...The effects of*

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<sup>206</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta* As It Is 7.2

<sup>207</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Numinous>

<sup>208</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta* As It Is 7.4 and 7.5

<sup>209</sup> Gagnon, Real L. J. Thesis (p. 11)

*the Sophists on education necessarily make one wonder whether it is wise to trust educators to the technicians rather than the philosophers.”*<sup>210</sup>

This trend became further entrenched with the advent of the Age of Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century followed by the Industrial Revolution with its emphasis on molding students to meet its scientific and technological needs leading up to modern day institutionalized consumer oriented and “programmed education”. In his controversial book “*Deschooling Society*”, Ivan Illich explains in the section entitled “*Why We Must Disestablish School*”:

*In these essays, I will show that the institutionalization of values leads inevitably to physical pollution, social polarization, and psychological impotence: three dimensions in a process of global degradation and modernized misery. I will explain how this process of degradation is accelerated when nonmaterial needs are transformed into demands for commodities; when health, education, personal mobility, welfare, or psychological healing are defined as the result of services or "treatments." I do this because I believe that most of the research now going on about the future tends to advocate further increases in the institutionalization of values and that we must define conditions which would permit precisely the contrary to happen. We need research on the possible use of technology to create institutions which serve personal, creative, and autonomous interaction and the emergence of values which cannot be substantially controlled by technocrats.*<sup>211</sup>

Modern education is giving increasing importance to STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) and less to humanities. In the article “*Why the world needs humanity graduates*”, author Paul Smith who is director of the British Council in the US writes:

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<sup>210</sup> Pratt, David. (1980). *Curriculum : Design and Development*. Queen’s University : Harcourt Brace Jovahovich Publishers. (Pratt 1980: 18)

<sup>211</sup> Illich, Ivan. *Deschooling Society*, (p. 1, 2)

*The second conviction around which the debate swirls is that the world desperately needs the insights of the humanities. Socio-economic progress, developmental challenges and the intelligent addressing of complex world issues require a combination of skills drawn from the humanities, social sciences and Stem subjects to design and deliver holistic and fully informed solutions.*<sup>212</sup>

Traditionally, *Vedic* education was only in the hands of qualified *brāhmaṇas* whose primary purpose was to train and educate students to take up occupations related to *brāhmaṇa varṇa*. In a similar way, in Europe, before the advent of the French Revolution, education was in the hands of the clergy or priestly class. They were expected to be the real philosophers and guardians of knowledge. However, modern education is giving over emphasis to computer software engineering and other technological subjects, thus minimizing the importance of humanities. When the philosophical aspect of education is lost, when education falls in the hands of technocrats as opposed to philosophers, we can expect more irregularities in society.

## 2. Disposition

Disposition, the second pillar of *Vedic* education, underlines the importance for both teachers and students to be properly disposed or qualified. A teacher (*brāhmaṇa*) is defined in the *Bhagavad-gīta* as someone possessing nine specific qualities such as 1) *śamaḥ*, (peacefulness), 2) *damaḥ* (self-control), 3) *tapah* (austerity), 4) *śaucaṁ* (purity), 5) *kṣāntiḥ* (tolerance), 6) *ārjavam* (honesty), 7) *jñānam* (knowledge) (8) *viññānam* (wisdom) and 9) *āstikyam* (religiousness).<sup>213</sup>

Judging by what we see in our modern educational system, if educational institutions were to implement this standard, we would have relatively very few qualified teachers. Not only should

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<sup>212</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/mar/19/humanities-universities-global-stem>

(See “*Humanities perspective is needed in all global challenges*”, first paragraph)

<sup>213</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is*. 18.43

one possess these fundamental qualities but also one should teach without accepting a salary. This touches on the core principle that knowledge, both spiritual and material, is a gift meant to be distributed freely, but only to deserving candidates. It is not a question of negative discrimination but rather one of needed, necessary healthy discrimination.

The *Vedic* view is that knowledge is not a right in itself but a privilege that one may receive if one is properly disposed. Contrary to modern education, in the *Vedic* model, a teacher will himself select only deserving students. In this way, knowledge or education is not seen as a commodity that one can exchange for payment as like in a business transaction. This is cheating, a gross misuse of knowledge. Traditionally, teachers would invite students to live with them either in their homes or in an *āśrama*. Thus, both the teacher and the student would bond in a lifelong friendship wherein the teacher would happily reveal knowledge to his deserving student.

A recent headline in England suggests there is a growing problem getting qualified teachers: “*Unqualified teachers in schools have risen by 62 per cent in four years, as head-teachers struggle to cope amid a crisis in recruitment.*”<sup>214</sup> The situation in India is also telling with “*a fifth of all elementary school teachers in the country do not have the requisite qualifications to teach young children.*”<sup>215</sup>

Not only was it necessary for the teacher to be qualified, but also indeed the student himself needed to demonstrate three specific qualities: 1) *praṇipāt* (submissiveness/ humility), 2) *sevayā* (service) and 3) *paripraśnena* (inquisitiveness).<sup>216</sup> Although more and more students are graduating, an alarming percentage (95%) of students in the field of computer software engineering in India

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<sup>214</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2017/07/25/unqualified-teachers-rise-62-per-cent-four-years-schools-struggle/>

<sup>215</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/1-in-5-primary-teachers-unqualified/articleshow/46809604.cms>

<sup>216</sup> *Bhagavad-gīta As It Is* 4.34

are unqualified to take up a job as reported by the magazine *Hindu Today*:

*Talent shortage is acute in the IT and data science ecosystem in India with a survey claiming that 95 per cent of engineers in the country are not fit to take up software development jobs.*

*According to a study by employability assessment company Aspiring Minds, only 4.77 per cent candidates can write the correct logic for a programme — a minimum requirement for any programming job.*<sup>217</sup>

### 3. Delivery

The third pillar of *Vedic* education has been described as delivery of knowledge. How and where should this education be imparted? For those taking up formal education, the traditional setting was the *āśrama* or home of the *Guru*, referred to as *Gurukula*. Education was therefore residential with both the teacher and student spending many years together cultivating knowledge. The early years would be spent mainly in character formation by taking up menial services. These formative years would also be spent in memorizing many *mantras* (verses) from the ancient *Vedic* texts. This was especially so because during the early years of character formation, the young student's mind could more easily and quickly absorb information. This is the special psychological feature of children at that young age.

Education was generally imparted in a more secluded place, away from unnecessary distractions, noise and pollution. The *Vedic* texts speak of “forest-university” where students would come to the *āśrama* of the saintly person who lived in the forest.

As a matter of principle, *Vedic* formal education was primarily for boys. There was no coeducation system as we find today in most colleges and universities. Since one of the foundational principles during student life was abstinence, there

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<sup>217</sup> <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/95-engineers-in-india-unfit-for-software-development-jobs-study/article9652211.ece>

was strict separation of boys and girls. “*Tapasā brahmacaryāṇe śamena ca damena ca.*”<sup>218</sup> As a celibate student, *brahmacāry*, one would accept the voluntary practice of austerity in controlling the mind and the senses.

#### 4. Design

The *Vedic* education being based on the principles of *Sanātana dharma* therefore has as its foundational curriculum the syllabus outlined in the original *Vedic* literatures referred to as the 14 books of knowledge, (*Caturdasa Vidya*). As explained by one of the foremost *Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyabhusana:

*angāni vedās catvāro mimāṃsā nyāya vistaraḥ  
dharma-śāstra purāṇas ca vidyā hy etās caturdaśa*<sup>219</sup>

“The fourteen books of knowledge include the four *Vedas*: (1) *R̥g*, 2) *Yajur*, 3) *Atharva* and 4) *Sāma*); the six *Vedangas* 1) *sikṣa* (phonetics), 2) *chāṇdas* (rituals), 3) *vyakaraṇa* (grammar), 4) *nirukta* (etymology), 5) *jyotiṣa* (astronomy) and 6) *kalpa* (prosody); *mimāṃsā* (*Vedānta Sūtra*), *nyāya* (books of logic), *dharma śāstras* (books of human conduct) and *Purāṇas* (books of history). In addition to these fourteen books of knowledge, there were four *Upavedas* or sciences directly related to the *Vedic* study, 1) *Āyur-veda* (medicine/health), 2) *Gandharva-veda* (music/dance/fine arts), *Dhanur-veda* (politics, military/martial arts) and *Sthapaty-veda* (architecture/*vāstu*).

The above describes the level of formal education for those qualified to attend *Gurukula*. The majority of students received non-formal education in the form of apprenticeship and skills preparing them for various vocational occupations.

There was also provision for educating the girls but separately. Their education was primarily to prepare the young girls for their “*stri-dharma*” of becoming chaste wives, ideal

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<sup>218</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.13

<sup>219</sup> *Caturdasa Vidya*, <http://www.kamakoti.org/hindudharma/part5/chap3.htm>  
[http://bbtedit.com/Gita\\_Revisions\\_Explained\\_Part\\_2#GRE\\_10.32b](http://bbtedit.com/Gita_Revisions_Explained_Part_2#GRE_10.32b)

housewives and caring mothers. The *Vedic* culture teaches that women should be protected throughout her life, in early childhood by her parents, in youth by her husband and in later days by the grown-up children or relatives. Modern day standard of complete independence for women goes against the nature of women and is a source of many social ills.

## 5. Destination

Whether we speak of formal, non-formal or informal education, all knowledge acquired was meant to help one progress and advance on the path of self-realization, the primary purpose of all education. The highest cultivation of knowledge, in the *Vedic* context, meant the culture of spiritual emancipation towards *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness.

## 2- IDENTIFYING ONE'S VARṆA (NATURE) AND ĀŚRAMA

In the *Vedic* culture, great emphasis was placed on identifying the *varṇa* or inherent quality of young boys so that they could be directed at an early age towards the proper education in keeping with their nature, which in turn would open the doors to a suitable occupation. This was considered most important for an additional reason, not acknowledged in modern day society. According to one's *varṇa*, one's *āśrama* would also be determined. While *varṇa* referred to social status or occupation, *āśrama* referred to spiritual status either as a *brahmacārī* (student), *gṛhastha* (householder), *vānaprastha* (retired life) or *sannyāsa* (renounced order).

This procedure to identify one's *varṇa* is still followed in some villages of India. The local *brāhmaṇas* and elders of the village would study a young boy's character between the ages of 6 to 10 to determine if he would take to formal education or non-formal education. There are four specific ways by which one would ascertain the *varṇa* of an individual: 1) by astrological calculation (the science of *Jyotiṣ*), 2) by study of family lineage, 3) by psychological test and 4) by simple observation. Because the *Aryas* understood the need to maintain purity, they would keep



records of their ancestors mainly for two reasons. One was to ascertain if the *Garbhodhana samskara* (purificatory ceremony) was followed and the other was to offer oblations to the forefathers for their continued advancement on the path of liberation. It is totally unthinkable in modern day society that before sexual intercourse one would perform some particular religious ceremony. The begetting of children was based on the principle of procreation, not simply some sensual act without a higher purpose. Spiritual Family Planning existed in the *Vedic* culture and is still followed by some, a far cry from present day advocates of modern Family Planning to avoid pregnancy or to terminate pregnancy through abortion.<sup>220</sup>

### 3- VARṆA EDUCATION AND VARṆA OCCUPATION

Once the *varṇa* was determined by authorized and experienced members of the village, the young boy would be directed to a particular type of education. Only very few in society would take up brahminical studies because those require special qualifications as mentioned earlier. The *Gurukula* system was the highest level of education one would receive in the *Vedic* culture as it would prepare one to become the guide and guardian of the general population. The majority of young boys would take to some apprenticeship to learn some particular skill that would allow them to work in that particular profession for their livelihood. That means that the vast majority of young boys did not need to attend formal school.

### 4- VARṆA DETERMINES ONE'S ĀŚRAMA

Out of the four *āśramas* or spiritual divisions, the majority of people in society would enter householder life after their years of formal or non-formal study. For someone identified as a *brāhmaṇa*, the four *āśramas* were open to him. He would receive the training and education at a *Gurukula*, and then, if he so desired, would enter *grhastha* life but only for a specific period of his life, generally up to the age of 50, then he would accept the

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<sup>220</sup> Bharat Chandra Dasa, *A complete guide to garbhadhana samskara*. (2015)

third stage of *vānaprastha* or retired life and then finally, he could chose the renounced order of *sannyāsa*.

VARṆA	EDUCATION	ĀŚRAMA
Brāhmaṇa	Formal	(4) <i>Brahmacārī,</i> <i>Gṛhastha,</i> <i>Vānaprastha,</i> <i>Sannyāsa</i>
Kṣatriya	Formal	(3) <i>Brahmacārī,</i> <i>Gṛhastha,</i> <i>Vānaprastha,</i>
Vaiśya	Formal	(2) <i>Brahmacārī,</i> <i>Gṛhastha</i>
Śūdra	Non-Formal	(1) <i>Gṛhastha</i>

#### 5- VARṆA (PROFESSION) AND FORMAL EDUCATION FOR MEN

A major point of contention, especially in the context of modern education and modern ideology promoting gender equality, is the question of *varṇa* being for men and not for women. As mentioned earlier, formal education was mainly for boys as the training, based on *guṇa* (natural inclination or quality) would prepare them for their future occupation (*karma*) or professions in society. The *Vedic* culture advocates that the vast majority of women not become professionals but rather remain at home to raise children and become ideal mothers and wives. This is arranged so as to protect women from undue mixing with the opposite sex and meant for their protection. The women would accept the *varṇa* of their husband and remain under his care.

#### 6- BRĀHMAṆA VARṆA OCCUPATIONS

Generally we think of *brāhmaṇas* as a *Purohits* or *Priests*. However, there are many professions attached to the *brāhmaṇa varṇa*, most of which take many years of formal training after which one becomes known as a *Vaidya*, specialist in some

particular branch of *Vedic* knowledge. These include Astrologers, Scientists, Lecturers, *Yoga* Teachers, *AyurVedic* Doctors known as *Kavirāja*, *Vāstu* Consultants, Traditional Music Teachers, Travelling Preachers, Writers, Advisors in the Political field to Government Ministers, Architects, etc. The underlining principle in all the above occupations is the mode of goodness that such *brāhmaṇas* must emulate. A *brāhmaṇa* by nature fully depends on the Lord and will never accept salary from anyone. He will accept donations but will also give as donations any excess that he has received.

## 2) THE MODERN PERSPECTIVE

### 1- DANGERS OF NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

We live in a world where the majority of workers are trained and engaged in what is termed as non-traditional occupations. Whereas traditionally one would take up occupations suited to his nature and would develop an affinity and liking for that particular profession, in modern day society, the majority of people work in an unnatural setting performing activities not to their nature and not to their liking. Mostly, one takes up some particular study for the sake of getting a well-paid job. Generally, one is much less interested in the studies and also much less interested in the occupation. A New Delhi-based company conducted an employability-focused study based on 150,000 engineering students who graduated in the year 2013 to find that barely seven percent of the graduates were suitable for core engineering jobs. Here are some of the startling statistics denoting a lack of interest in the students' studies and near total incompetency in taking up actual work:

*As many as 97% of graduating engineers want jobs in software or core engineering. But, only 3% have suitable skills to be employed in software or product market and only 7% can handle core engineering tasks.*

*One of the major problems facing the fresh graduates is their insufficient understanding of basic concepts. The lack of in-depth understanding of technical information, lack of client-handling skills*

and insufficient knowledge across domains are the major skill gaps in the area.

*Rote learning instills in students a sort of complacency for more than 12 years of education and they are unable to make the shift from un-questioning learners to innovators in the job market.*

*Despite the fact that the IT sector carries out the highest number of recruitments from the pool of engineers, only 18.43% engineers are skilled enough to work there, and only 3.21% candidates are suited for IT product roles.*<sup>221</sup>

## 2- THE DESECRATION OF VEDIC EDUCATION BY THE BRITISH

It is a well-known and well-documented fact that the entire system of traditional *Vedic* education was sabotaged during the 200 years period of British colonialism. This should not simply be seen as the work of the British, it must be understood in its proper context of the effect of modernity of which Britain was an advocate. There were two main groups at the time, those promoting Indian culture, the Orientalists and those promoting Western education, the Anglicists.

Both Macaulay and Charles Wood promoted Western education. According to Macaulay, “A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia,”<sup>222</sup>

“... the great object of the British government in India is henceforth to be the promotion of European literature and science among natives of

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<sup>221</sup><http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/engineering-employment-problems/1/713827.html>

<sup>222</sup>[https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic\\_4/macaulay.htm](https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_4/macaulay.htm)

India and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone”.<sup>223</sup>

There was also the well-known Wood’s Despatch of 1854 stating: “the education that we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, and philosophy and literature of Europe, in short, of European knowledge.”<sup>224</sup>

In his book *The Case for India*, American writer Will Durant explains:

“When the British came there was, throughout India, a system of communal schools, managed by the village communities. The agents of the East India Company destroyed these village communities, and took no steps to replace the schools; even today, after a century of effort to restore them, they stand at only 66% of their number a hundred years ago. There are now in India 730,000 villages, and only 162,015 primary schools. Only 7% of the boys and 1.5% of the girls receive schooling; i.e. 4% of the whole. Such schools as the Government has established are not free, but exact a tuition fee which, though small to a Western purse, looms large to a family always hovering on the edge of poverty.”<sup>225</sup>

Durant further adds:

“Instead of encouraging education, the Government encouraged drink. When the British came, India was a sober nation. “The temperance of the people,” said Warren Hastings, “is demonstrated in the simplicity of their food and their total abstinence from spirituous liquors and other substances or intoxication.” With the first trading posts established by the British, saloons were opened for the sale of rum, and the East India Company made handsome profits from the trade. When the Crown took over India it depended on the saloons for a

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<sup>223</sup> <http://www.historydiscussion.net/articles/spreading-of-western-education-during-british-rule/2065>

<sup>224</sup> Ibid

<sup>225</sup> Durant, *The Case for India* (p. 31)

large part of its revenues; the license system was so arranged as to stimulate drinking and sales.<sup>226</sup>

In an interview on ABC News in Australia on September 4, 2017 Dr. Shashi Taroor, author of *Inglorious Empire: What the British did to India* spoke as follows:

... the literacy rate in India when the British left was below 17%. “Education, my gosh, the British, the last thing they wanted to do was to invest in educating Indians.... the American writer Will Durant, while traveling in India as late as 1930, pointed out that the entire expenditure on education in India from the nursery level to the highest level of university was less than half the high school budget of the State of New York. All the Indian institutes of technology, the engineering achievement you are talking about were established after independence by the Government of India.”<sup>227</sup>

### 3- DRUG ADDICTION AMONG STUDENTS IN INDIA (HYDERABAD)

One of the advocates in defending Liberty and promoting Freedom is the American-based Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), inspired by John Stuart Mill’s definition of liberty: “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign”.<sup>228</sup>

*The Drug Policy Alliance is a leading voice in the movement to reclaim the rights and freedoms of all people — no matter what they choose to put into their bodies. While DPA does not encourage or advocate drug use, we are guided by the strong conviction that using drugs is private and personal, not the business of the government or criminal justice system.*<sup>229</sup>

With the aid of modern day computer technology and instant communication, trends, beliefs and events quickly infiltrate the mindset of young people in different parts of the

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<sup>226</sup> Durant, *The Case for India* (p. 33)

<sup>227</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D14i1NxLXlQ&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>228</sup> <http://www.drugpolicy.org/issues/defending-liberty-promoting-freedom>

<sup>229</sup> Ibid

world. We live in a world of increased promiscuity where especially the youth become the most victimized.

*Narcotic drugs are not new to the world. Nefarious drugs, its abuse and its addiction are prevalent since early 70s. However, what's new and unsettling is its all-pervasive presence in the hinterland of India and its availability and abuse by secondary and senior secondary school-going youngsters in Hyderabad.*

*Narcotics and psychotropic addiction is a killer. It transforms young people into zombies. Those who become chronic drug abusers have rare chances of complete de-addiction, even after external intervention. According to a study, young drug abusers have 90 per cent chances to turn into full blown drug addicts. Their neuro paths can become neuro highways for substance induced pleasure, much easier than in adults.*<sup>230</sup>

#### 4- WESTERN EDUCATION

During a survey conducted in 2010, the following alarming results have come to light:

1) *In 2010, the typical college student had to work 8 years to break even on their bachelor degree investment;* 2) *the current student debt is over \$1 trillion;* 3) *71% of all college graduates carry student loans with an average of \$29,400 and* 4) *36% of college students "did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning" during their college educations.* 5) *In 2013, 56% of employers thought half or fewer of graduates had the skills or knowledge to advance within their companies.* 6) *30% of college students felt that college did not prepare them well for employment, specifically in areas of technical and quantitative reasoning skills.* 7) *A 2011 Pew Research survey found that 57% of Americans felt higher, or traditional education, did not provide students with good value compared to the money spent.*<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> [http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Hans/2017-07-14/Parents-schools-drugs-- Hyderabad/312249](http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Hans/2017-07-14/Parents-schools-drugs--Hyderabad/312249)

<sup>231</sup> <https://response.com/non-traditional-education/>

### 3) TOWARDS REMEDIES (BEST PRACTICES FOR EDUCATION)

Modern-day society has “sold its soul” to modern technology and industry. Especially for a country like India, this will prove fatal. Many countries, but India in particular, have witnessed various alarming trends in the latter part of the Twentieth Century. The world now faces 15 major global millennium challenges. These include: 1) sustainable development and climate change, 2) clean water, 3) population and resources, 4) democratization, 5) global foresight and decision-making, 6) global convergence of IT, 7) the rich-poor gap, 8) health issues, 9) education and learning, 10) peace and conflict, 11) status of women, 12) transnational organized crime, 13) energy, 14, science and technology, and 15) global ethics.<sup>232</sup>

From a *Vedic* perspective, to address these challenges, there is a need to return to basic *Vedic* concepts, principles and practices. This can best be done through proper training and education that will demonstrate the ill effects of modernization, uncontrolled consumerism, resulting in an unsustainable and irresponsible global destructive “overdevelopment”. Such modern “overdevelopment” can hardly be labeled as rational and progressive, what to speak of being the cause of any kind of “enlightenment”:

As stated by one economist:

*States, regions, cultures and people are considered 'underdeveloped' in that they do not adhere to Eurocentric ideals of rationality, progress, and modernity that are associated with the Enlightenment. In contrast, the framework of overdevelopment shifts the focus to the 'developed' countries of the global North, asking "questions about why excessive consumption amongst the affluent is not also seen foremost as an issue of development". By questioning how and why uneven development is produced in the world, one can evaluate the global North's role and responsibility as "overdevelopers"*

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<sup>232</sup> <http://107.22.164.43/millennium/challeng.html>



*in producing global inequality. According to various surveys, consumption is seemingly not making people notably happy, but rather increasing the West's ecological footprint. Overdevelopment has a huge impact on the environment, the social realm, human rights, and the global economy.*<sup>233</sup>

To abruptly return to traditional practices may not be possible but to gradually reintroduce the basic principles that governed *Vedic* thought and education is very much wanted. This begins by providing training in the 30 *Vedic* qualities described earlier to help individuals develop a sound character, based on human and spiritual principles. The ideals of *brahmācarya* life need to be inculcated in the younger generations by introducing them to a regulated lifestyle and practices in connection with natural eco-systems of agriculture and cow care. Some of the practices will include daily exposure to *Yoga āsanas* and *Japa* Meditation, regular hearing from *Vedic* scriptures, various types of apprenticeship training and whenever possible various forms of home schooling or *Pāthshala* and *Gurukula* as before. Not only will it be important to educate the children and youth, but indeed, it will be imperative to also provide such training and education to all adult members of the society. Hence, the importance of grass-root initiatives, beginning at the village levels.

We must see the present day global situation (the UN itself admits that our world is in a mess) as a major deviation from a more simple, sustainable and practical way to live. As we have mentioned before, when there is a flaw in *ānvīkṣikī*, in basic philosophy of life, the fundamental premise of what life and existence is all about, naturally there will be flaws in all other areas too. This very first science of education must be flawed when the basic premises are faulty.

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<sup>233</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overdevelopment>

The world is yet to properly understand the glories of *Vedic* culture that warns us against making material pursuits our primary goal of life. The more a nation endeavors for material progress at the expense of spiritual progress, the exact opposite effect will take place. *Vedic* knowledge is based on timeless unchanging wisdom gifted to mankind and meant to serve as guiding principles for living both a spiritual and material life that will help individuals and society attain perfection in this human form of life. We find this most important injunction in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.30-32:

*matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā  
mitho 'bhipadyeta gṛha-vratānām  
adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisraṁ  
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*

*na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇuṁ  
durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ  
andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās  
te 'pīṣa-tantryām uru-dāmni baddhāḥ*

*naiśām matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ  
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ  
mahīyasām pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ  
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat*

“Persons who are determined to totally rot in false, material happiness cannot become Kṛṣṇa-minded either by instructions from teachers, by self-realization or by parliamentary discussions. They are dragged by the unbridled senses into the darkest region of ignorance, and thus they madly engage in what is called 'chewing the chewed.’”

“Because of their foolish activities, they are unaware that the ultimate goal of human life is to achieve Viṣṇu, the Lord of the cosmic manifestation, and so their struggle for existence is in the wrong direction of material civilization, which is under the external energy.

*They are led by similar foolish persons, just as one blind man is led by another blind man and both fall in the ditch.”*

*“Such foolish men cannot be attracted towards the activities of the Supreme Powerful, who is actually the neutralizing measure for their foolish activities, unless and until they have the good sense to be guided by the great souls who are completely freed from material attachment.”<sup>234</sup>*

The *Vedas* do not advocate any sectarian religion but rather teach us the essence and principles of religiosity, more easily defined and understood as *dharma*. As such, *Vedic* knowledge should not be seen as Indian knowledge, nor should those who follow these teachings be seen as *Hindus*. The word *Hindu* is nowhere to be found in the *Vedic* texts. Further, this knowledge is not something composed or invented by writers or scholars at some particular time in history. *“The Vedas have no human author. They are eternal.”<sup>235</sup>*

## CONCLUSION

When knowledge is misused and abused as we have seen in modern day society, it is of no surprise that our modern educational system is running in a crisis mode. The vast majority of students should simply not be enrolled in colleges and universities. They should follow their more natural tendencies of taking up some simple vocational training within an agrarian lifestyle. Alas, this will be seen as utopian and regressive to most for the simple reason that most of our educators and leaders have lost the real meaning and goal of life. Instead, the majority has been lead to believe that our modern educational system, that simply feeds the demands of the large corporates and government leaders who rule without proper understanding of *śāstra*, will provide the answers to all our problems. Instead, the opposite is true. We are misusing knowledge and misdirecting our younger

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<sup>234</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. 7.5.30-32

<sup>235</sup> Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī, *Tattva-sandarbhā*, Giriraja Publishing, (2013) *Sarva-saṁvādinī* on Śrī *Tattva-sandarbhā*, Paragraph 31, Page 278.

generation. We are falsely alluring them to an artificial world filled with empty promises of material well-being. Unfortunately, the educational system continues to be influenced by technocrats and has been set up to meet the demands of those technocrats. When such a system is totally bereft of the basic philosophy of life, how can we expect to succeed in our attempts to have a stable and progressive society?

There is a need to return to basic values and customs that will favor our personal growth and personal advancement as individuals. We are doing the largest disservice to the youth of the world by not providing them with real knowledge. Indeed, present day scholars and professors are doing the greatest disservice by keeping society in darkness as to what its real duty and responsibility is. According to a NASA report, modern education is regressive: *“We are born creative geniuses and the education system dumbs us down according to Nasa scientists.”*<sup>236</sup>

#### ADDITIONAL QUOTES:

*Modern civilization, not referring to the verdicts of Vedic literature, is so cruel to the members of human society that instead of teaching children to become brahmachārīs, it teaches mothers to kill their children even in the womb, on the plea of curbing the increase in population. And if by chance a child is saved, he is educated only in sense gratification. Gradually, throughout the entire world, “human” society has redefined perfection of life to increased ability to gratify the senses.”*<sup>237</sup>

*“The foundational principles of modern family planning do not aim to lead an individual to the ultimate goal of life nor help one enlighten towards such a goal. Therefore, such plans are condemned*

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<sup>236</sup> <https://ideapod.com/born-creative-geniuses-education-system-dumbs-us-according-nasa-scientists/>

<sup>237</sup> Vrindavanlila Devi Dasi (Dr. Vrinda Baxi), *Kṛṣṇa Smarana* (Preface)

in Vedas as sinful. A cultured alternative is provided by Vedas called as Garbhādāna-saṁskāra, a great science in itself.”<sup>238</sup>

“Vedic Family Planning recommends proper planning of the conception, based on the auspicious date, time, mental condition and physical health. The intent of the approach is to consciously seek to obtain a virtuous soul as progeny. Thus, Garbhādāna-saṁskāra is the seed of all reformatory programs in the human society. It is therefore recommended to be adopted by all.”

“In Vedic perspective the concept of ‘un-intended’ pregnancy does not exist. All pregnancies are intended.”<sup>43</sup>



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<sup>238</sup> Bharat Chandra dasa, A Complete Guide to Garbhādāna-saṁskāra, Introduction, p. XIX

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## CHAPTER 6

# CONCLUSION

### 1) SOROKIN AND MASLOW

We are faced in modern day society, as in most periods in history, with the age-old paradox of extremes, or as we have earlier described in **Chapter One**, with the ever swaying pendulum swing between Idealism/Spiritualism and Humanism/Materialism. With the advent of the industrial revolution, mechanization and globalization, and the forward march towards ever-increasing materialism since the last 400 years, we find ourselves in an unsettling situation. Modernity has clearly carved our destiny towards an ever-increasing materialistic and complex urbanized living condition as opposed to the more traditional, natural, simple and less materialistic rural lifestyle. Although we presently experience multi-directional life-threatening global crises and calamities, largely due to our excessive and insatiable exploitation based on lust and greed, our “voluntary” return to a more simple and traditional lifestyle, regarded by most as antiquated, regressive and primitive, seems highly unlikely and improbable. We seem to have thrown ourselves in a trajectory of no return. Although we have some understanding of ourselves having created such an unsustainable living condition, the many attractive features of this new found liberty and freedom have heavily conditioned us and we are not about to change direction although many know, or at least sense, that we are on a suicidal path. Many will agree that we have gone to the extreme of humanism or materialism that is soon to reach its apogee.

We can all agree that neither of the extremes is desirable for individuals nor for society. In his popular social cycle theory of a Sensate, Idealistic and Ideational society in constant flux, America-Russian Sociologist Pitirim Sorokin was appalled at the deteriorating social condition in America in the mid-twentieth century for which he wrote several books such as “*The Crisis of*

*our Age*” (1941) and “*Man and Society in Calamity*” (1942). We can hardly imagine what titles he would chose to describe the state of affairs in this second decade of the twenty-first century. What follows is Sorokin’s description of the world in crisis way back in the mid-twentieth century:

*The organism of the Western society and culture seems to be undergoing one of the deepest and most significant crises of its life. The crisis is far greater than the ordinary; its depth is unfathomable, its end not yet in sight, and the whole of the Western society is involved in it. It is the crisis of a Sensate culture, now in its overripe stage, the culture that has dominated the Western World during the last five centuries....*

*Shall we wonder, therefore, that if many do not apprehend clearly what is happening, they have at least a vague feeling that the issue is not merely that of “prosperity,” or “democracy,” or “capitalism,” or the like, but involves the whole contemporary culture, society, and man? ...*

*Shall we wonder, also, at the endless multitude of incessant major and minor crises that have been rolling over us, like ocean waves, during recent decades? Today in one form, tomorrow in another. Now here, now there. Crises political, agricultural, commercial, and industrial! Crises of production and distribution. Crises of moral, juridical, religious, scientific, and artistic. Crises of property, of the State, of the family, of industrial enterprise... Each of the crises has battered our nerves and minds, each has shaken the very foundations of our culture and society, and each has left behind a legion of derelicts and victims. And alas! The end is not in view. Each of these crises has been, as it were, a movement in a great terrifying symphony, and each has been remarkable for its magnitude and intensity.<sup>239</sup>*

Sorokin was sufficiently sober to distant himself from purely empiricist views to broaden his field of knowledge through

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<sup>239</sup><https://satyagraha.wordpress.com/2010/08/19/pitirim-sorkin-crisis-of-modernity/>

values and an undefined spirituality that he referred to altruism. It is interesting to note that by doing so, unknowingly, Sorokin aligned himself closer to the epistemology professed by advocates of the *Vedic* tradition, namely that there is something beyond sensory perception (*pratyakṣa*) and beyond reason (*anumāna*). In the *Vedic* context, the highest realm of altruism is experienced beyond the sense or mind perception and culminates in spiritualism through transcendental sound vibration (*śabda*).

We can also make an interesting parallel to Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs that rises above the mundane needs of the senses and mind to reach even beyond the level for "self-actualization", that of "self-transcendence". In this way, Sorokin and Maslow both acknowledged the spiritual dimension for which Sorokin established the Harvard Center for Creative Altruism.

We must recognize that we have deviated from what was more natural and common before the Industrial Revolution: *"... only a few centuries ago the whole inhabited world was underdeveloped judging by present European or North American standards. Not until the Industrial Revolution did what Jan Romein calls the Western European Deviation from the Common Human Pattern (1) begin to stand out clearly."* (P. 950)<sup>240</sup>

To more clearly understand how to proceed with the observations we have made in our presentation up to now, it will be helpful, nay, necessary, to introduce three distinct levels of understanding, fundamental for the successful accomplishment of any undertaking. These are based on a simple and logical sequence termed in the *Vedic* teachings as *sambandha jñāna* (the knowledge of identity/relationships), *abhidheya jñāna* (the knowledge of activity) and *prayojana jñāna* (the knowledge of goal/destination).

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<sup>240</sup> Desai, A.R.: *Rural Sociology in India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1987.



2) THE SCIENCE OF SAMBANDHA-JÑĀNA (IDEOLOGY/ RELATIONSHIPS)

My premise is that the *Vedic* culture offers individuals and society clearly defined parameters of a ideal village structure based on well-established codes and principles that will allow residents of a village to meet their basic necessities of life. Inherent in the *Vedic* philosophy of *Sanātana Dharma* are the needed components for leading both a successful and congenial spiritual and material life. The four principles of *dharma* (religion), *artha* (economy), *kāma* (meeting material needs) and *mokṣa* (liberation) form the basis of such a society and are all centered on the scientific system of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, social divisions and spiritual divisions.

The principles of *Sanātana Dharma*, once properly understood, form the pillars of a stable yet unchanging societal organization.

3) THE SCIENCE OF ABHIDHEYA-JÑĀNA (PRACTICAL APPLICATION/ ACTIVITIES)

An agrarian lifestyle provides all members of the society with ample opportunities to meet their necessities of life at the physical, mental/emotional, social and spiritual levels. The basic material necessities are those of food, clothing, shelter and medicines. All can easily be had from the land. As for one's mental/emotional needs, when one does not need to travel long distances for earning a livelihood, when one is surrounded by caring and loving family members and neighbors, one's mental/emotional needs can easily be met. The natural and spontaneous interactions and exchanges among village residents, their close-knit relationships and their common bond to making their village community ideal provides for the social needs of individuals. In India, by nature, all villages have a temple in the center of the village. When guided by qualified *brāhmaṇas* and responsible social leaders, the residents will be nourished culturally and spiritually.

An agrarian life also helps one to develop his/her human potential for a peaceful and progressive life. Progressive life in the *Vedic* context refers to most and foremost spiritual or transcendental progress since the primary objective is to reawaken our dormant *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness and help others also develop spiritually.

4) **THE SCIENCE OF PRAYOJANA-JÑĀNA  
(OBJECTIVES/GOALS)**

And what is the expected result of such a worldview? On the material level, people who chose to live a more simple life based on principles of *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness will live a more peaceful and rewarding life. As Canakya Pandit teaches in his *Niti Śāstra*, by becoming localized and by not incurring debts, one can more easily become happy.<sup>241</sup> Materially people will be happy by living communally and by providing the needs of the family members healthy and wholesome food, by developing friendly relationships with one another and by culturally and spiritually becoming emancipated.

5) **SYNTHESIS OF IDEALISM AND HUMANISM**

If I am to be true to the *Vaiṣṇava Vedic* tenets I must conclude that the best solution to remedy the present imbalances in society is to gradually introduce the timeless teachings of the *Vedas*. As evidenced in this presentation, modernity has grossly deviated from the proper course of humanity allowing over fixation on the sensual and mental levels. This cannot be rectified overnight, but as in all similar impasses, there must be proper training and education provided to people in general and to leaders and educators in particular. Educators are the guardians of knowledge and wisdom but when due to the strong effects of material nature they also deviate from what is righteous, the whole situation becomes most compromising.

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<sup>241</sup> *Vedabase*, Correspondence 1974, Letter to Madhavananda – Mayapur October, 1974

There is a need for Science and Religion to blend and synthesize their respective efforts to help resolve the growing menaces surging upon modern day society. The following is an excerpt from His Holiness Bhakti Swarupa Maharaja, the Director of the Bhaktivedanta Institute (BI), the scientific wing of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON) established in 1974, as presented in his *Vyasapuja Homages* from GBC in 1996 summarizing some of the highlights at the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders, held January 15–19, 1990:

*For the first time in history, more than thirty leading scientists from around the world, including a number of Nobel laureates, headed by Carl Sagan, the well-known cosmologist, made a moving appeal to all the religious leaders of the globe entitled “Preserving and Cherishing the Earth—An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Science and Religion.” They expressed profound concern for the protection of the ecosystem of our planet in a spirit of humility by realizing the inconceivable dimension of nature. A part of the appeal runs thus:*

*“We are now threatened by self-inflicted, swiftly- moving environmental alterations about whose long-term biological and ecological consequences we are still painfully ignorant—depletion of the protective ozone layer; a global warming unprecedented in the last 150 millennia; the obliteration of an acre of forest every second; the rapid-fire extinction of species; and the prospect of a global nuclear war that would put at risk most of the population of the Earth. There may well be other such dangers of which, in our ignorance, we are still unaware. Individually and cumulatively they represent a trap being set for the human species, a trap we are setting for ourselves. However principled and lofty (or naive and shortsighted) the justifications may have been for the activities that brought forth these dangers, separately and together they now imperil our species and many others. We are close to committing—many would argue we are already committing—what in religious language is sometimes called Crimes against Creation....”*

*“Problems of such magnitude, and solutions demanding so broad a perspective, must be recognized from the outset as having a religious as well as a scientific dimension. Mindful of our common responsibilities, we scientists—many of us long engaged in combating the environmental crisis—urgently appeal to the world religious community to commit, in word and deed, and as boldly as is required, to preserve the environment of the Earth....”*

*“As scientists, many of us have had profound experiences of awe and reverence before the universe. We understand that what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect. Our planetary home should be so regarded. Efforts to safeguard and cherish the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred. At the same time, a much wider and deeper understanding of science and technology is needed. If we do not understand the problem, it is unlikely we will be able to fix it. Thus there is a vital role for both religion and science.”*

*Two hundred and seventy well-known spiritual leaders from eighty-three countries responded to and signed the appeal and presented it at the Moscow meeting of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders, held January 15–19, 1990.<sup>242</sup>*

### **THE GREATEST MISTAKE OF “MODERN TIMES”**

The greatest blunder a nation can make is to commercialize cows, commercialize land (agriculture) and commercialize knowledge (education). When we do so, we bring upon our nation untold calamities as we are directly exploiting three of our most cherished mothers, 1) Mother Surabhi (Cow), 2) Mother *Bhumi* (Land) and 3) Mother Sarasvati (Knowledge). Exploiting these mothers means: 1) butchering our cows, 2) raping our land and 3) killing our knowledge, all in the category of *go-hatya*. How would we feel if someone butchered, raped and killed our own mother?

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<sup>242</sup> *VedaBase*, Bhakti Swarupa Swami, Offering to GBC, 1996. (Nobel Laureates , Carl Sagan)

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To rectify the present precarious conditions in both the rural and urban sector that are having a devastating effect on the lives of individuals and communities, there is an immediate and urgent need to systematically introduce the *Vedic* culture of a cow-based civilization. This must begin at the village level where our two essential mothers are threatened, mother cow and mother earth. Teams of knowledgeable volunteers familiar with both the spiritual and material dimensions of *dharma* must visit and gradually give people a proper understanding and choice.

How to best rectify the three areas that have been besieged by lack of proper understanding in the matter of knowledge, land and cows is the focus of a recently launched grass-root initiative meant to reach every country in the world. The aim is to reestablish dignity and honor to our three besieged mothers, beginning with cows, land and knowledge. Therefore, the slogans “Save our Cows”, “Save our Villages” and “Save our Culture” directly identify where we must focus our attention.

IDVM-India has already launched the OM Sri Surabhi Campaign three years ago in its effort to sensitize and bring awareness as to the need to train and educate people in these three essential aspects of *Sanātana* Dharma, the eternal and natural activity for everyone. Readers can immediately connect with this initiative by establishing awareness groups or cells in their respective countries.

More recently, IDVM-India has launched its Sri Surabhi Mobile App promoting Sri Surabhi Global, inviting individuals to connect as Serve Surabhi Members and Serve Surabhi Teams making it convenient and simple to get involved at the grass root levels. The campaign has both short term and long-term objectives, one of which is to recognize Mother Surabhi as our Global Mother and thus provide protection to her everywhere. One can learn more about these initiatives by visiting the website dedicated for the OM Sri Surabhi Campaign at the following website: [www.srisurabhi.org](http://www.srisurabhi.org).

Only by taking such actions we can expect to stop  
Modernity from Killing Civilization.



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APPENDIX I  
REVIEWS FROM SCHOLARS

SCHOLARS PRAISE ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S BOOKS

(<https://asitis.com/reviews/>)

*"No work in all Indian literature is more quoted, because none is better loved, in the West, than the **Bhagavad-gīta**. Translation of such a work demands not only knowledge of Sanskrit, but also an inward sympathy with the theme and a verbal artistry. For the poem is a symphony in which God is seen in all things.... The Swami does a real service for students by investing the beloved Indian epic with fresh meaning. Whatever our outlook may be, we should all be grateful for the labor that has led to this illuminating work."*

**Dr. Geddes MacGregor, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Southern California**

*"The Gīta can be seen as the main literary support for the great religious civilization of India, the oldest surviving culture in the world. The present translation and commentary is another manifestation of the permanent living importance of the Gīta."*

**Thomas Merton, Theologian**

*"I am most impressed with A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's scholarly and authoritative edition of **Bhagavad-gīta**. It is a most valuable work for the scholar as well as the layman and is of great utility as a reference book as well as a textbook. I promptly recommend this edition to my students. It is a beautifully done book."*

**Dr. Samuel D. Atkins, Professor of Sanskrit, Princeton University**

*"I have had the opportunity of examining several volumes published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust and have found them to*

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*be of excellent quality and of great value for use in college classes on Indian religions. This is particularly true of the BBT edition and translation of the Bhagavad-gīta."*

**Dr. Frederick B. Underwood, Professor of Religion, Columbia University**

*"...If truth is what works, as Pierce and the pragmatists insist, there must be a kind of truth in the Bhagavad-gīta As It Is, since those who follow its teachings display a joyous serenity usually missing in the bleak and strident lives of contemporary people."*

**Dr. Elwin H. Powell Professor of Sociology State University of New York, Buffalo**

*"The Bhagavad-gīta, one of the great spiritual texts, is not as yet a common part of our cultural milieu. This is probably less because it is alien per se than because we have lacked just the kind of close interpretative commentary upon it that Swami Bhaktivedanta has here provided, a commentary written from not only a scholar's but a practitioner's, a dedicated lifelong devotee's point of view."*

**Denise Levertov, Poet**

*"The scholarly world is again indebted to A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Although Bhagavad-gīta has been translated many times, Prabhupāda adds a translation of singular importance with his commentary...."*

**Dr. J. Stillson Judah, Professor of the History of Religions and Director of Libraries Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California**

*"Śrīla Prabhupāda's edition thus fills a sensitive gap in France, where many hope to become familiar with traditional Indian thought, beyond the commercial East-West hodgepodge that has arisen since the time Europeans first penetrated India."*



*"Whether the reader be an adept of Indian spiritualism or not, a reading of the Bhagavad-gīta As It Is will be extremely profitable. For many this will be the first contact with the true India, the ancient India, the eternal India."*

**Francois Chenique, Professor of Religious Sciences||Institute of Political Studies, Paris, France**

*"I can say that in the Bhagavad-gīta As It Is I have found explanations and answers to questions I had always posed regarding the interpretations of this sacred work, whose spiritual discipline I greatly admire. If the asceticism and ideal of the apostles which form the message of the Bhagavad-gīta As It Is were more widespread and more respected, the world in which we live would be transformed into a better, more fraternal place."*

**Dr. Paul Lesourd, Author Professeur Honoraire, Catholic University of Paris**

*"This is a work to be treasured. No one of whatever faith or philosophical persuasion who reads these books with an open mind can fail to be both moved and impressed...."*

**Dr. Garry Gelade Professor of Psychology Oxford University**

*"The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is extremely useful for all those interested in ancient India, whether their interest be that of the philosopher, the student of religion, the historian, the linguist, the sociologist or the political scientist.... I truly hope that Śrīla Prabhupāda will complete his translation of the entire Bhagavata and continue to translate other eminent Sanskrit works as well. Undoubtedly, this work of Swamiji's is a great contribution to the troubled human society of today's world."*

**Dr. Sooda L. Bhatt, Professor of Indian Languages, Boston University**

"The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust editions of famous religious classics of India, with new translations and commentaries, are an important addition to our expanding knowledge of spiritual India. The new edition of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is particularly welcome."

**Dr. John L. Mish, Chief, Oriental Division, New York Public Library**

"In the diversity of religious approaches offered by the yogis of India, the most significant, of course, is the way of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is amazing to see how Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami has in less than ten years succeeded, by his personal devotion, untiring energy and efficient direction, in organizing the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. Now, he has undertaken the stupendous project of rendering the entire Bhagavata, the great devotional classic of India, into English. His edition is learning blended with devotional feeling and inspired by a definite purpose of communicating the intense lyrical and devotional quality of the Bhagavata. Śrīla Prabhupāda has done an excellent service by his able rendition of 'the abode of divine joy' that the Bhagavata is."

**Dr. Mahesh Mehta, Professor of Asian Studies University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada**

"...For those who have no access to the Sanskrit language, these books convey, in superb manner, the message of the Bhagavatam. In addition to being a scholarly work, it directly reflects the spiritual aspirations of a religious community which has gained considerable popularity in modern America."

**Dr. Alaka Hejib, Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University**

"I can recommend Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta as a source of rich insights for every serious student of consciousness."

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**Dr. Rory O'Day, Department of Human Relations, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada**

*"The publications of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust are very valuable documents and will no doubt become classics for the English reader of Indian religious literature."*

**Dr. Jerry M. Chance, Chairman, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Florida A+M University**

*"These books are not only beautiful, but also relevant to our times, as we as a nation search for new cultural patterns for our way of life."*

**Dr. C. L. Spreadbury, Professor of Sociology, Stephen F. Austin State University**

APPENDIX 2  
LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER OF  
INDIA – 2016



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री

Prime Minister

**MESSAGE**

I am delighted to learn that The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Over the last five decades, the journey of ISKCON has been one of selfless service to society.

The ISKCON family has emerged at the forefront of the quest to create a more peaceful, harmonious and compassionate society. ISKCON's journey has been a manifestation of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.' Integration has been at the core of your philosophy.

ISKCON's story has been the story of the determination and devotion of lakhs of devotees spread across the world. Inspired by the teachings of Lord Krishna, they spread His message far and wide. The efforts of the ISKCON family in sectors like education, publishing and disaster-relief are commendable.

On this occasion, I convey my best wishes to the ISKCON family and hope they continue to serve humanity with the same enthusiasm and diligence as they have been doing for the last five decades. May this family of devotees be agents of change in creating a better tomorrow.

Jai Shri Krishna!

(Narendra Modi)

New Delhi  
08 August, 2016

APPENDIX 3  
SEVEN PURPOSES OF ISKCON (1966)

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of *Kṛṣṇa* (God), as it is revealed in the great scriptures of India, *Bhagavad-gīta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to *Kṛṣṇa*, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (*Kṛṣṇa*).
4. To teach and encourage the *sankirtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy name of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of *Kṛṣṇa*.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books and other writings.

APPENDIX 4  
**PROMOTING VRINDABAN VILLAGE  
DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**

POSITION PAPER OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNING BODY  
FOR INDIA

Dated: 2 September 2008

THE MISSION REVEALED

As early as 1949, Śrīla Prabhupāda described his mission in a letter to the Hon. Sardar, Dr. Vallabhaji Patel, Deputy Prime Minister of India, outlining four movements. The first was the "*sankirtan*" movement of chanting and philosophical discourse that was to be introduced all over the world. Then came the "temple entry" movement; organizing temples as centers of spiritual culture according to scriptures like *Bhagavad-gīta*. Thirdly, he described the "spiritual initiation" movement, a movement that would be conducted under strict disciplinary methods to enable "*Mahajanas*" to attain the perfection of human life. This would "be organized in such a manner that people all over the world may take interest in it." Finally, he described the "classless society" movement or the "scientific division of the caste system as envisaged in the *Bhagavad-gīta*".

We can see that Śrīla Prabhupāda had a clear idea how his preaching movement would be conducted as early as 1949. As the years went by he refined the concepts involved. In 1956 he published his "Essay on Gita Nagari" in *Back to Godhead* magazine, which reiterated the same "four movements" or divisions. Then again in 1966 Śrīla Prabhupāda registered his International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and began to systematically introduce these four divisions earlier identified in his 1949 letter and 1956 essay. As his mission expanded around the world he began to purchase farmland to develop

rural communities. In October of 1977 this conversation took place:

Prabhupāda: What meeting going on?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Oh, very interesting meeting. (We were) discussing our Gītā-nagarī community and talking about varṇāśrama. We were trying to reflect on all of the teachings in your books and what we had read about Kṛṣṇa's life and Nanda Mahārāja's community. How the *vaiśya* community lives, how the different *varṇas* and *āśramas* function together, and what their responsibilities are to each other. We're trying to set up our Gītā-nagarī community based upon the teachings which you've given in your books. Dhṛṣṭadyumna Mahārāja has designed the very ideal plan for all of the *varṇas* and *āśramas* to live together.

Prabhupāda: Hm. Do it.

#### DEPARTING INSTRUCTIONS

In the last film footage of Śrīla Prabhupāda we find him lying in his bed with HH Jayadvaita Swami holding a microphone to his lips. Carefully choosing the words for what were to become his final purports, he explained exactly why we need *varṇāśrama*:

According to the association of different natures, we get a body. *kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu*. Therefore we should always seek good association, devotee association. Then our life will be successful. If we live with good association, then we cultivate knowledge. . . A man is known by his company. So if we have the chance of association with devotees, then our character, nature becomes better. By hearing, by discussing *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, this *raja guṇa*, *tama guṇa* are subdued. Then *sattva guṇa* remains. *naṣṭa prāyeṣu abhadreṣu nityam bhāgavata-sevayā*. Then *raja guṇa*, *tama guṇa* cannot do us harm. Therefore, *varṇāśrama dharma* is so essential that people

live in *sattva guṇa*. *Tama guṇa*, *raja guṇa* increases lust and greediness, and that implicates the living entity who exists in the material world in many, many forms. That is very dangerous. Therefore, they should be brought into *sattva guṇa* by the establishment of *varṇāśrama dharma*. [Note: transcribed directly from the video, emphasis added.]

We can understand from this statement, as well as from numerous similar references made by Śrīla Prabhupāda, that he clearly expected his ISKCON society to establish *varṇāśrama dharma* within the context of agrarian based self-sufficient communities, the actual norm and standard of *Vedic* society.

#### SANĀTANA DHARMA - TWO FEATURES

"The complete span of life of a human being is meant for preparing himself for going back to Godhead or to get rid of the material existence made of the repetition of birth and death. As such in the system of *varṇāśrama dharma* every man and woman is trained up for this purpose of eternal life, in other words the system of *varṇāśrama dharma* is known also as *Sanātana Dharma* or eternal occupation. The system of *varṇāśrama dharma* prepares a man for going back to Godhead..." [SB 1.19.4 purport.]

The two features of *Sanātana dharma* are *bhagavat dharma* (activities of all the liberated souls in the spiritual world and a few in the material world) and *varṇāśrama dharma* (activities of most conditioned souls in the material world). In the material world, *varṇāśrama dharma* is meant to support the activities of *bhagavat dharma*; together both provide a complete science.

"VARNĀŚRAMA SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO BECOME A VAIṢṆAVA"



When it was suggested that the chanting of Hare *Kṛṣṇa* was meant to replace *varṇāśrama* for everyone, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied:

Prabhupāda: Yes, it can replace, but who is going to replace it? People are not so advanced. If you imitate Haridāsa Ṭhākura to chant, it is not possible . . . the *sahajiyā's* chanting will come. Just like our (name withheld). He was not fit for *sannyāsa* but he was given *sannyāsa*. And five women he was attached and he disclosed. Therefore *varṇāśrama-dharma* is required. Simply show-bottle will not do. So the *varṇāśrama-dharma* should be introduced all over the world, and...

Satsvarūpa: Introduced starting with ISKCON community?

Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes. *Brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriyas*. There must be regular education.

Hari-śauri: But in our community, if the..., being as we're training up as *Vaiṣṇavas*...

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Hari-śauri: ...then how will we be able to make divisions in our society?

Prabhupāda: *Vaiṣṇava* is not so easy. The *varṇāśrama-dharma* should be established to become a *Vaiṣṇava*. It is not so easy to become *Vaiṣṇava*." [Māyāpura 14 February 1977]

From the above, we can understand that the *sankirtan* movement as introduced by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu based on the chanting of the holy names and the performance of devotional service to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, is not meant to replace *varṇāśrama* as a means of societal organization. Rather the *varṇāśrama dharma* should be established in society as a supportive measure to help individuals become *Vaiṣṇavas*.

In Sri Bhaktyaloka, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura also confirms that Lord Caitanya did not reject *varṇāśrama* for social organization. After quoting *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 1.2.8 -  
*dharmah svanuṣṭhitah puṁsām*  
*viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ*  
*notpādayed yadi ratim*  
*śrama eva hi kevalam*  
- the Thakur explains:

“The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead.”

From this one should not conclude that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has ordered us to discard *varṇāśrama-dharma*. If that had been the case, then He would not have instructed all living entities through His pastimes of completely following the orders of *gṛhastha* and *sannyāsa*. As long as one has a material body the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* must be followed, but it should remain under the full control and domination of *bhakti*. *Varṇāśrama-dharma* is like the foundation of one's supreme occupational duty. When one's supreme occupational duty is matured and one achieves his goal, then the process is gradually neglected. Again, it is also abandoned at the time of death.

## PROMOTING RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed his desire to establish *Kṛṣṇa* Conscious, self-sufficient communities and villages. He also gave instructions to make existing villages *Kṛṣṇa* Conscious.

So far, ISKCON India has become very successful at city preaching and large numbers of the populace have taken up to the chanting of the holy names sincerely, thus adapting their lives to the principles of *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness. However, the

establishment of a society based on the traditional village lifestyle has been neglected. Although one can still advance in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness living in the cities, the degraded influences of urban life place serious constraints on the progress most devotees can make. ISKCON must recognize the need to re-establish, develop, and maintain the ideals of village-based communities, the natural *Kṛṣṇa*-conscious village lifestyle which was shown by *Kṛṣṇa* and Balarama Themselves. Initially, perhaps only a few will want to take it up, but without it, Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission in four phases or "movements", and ISKCON's preaching programs, remain incomplete. The following are but a few selected quotes supporting the need to remain in the villages:

*Actually, everyone should be engaged to produce food, but the modern set-up of civilization is that few people are engaged in producing food, and others are eating. They are offering... They are artificially getting money.* [Conversation 25/7/73 London]

Clever means that he must stay in his own land. He should not be cheated by the paper and go to the city.  
[Conversation 25/7/73 London]

Gandhi's program was very nice, village organization so that they may not come to the city and help the capitalists. Remain satisfied in the village.  
[Conversation 12/9/76 Vrindavan]

So this *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness movement is trying to revive the original, constitutional position. So one of them, in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness movement, is village organization, as you are trying here.  
[Lecture 15/7/76 Gita Nagari]

India's civilization was based on village residence. They would live very peacefully in the villages.  
[Morning Walk 13/10/75 Gita Nagari]

Therefore, the RGB vision is to develop preaching and development programs that involve the following specific village-oriented programs:

1. Establishing *Kṛṣṇa* Conscious rural communities
2. Helping existing villages to become self-sufficient and *Kṛṣṇa* Conscious.
3. Developing *Nama Hatta* village preaching programs to expand *Kṛṣṇa* Consciousness in rural India.

Each temple should expand and develop their rural preaching programs as an integral aspect of its preaching effort following these three aspects of rural *Kṛṣṇa* Consciousness development.

#### ESTABLISHING A VARṆĀŚRAMA SOCIETY THROUGH EDUCATION

The *varṇāśrama* system is a complete educational institution in itself where the needs of individuals are met at all levels: physical, mental, social and spiritual. A *varṇāśrama* society, which is primarily agrarian based, provides an ideal educational environment. It is grounded on two important concepts and scientific principles of (1) aptitude-based learning, which leads to aptitude-based occupation, *varṇa* and (2) phased lifelong education, *āśrama*, which leads to gradual self-realization. This education is formal and informal. In traditional village life the majority of the population is trained at home, imbibing the occupation of the family they are born into. Formal education, which is meant for the *dvijas* (*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*), needs to be introduced by the revival of the original *Vedic gurukula* system as recommended by Śrīla Prabhupāda. According to *Vedic* tradition, education is awarded based on merit. Śrīla Prabhupāda describes this in his "Essay on Gita Nagari":

By a test of practical psychology and by examination of the birth horoscope of the child, with special reference to his

birthright, sect and class arrangement, a student from the very beginning shall be given the education of a *brāhmaṇa*, of a *kṣatriya*, of a *vaiśya* or of a *śūdra*, as may be the case, according to his quality and destined work.

Formal training can only be given to those who have the right disposition and who display the appropriate attitude. Teachers also require the proper temperament and qualification. It is necessary therefore to give the utmost consideration when appointing *gurukula* teachers to ensure that they have proven, exemplary character. Students trained in such *gurukulas* will eventually graduate according to their nature and aptitude to take up key occupations in a developed *varṇāśrama*-based society. It is therefore essential that we immediately begin the work to develop this greater society. Śrīla Prabhupāda stressed: "To train the innocent boy to be a sense gratifier at the early age when the child is actually happy in any circumstance is the greatest violence. Therefore; *brahmacārī gurukule vasan dānto guror hitam*" [SB 7.12.1]. The curriculum of such schools needs to be derived primarily from sources as recommended by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

There is not a full body of specific instruction from Śrīla Prabhupāda spelling out all the details of how *gurukula* should be developed in ISKCON. The various efforts to follow whatever instructions he did give have born various fruits. In Mayapur, the Sri Rupanuga Paramarthika Vidya Pitha found that the closer they got to focusing on character development rather than academics, the more successful the graduates were in any sphere. The kind of character that is developed from appropriate *gurukula* training in general equips the majority of students to adapt to any future circumstance. In *Purānic* descriptions of *gurukula* there are many varieties according to the mood of the particular guru.

Apart from the *gurukulas*, Prabhupāda ordered:

The *varṇāśrama* college has to be established immediately. Everywhere, wherever we have got our center, a *varṇāśrama* college should be established to train four divisions: one class, *brāhmaṇa*; one class, *kṣatriya*; one class, *vaiśya*; and one class, *śūdra*. But everyone will be elevated to the spiritual platform by the spiritual activities that we have prescribed. There is no inconvenience, even for the *śūdras*.

[Morning walk, Vrindavan '74]

These colleges are required not only for practical training, but as a way to impart cultured behavior.

The *Vedic* system does not condemn anyone. 'You are a potter. Oh, you are lower.' No. You are as good as a priest because you are doing your duty. Just like a *brāhmaṇa* is addressed as *paṇḍita mahārāja*. A *kṣatriya* as *ṭhākura saheb*, a merchant as *sethji* and the laborer as *choudhdhari* -- leader. In this way everyone has got respectable position.

[July '68 Conversation.]

So this *Vedic* scheme, *varṇāśrama*, is a very important scheme. If possible it should be introduced and taken up very seriously. That is one of the items of Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, to re-establish the institution of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. Not by birth, but by qualification.

[July '76 Conversation]

This system of *varṇa*-based training, with appropriate *āśrama* progression, is a scientific system designed to bring people to the mode of goodness, with the ultimate goal of achieving *suddha sattva*, the attainment of full Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. So far, in general, we have failed to provide excellence in the *gurukula* system, or to provide much in the way of appropriate livelihoods to *gurukula* graduates. As a result, we find that there is a growing demand for western-style academic education. This type of education overlooks the fact that humans are born of four particular natures. Therefore, statistically, only a few

students can gain any benefit from this system. In terms of spiritual life, this system can never impart the kind of character training that is obtained from the proper matching of teacher and student in the spiritual atmosphere of menial service to *guru* that should be provided in a *gurukula*. *Kṛṣṇa* and Balarama set the perfect example when they attended the *āśrama* of Sandipani Muni. By graduating from the *gurukula*, and progressing through the *āśramas* of adult life in devotee association, all the while cultivating spiritual knowledge, the students gain realization to enable them to perfect their lives.

## COW PROTECTION & BRAHMINICAL CULTURE

Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us that cow protection and *brahminical* culture are the keys to real prosperity and that they occur as a natural side effect of following *varṇāśrama dharma*. So far in India we have had problems with some of our *goshala* programs, mainly because they have been developed in isolation, not within the framework of a greater *varṇāśrama* social structure. Cows have been neglected and as a result *brahminical* culture is not thriving. The *śāstras* warn us of this result.

## CONGREGATION AND YOUTH PREACHING

Internationally, many of our devotees are suffering due to lack of good association. Most devotees are forced to work and associate with non-devotees in order to survive in the outside world. In India and in certain parts of the world, some devotees are benefiting from such programs as Nama Hatta, Bhakti Vṛkṣa, and similar congregational programs. Among our congregation of devotees, the youth are the key. It has been seen in some parts of the world that when youths are introduced to the concepts of *varṇāśrama dharma*, they become enthused because they recognize that this is a system that lets them take their lives into their own hands. Rather than placing faith in the empty promises of the politicians and industrialists,

they appreciate the opportunity to use what *Kṛṣṇa* has given: the means of production - land and cows. Introducing *varṇāśrama* concepts to our youth preaching teams is a new concept that can result in the conception of *varṇāśrama* communities, therefore demonstrating the effectiveness of the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness philosophy. Śrīla Prabhupāda predicted that by creating 'ideal units' of society, people will want to give up the factory work to come and live in blissful communities wherein *Kṛṣṇa* culture is practiced.

## CITY TEMPLES AND RURAL COMMUNITIES IN TANDEM

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted that we should have farms supporting our city temples. In this way persons from the city can be shown how to live a simple *Kṛṣṇa* conscious lifestyle. Śrīla Prabhupāda predicted that many people will be attracted to *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness in this way:

*It is very good that the farm will be providing foodstuffs for both the farm and the temple in Paris. That is wanted. The farm program should be: grow your own food, produce your own milk, cloth and everything and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.*

[Letter to Bhagavan, 14/11/75]

*Regarding Ahmedabad Centre, we must have a place there... (it is) one of the most opulent and important cities of India. We have to organize in the neighboring village... Now, our next program will be to organize farming land to set an example to the whole world how people can be peaceful, happy, and free from all anxieties simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa Maha-mantra and living an honorable life in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.*

[Letter to Kartikeya Mahadevia, 19/10/75]

## NETWORKING

The technical aspects of creating villages in which the process of *varṇāśrama* organization can begin will be a challenge. Many



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aspects of simple living are vanishing. There are, however, organizations in India that are already working with simple traditional systems. It may be beneficial for us to network with such organizations to make the progression to a simple rural life easier.

While there is an urgent need to develop the *varṇāśrama* aspect of the *Kṛṣṇa* Consciousness movement in India, the work will have to proceed at a natural pace as interest can be aroused.

APPENDIX 5  
**IDVM-INDIA MANDATE (2009)**

\*\*\* I think no need to underline titles...

“Therefore, the India RGB hereby establishes the *Varṇāśrama*-based Rural Development Ministry with the following mandate:

1. To encourage the establishment in India of models of *Kṛṣṇa*-conscious rural communities (villages):
  - a. To demonstrate in a practical way how the principles of *varṇas* (aptitude based occupations) and *āśramas* (phased lifelong spiritual emancipation) are universal and standard principles meant to be implemented.
  - b. To demonstrate the principles of self-sufficiency, sustainability, and localized economy based on proper utilization of land and cow protection.
2. To encourage, wherever possible in India, *varṇāśrama*-based rural development centered on the land, cows, and *Kṛṣṇa*.
3. In order to accomplish the above, to establish training programs, publish resource materials, organize conferences and seminars, establish libraries and resource centers, etc.

NB: The word “Daiva” was added later and the name ISKCON Daiva *Varṇāśrama* Ministry” (IDVM) was thus coined to represent the Ministry.

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APPENDIX 6  
GAUDIYA VAIṢṆVA  
VEDIC ONTOLOGY

*A Report on the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇva Vedanta  
Form of Vedic Ontology*

By Henry P. Stapp

ONTOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF SCIENCE  
PART ONE

GVV form of *Vedic Ontology*

Preamble

This is the first part of a two-part report on the ontological content of *Vedic* philosophy as viewed from a scientific perspective. The aim of this part is to describe the essential features of *Vedic* ontology in a form readily comprehensible to Western scientists. The content of this first part is purely descriptive; no attempt is made to evaluate either the compatibility of this ontology with science, or its utility in scientific endeavors. Evaluation is reserved for part two.

The possibility that this ancient way of viewing Nature might be useful in science arises in the context of contemporary efforts to understand the empirically observed correlations between conscious processes and brain processes. Western science sprang from a sharp conceptual separation between mind and matter that was extremely productive. Presently, however, scientists are producing an increasingly detailed description of the physical and chemical processes occurring in human brains, together with a wealth of information about the correlations between brain processes, as measured by physical probes, and psychological processes, as reported by human subjects. To adequately coordinate this mass of new information we apparently need a conceptual framework that links

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psychological processes to physical processes: the sharp theoretical cleavage of mind from matter that triggered Western science, and sustained it for several centuries, is now widely perceived by scientists working in these areas to be inimical to progress, and their research is, accordingly, producing a flood of conflicting opinions about how best to mend the Cartesian cut.

Science has its own methods of evaluating theoretical concepts, and these methods rest heavily upon empirical testing. However, the sources of inspiration for theoretical ideas are not correspondingly circumscribed: any source is permitted in principle. Still, certain kinds of sources are generally considered far more likely to produce useful theoretical concepts than others, and divine revelation, judged on the basis of past performance, would normally be regarded as an unlikely source of useful inspiration in science.

Starting from that consideration alone one would not expect the present study to produce anything useful in science. On the other hand, the contemporary efforts to comprehend the nature of the relationship between mind and matter differ in an essential way from earlier efforts to expand science: they bring into question the presumption of a complete disjunction between conscious processes and material processes. That separation was fruitful. Yet in the present circumstance it seems reasonable to try to develop a more general theoretical framework in which the earlier assumption of complete separation of mind and matter can be treated as simply a first approximation that is adequate over a specified but limited range of phenomena.

Efforts of scientists to generalize the present framework could tend to be blocked by their bondage to ideas that work well only in the approximation of a complete separation between mind and matter. To break free of such overly restrictive ideas it may therefore be useful to see things from another point of view, particularly if that other point of view is internally consistent.

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The view of nature to be described below appears to be internally consistent and compatible with the available scientific data. It is essentially a phenomenalist theory, in which the entire universe is considered to be built out of things of the sort that we can directly experience, rather than out of atoms that are conceived to be intrinsically different in kind from conscious experiences. This phenomenalist theory has been articulated in considerable detail, and is the outcome of an intensive effort to synthesize the positions of the various camps of *Vedic* philosophy. Hence it can be said to have weathered a careful critical scrutiny of its internal consistency.

The ontology to be described is the product of one particular strand of *Vedic* philosophy. It is thus appropriate to give some idea of the position of this ontology within the broad landscape of the philosophies of India.

There are six main branches of Hindu philosophy that are *Vedic* in the sense that they rest on the authority of the *Vedas* and accept the *Vedas* as divine revelation. They are *Nyāya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Karma Mimāṃsa*, and *Vedānta*. All six accept both the idea of an eternal soul that undergoes multiple incarnations, governed by a law of *Karma*, and the idea that this soul moves toward "liberation". They also accept, to varying degrees, that there is a Supreme God.

Primarily, the *Vedas* give instructions about the regulation of human conduct. But these rules of conduct are rooted in an ontology: i.e., in a conception of what the world is made of, and how it is constructed and maintained. This work is concerned solely with the ontology. I do not cover the normative aspects of the philosophy, which concerns rules of conduct, and recommendations for behavior or attitude.

Of the above-mentioned six branches of *Vedic* philosophy, *Nyāya* is a system of logic and *Vaisheshika* builds on *Nyāya* to

describe the material aspects of nature. *Sāṅkhya* enumerates the various elemental categories that comprise the phenomenal world, while Yoga prescribes a process by which to disentangle the soul from the phenomenal world. *Karma mimāṃsa* emphasizes the ritualistic processes for attaining material well-being.

The most comprehensive of the six branches is *Vedānta*. It has two schools, the Personal and Impersonal or the *Vaiṣṇava* and the *Mayavada* schools. The *Vaiṣṇava Vedānta* school accepts a Personal God and purports to give a detailed account of reality in terms of God, individual souls, time, matter, and their relationships to each other.\*

The *Vaiṣṇava Vedānta* has four main schools — Sri, Rudra, Kumara and Brahma. A sub-branch of the Brahma school is called *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava Vedānta* (GW). It is characterized as being in the line of descent of *Vedic* tradition that originates in Brahma and passes through Śrīla Vyasadeva and Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Vyasadeva translated the *Vedas* from their earlier oral tradition into written form. According to the *Vedic* texts themselves and traditional Indian almanacs or *panchangas*, this recording was performed at the start of the present epoch called Kali yuga, 5091 years ago; modern scholars place this recording sometime during the few centuries preceding 400 B.C. The same author, Vyasadeva, then wrote a terse summary of the *Vedas* called *Vedānta Sūtra*, a commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtra* called the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, which is considered to re-elaborate, authoritatively, the essence of the *Vedas*.

\* The *Mayavada* school only accepts an all-pervading impersonal unitary plane of Consciousness as reality and holds all other categories such as matter, individual soul etc., to be illusion. consisting of only 570 one-line aphorisms. He then composed

Lord Caitanya is an historical person. He was born in 1486 and lived for forty-eight years, and is regarded within the *Gaudiya*

*Vaiṣṇava* Vedanta tradition as God Himself, disguised in the form of His own devotee. The ontology to be described here was constructed in the following way. I first scanned the *Bhagavad-gīta* and extracted a general idea of the *Vedic* ontology. In this reading I used the widely available English translation and commentary authored by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Then I entered into an intensive ten-day discussion with four *Vedic* scholars, provided by the Bhaktivedanta Institute in Bombay. The aim of this discussion was to correct and clarify my original understanding of the ontology and bring it into conformity with the GW tradition. The basis of this effort was the *Bhagavad-gīta* and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, as translated and interpreted by Prabhupāda. In these discussions I accepted as final the judgments of the four scholars as to the proper interpretations of these texts. The description of the ontology as given below represents, therefore, my effort to describe the GW formulation of *Vedic* ontology as interpreted by these four scholars, whose names and positions are as follows:

1. Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami (Dr. T.D. Singh),  
International Director, Bhaktivedanta Institute
2. Banu Swami, Regional Secretary, ISKCON - South India
3. Satya Narayana dasa, Teacher, Bhaktivedanta Swami  
International Gurukula, Vrindaban, U.P. India
4. Rasaraja dasa (Ravi V. Gomatam), International Secretary,  
Bhaktivedanta Institute

APPENDIX 7  
**VEDIC ONTOLOGY BY ŚRĪLA  
BHAKTISIDDHANTA SARASVATI  
THAKURA**

**By Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaja**  
A lecture delivered on the 27th August, 1933 at the Saraswati Assembly Hall of Śrī Gaudiya Math, Calcutta on the occasion of the Advent Celebrations of Śrīla Thakur Bhaktivinode.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: His Divine Grace Paramahansa Paribrajakacharya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj, Founder of the Gaudiya Math, is the Spiritual Master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. It was He who sent Bhaktivedanta Swami to the Western world to deliver the message of *Kṛṣṇa* Consciousness. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhanta is highly regarded throughout India, for during His lifetime He founded hundreds of centers in all parts of the country and had literally thousands of followers. This lecture, delivered three years before His Disappearance Day from this mortal world, commemorates the Advent of His own Father and Spiritual Master, Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thakur, the Great-grandfather of the *Kṛṣṇa* Consciousness Movement in America.]

All glory to Guru and Gauranga!

Dear Friends—I stand before you as a teller. I am going to tell you now a few words more on the Vedanta and specially its ontological aspect, morphology being a former changeable part of the same. My telling craves a reciprocity of your listening to my sound through your aural reception. Sound is the main substratum of the Vedanta which deals with a subject unapproachable by our present crippled imperfect senses. The ear cannot work as a receptacle unless we are willing to admit a sound, and this admittance depends on our taste and previous experience. This prior experience invites affairs within the



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phenomenal range, but the Vedantic sounds have a different aim. So our reciprocal situation will crown our efforts with success.

Many of our friends pose themselves as knowers when they have a true taste for knowledge. To acquire such knowledge they utilize their senses to associate with the conception of objects and their components. These knowers claim a subjective position to consider the synthetic as well as analytic values of their determination. The objects before them are known as phenomena which serve to engage their attention to scrutinizing the knowledge of the causes and the laws of all phenomena by their empiric and intuitive reasonings. This is, in other words, philosophising the object by mental speculation.

When the knowledge of a being is restricted to phenomena, it passes by the name of natural philosophy, but the psychological dealing of sentiments discloses a branch of knowledge known as mental philosophy.

All the philosophical speculations in connection with our sensuous perception are no bar to our wrangling over them. The outward representations in all cases, if reasoned, need not exactly identify themselves with the true objective stand; as for instance, our impression of a star is much more augmented when we are conversant with the coaching of an adept of astronomy or when scientific methods predominate over our erroneous convictions. The deceptive outward manifestations are not necessarily to be accepted when such delusions are detected by our true activity. The seeming reasons often carry us to a wrong direction and we are not favored with the Truth, and seeming truths are found to be efficacious in particular circumstances with susceptibility of transformation. So ontology of unchangeable formation need not be neglected for alternative changing features.

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The methods of thinking of different people of different countries are not the same. So we cannot expect identical results in philosophy. Happiness and virtue have been selected as the essence of philosophical speculation by both the Hellenic and Hebraic Schools, whereas in China they were meant for the preservation of loyal society and local constitutional Government. The mystic philosophy of the mediaeval Europe in its different varieties has invited apathetic reflection in the judgment of considerate persons. The animistic conception of Persia as well as impersonal idea have brought out criticisms from the Indian philosophers. The savage conception of philosophy as well had no favor with the critical and ethical arguments.

For a long time Indian Philosophy had been mentioned in six different phases bearing dissimilar methods of exposition and in the unrolling evolutionary process we have had a few dozen of philosophic views coming to us for our speculative considerations. Mind has been noticed as the functional agent of agreeing or disagreeing with a standard position of its finitudinal range. It is termed conscience or *Buddhi* when it is fixed. The egotistic function of mind in respect of mundane objects is called *Ahankār* or worker's activity of lording it over a partial phenomenal aspect. The *Jīva* or soul is different from phenomenal denomination, but the fettered condition of an individual soul has association with the material world.

The five old schools of philosophy of India do not vouchsafe to bear the same character with the *Vedānta* philosophy. Some super-sensuous methods are marked by the comparative studies though in the beginning such warnings need not be offered to the students of the *Vedānta*. The science of the *Vedānta* philosophy has also dealt with the aspects of formation concerning the constant changes of form resulting from an unfolded development and permanent unalterable elements in ever-altering forms.

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The *Vedanta* deals with a theme beyond the finite views of phenomena. The subjects dealt within that particular philosophy are not confined to any part of the material space, any definite span of time or any object of sensuous perception made up of any substance of this Universe. The activities of a being are measured in time, the playground of a being either linear, superficial or cubical is accommodated in space and the limited subjectivity or fleshy tabernacular entity is confined to phenomenon. The Vedantic scheme is quite different from such limited structural monuments though some people attempted to bring Vedanta within the prison bars of their senses.

Though *Vedanta* deals with ordinary language quite dovetailing the views of ordinary intelligentsia to gradually heave them up to the supersensuous regions where senses cannot work by their present implements or cannot help them by the words of their credulous friends, still the transcendental topics are imparted slowly through the linguistic and rationalistic attainments to differentiate the plane of transcendence and the undesirable transformable plane of enjoyments. As it is helping the journey of understanding, we need not stick to a stagnant view in order to gratify our senses at the cost of rationality and harmonious language exactly fitting our whims. So the method of studying this particular philosophy should never be confined to the same process of confusing the transcendence with our present plane of thought.

When the Absolute becomes the goal of a sentient being, such sentientism has a character other than the nature of phenomenal restrictions. But when it tends to limit activities to finite things of phenomena, we find a temper of lording it over the finite things which have mundane relativity among them. All activities of a spirit towards the direction of transcendental Absolute are to come under devotion or Bhakti, whereas the gratification of senses leads to an activity known as Karma of the actor. The Absolute has an unalterable complete situation void of all sexological divisions as well as of the three positions of the

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observer, observation and the observed; they become the functions of the gnostic or *jñāīs*. The factor of time cannot have any supremacy over the Absolute.

Unlike phenomena where everything is liable to transformation during the course of time, the Absolute does not undergo any change, whereas the opposite element has a shaky position. The Absolute cannot be enjoyed by sensuous exploitations to bring any profit to mind and body. All the profits accrued by offering our services to the Absolute are never meant for our temporary happiness depriving others of the benefit. The theme of the *Vedānta* actually deprives the human frame and subtle body of the Bliss which is wrongly incorporated with the unalloyed absolute infinitesimals. By the word absolute infinitesimal I mean the individuation of the identical quality and not the quantity. The stuff of the Absolute is not liable to any change. No factor of time would have any cogent potency to mutilate it. No space is reserved for it like material entities. The Absolute when analyzed will go to show a division between the parts and the whole. The character of the Absolute will differ from non-Absolute as estimated by the properties of perfection and imperfection. The undesirable experience of regions of imperfection and inadequacies need not be carried over to the eternal aspects of origin, nature and ontological essence of the *Vedānta*.

## APPENDIX 8 GOMATI-VIDYA

From *Visnu-dharmottara* Part II—42/49 to 58

*gomatim kitayisyami sarva papa pranasinim  
tam tu me vadato vipra srinusva susamahitah*

“In reply to the question of Puskara, the son of Varuna, Lord Parasura described this gomati-vidya: ‘O great *brāhmaṇa*, now I will reveal to you the gomati-vidya which uproots all sinful reactions. Hear this with full attention.

*gavah surabhaya nityam gāvo guggula gandhikah  
gavah pratistha bhutanam gavah svastyayanam param*

The cow, who is another form of Surabhi, is the eternal mother of the universe. She is sacred, beautiful and as fragrant as guggula.” “This existence of all living entities depends upon the cow. She awards all of life’s objectives.

*Annameva param gāvo devanam hariruttanmam  
Pavanam sarvabhutanam raksanti ca vahanti ca*

She is the main cause of the production of all types of food grains. She is also the cause of the ingredients and the food offered in sacrifice to the demigods. Simply by her touch and sight, she purifies all living entities.

*harisa mantra putena tarpayantya marandivi  
rsinam agnihotresu gāvo home prayojitah*

She produces nectarean objects like milk, yogurt and ghee. Her calves, when grown up as bulls, carry heavy loads and help produce food grains. By her milk products she helps the demigods perform sacrifices.”

*sarvesam eva bhutanam gavah saranamuttamam*

*gavah paritram paramam gāvo mangalam uttamam*

All the great sages use cow products as ingredients for their various activities. The cow gives shelter to one who no shelter. Among all purified objects, she is the most pure, and among all auspicious objects, she is the most auspicious.

I bow down before the cow, who is the daughter of Brahma. She is pure, internally and externally, and she keeps the whole atmosphere pure by her presence. I repeatedly offer my obeisances to her.”

*gavah svargaya sopanam gavo dhanyah santanah  
namo gobhyah srimatibhyah saurabheyibhya eva ca*

“The cow is the support by which one can directly transfer himself to heaven. She is also the perpetual cause of one’s wealth and prosperity. I offer my obeisances to the cow, in whole body Laksmi resides. I offer my respect to the beautiful cow, for she is pure, simple and aromatic.

*namo brahmasutabhyasca pavitabhuo namo namah  
brāhmaṇascaiva gvasca kulamekam dvidha stitam*

If *brāhmaṇas* are qualified to recite *Vedic* mantras, then cows will supply ingredients for their sacrifices.

The cow is the support of the entire world, as well as all of the demigods, the *brāhmaṇas*, the saintly persons, the chaste ladies and other pious beings. She is always worshipable.”

“Actually, the cow and the *brāhmaṇa* belong to the same family. Both are situated in the mode of goodness.

*ekatra mantras tisthanti whavir ekatra tisthati  
deva brāhmaṇa gosadhu sadhvihih sakālam jagat*

Only by the combination of both, the *brāhmaṇas* and the cows, is the performance of sacrifice for the pleasure of Visnu complete.

*dharyate yai sada tasmāt sarve puḡyāmah sada  
yatra tirthē sada gāvah pibanti trsita jālam*

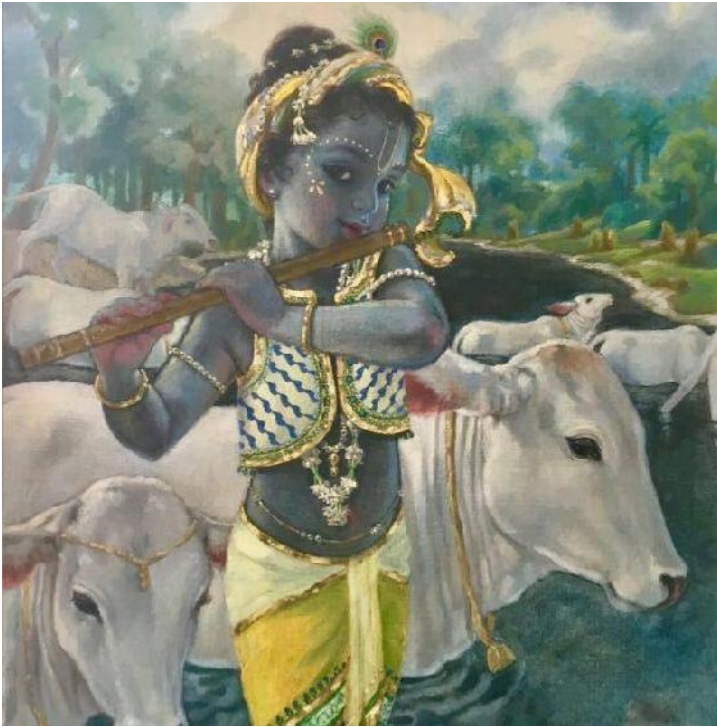
The cow is the source of all nourishment and religious principles.

*attractanti patha yena stita tatra Sarasvatī  
gāvam hy tirthē vasatīh gangā pustistathā*

Wherever the thirsty cow drinks water from, that body of water is as good as the Ganga, Yamuna, Sindhu or Sarasvati. In the body of the cows, all holy places and rivers are present.

*tadrajasi pravṛddha lakṣmīh karise pranatau ca  
dharmastāsam pranamam satatam ca kuryat*

Lakṣmī resides in cow dung. By offering respect to cows, one captures the four objectives of life (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*). Therefore, all intelligent persons who desire benefits offer obeisances to the cows.”



## GLOSSARY

**Abhidheya** – The practice to be performed for spiritual realization which constitutes the second phase of *Vedanta* discipline.

**Ācārya** – a spiritual master who teaches by his own example and who sets the proper religious example for all human beings.

**Āpauruseya**—“Without an author”, as in the case of the eternal *Vedas*.

**Adharma**—irreligion.

**Advaita-siddhānta**—the conclusion of the monists, namely, that the Absolute Truth and the individual living entity are separate in the material state, but that when they are spiritually situated there is no difference between them.

**Advaita-vāda**—the philosophy of absolute oneness taught by Śaṅkarācārya, and whose conclusion is *advaita-siddhānta*.

**Advaita-vādīs**—atheistic philosophers who say all distinctions are but material illusions. [See also: **Māyāvādīs**]

**Alwars**—Tamil Nadu saints who were devotees of Lord Viṣṇu.

**Ārati**—a ceremony in which one greets and worships the Lord in the Deity form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by offering Him incense, a flame in a lamp with ghee-soaked wicks, a flame in a lamp containing camphor, water in a conchshell, a fine cloth, a fragrant flower, a peacock-feather, and yak-tail whisk, accompanied by bell-ringing and chanting.

**Arcā-vigraha**—an authorized form of God manifested through material elements, as in a painting or statue of Kṛṣṇa worshiped in a temple or home. Actually present in this form, the Lord accepts worship from His devotees.

**Arjuna** – The third of the five Pandava brothers. A great bowman, he figured prominently in winning the Kuruksetra battle, with Kṛṣṇa driving his chariot. It was to Arjuna that Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gīta* just before the battle.



**Aryan**—a follower of *Vedic* culture. A person whose goal is spiritual advancement. He truly knows the value of life and has a civilization based on spiritual realization.

**Āśrama**—one of the four spiritual orders of life—*brahmacārī-āśrama*, or student life; *Gṛhastha-āśrama*, or married life; *vānaprastha*, or retired life; and *sannyāsa-āśrama*, or the renounced order of life; the home of the spiritual master, a place where spiritual practices are executed.

**Āyurveda**—the section of the Vedas which expounds the *Vedic* science of medicine delivered by Lord Dhanvantari, the incarnation of the Supreme Lord as a physician. He was born out of the ocean of milk when it was churned by the demons and demigods in the Satya-yuga. He expounded on the three categories of medicine.

**Bhāgavata-dharma**—the science of devotional service to the Supreme Lord; the religious principles enunciated by the Lord; the eternal function of the living being.

**Bhagavad-gīta**— the Holy book of Hindus

**Bhakti-yoga**—the system of cultivation of bhakti, or pure devotional service, which is untinged by sense gratification or philosophical speculation.

**Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda**—(1874-1937) the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, and thus the spiritual grandfather of the present day Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. A powerful preacher, he founded sixty four missions in India.

**Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura**—(1838-1915) the great-grandfather of the present-day Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the spiritual master of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and the grand-spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a responsible officer and a householder, yet his service to the cause of expanding the

mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is unique. He has written many books on the philosophy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Bhakti**—devotional service to the Supreme Lord; purified service of the senses of the Lord by one's own senses.

**brahmacārī**—a celibate student under the care of a spiritual master. One in the first order of spiritual life; In the *Vedic* social order, the student class who strictly accept the vow of celibacy, in the case of *brāhmaṇas*, up to the age of 25, at which time they may marry or continue the life of celibacy; a celibate student of a spiritual master.

**Brahmācārya**—celibate student life; the first order of *Vedic* spiritual life; the vow of strict abstinence from sex indulgence.

**Brāhmaṇa**—a member of the intellectual, priestly class; a person wise in *Vedic* knowledge, fixed in goodness and knowledgeable of Brahman, the Absolute Truth; One of the four orders of occupational life, *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. The *brāhmaṇas* are the intellectual class and their occupation is hearing *Vedic* literature, teaching *Vedic* literature, learning deity worship and teaching deity worship, receiving charity and giving charity.

**Brahmā**—the first created living being and secondary creator of the material universe. Directed by Lord Viṣṇu, he creates all life forms in the universes. He also rules the mode of passion. Twelve of his hours equal 4,320,000,000 earth-years, and his life span is more than 311 trillion of our years.

**Buddha**—incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the founder of *Buddhism* who lived during the 5th century B.C., and appeared to bewilder atheists and dissuade them from performing unnecessary animal sacrifices.

**Buddhi-yoga**—(*buddhi*—intelligence + *yoga*—mystic elevation) another term for *bhakti-yoga* (devotional service to Kṛṣṇa), indicating that it represents the highest use of intelligence by surrendering it to the will of the Supreme Lord. Action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is *buddhi-yoga*, for that is the highest intelligence.

**Caitanya Mahāprabhu**, (1486-1534)—Lord Kṛṣṇa in the aspect of His own devotee. He appeared in Navadvīpa, West Bengal, and inaugurated the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord to teach pure love of God by means of *sāṅkīrtana*. Lord Caitanya is understood by *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* to be Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

**Caitanya-caritāmṛta**—translated as “the character of the living force in immortality,” it is the title of the authorized biography of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu written in the late sixteenth century and compiled by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, presenting the Lord’s pastimes and teachings. Written in Bengali, with many Sanskrit verses as well, it is regarded as the most authoritative book on Lord Caitanya's life and teachings.

**Cāṇakya Paṇḍita**—the brāhmaṇa advisor to King Candragupta responsible for checking Alexander the Great’s invasion of India. He is a famous author of books containing aphorisms on politics and morality.

**Cātur-varṇyam**—the four occupational divisions of society (*brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, and śūdras*).

**Dhanur Veda**—a *Vedic* treatise on the science of warfare.

**Dhanvantari**—the incarnation of the Supreme Lord who is the father of medicine

**Deśa**: village

**Dharma**—religious principles; one's natural occupation. The capacity to render service, which is the essential quality of a living being. The occupational eternal duty of the living entity, regarded as inseparable from the soul himself.

**Dīkṣā**—spiritual initiation.

**Ekādaśī**—a special day for increased remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, which comes on the eleventh day after both the full and new moon. Abstinence from grains and beans is prescribed. Directly presided over by Lord Hari, Ekādaśī is a holy test day for *Vaiṣṇavas*. One should utilize this day for fasting and increasing

one's devotion to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa by intensifying their chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and other devotional activities.

**Ekadaṇḍa**—the staff, made of a single rod, carried by a *sannyāsī* of the Māyāvāda (impersonalist) school.

**False ego**—the conception that “I am this material body, mind or intelligence.”

**Garbhādhāna-saṁskāra**—the *Vedic* ceremony of purification to be performed by parents before conceiving a child.

**Garbhodaka Ocean**—the body of water that fills the bottom part of each material universe.

**Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu**—the second Viṣṇu expansion, who enters each universe and from whose navel grows a lotus upon which Lord Brahmā appears. Brahmā then creates the diverse material manifestations.

**Gurukula:** literally means “house” of Guru or Teacher; refers to traditional *Vedic* educational system still followed in India

**Guru**—spiritual master.

**Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra**—a sixteen-word prayer composed of the names Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma: *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare* is the personal form of God's own happiness, His eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Kṛṣṇa, "the all-attractive one," and Rāma, "the all-pleasing one," are names of God. This prayer means "My dear Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa, please engage me in Your devotional service." The *Vedas* recommend the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra as the easiest and most sublime method of awakening one's dormant love of God; the great chant for deliverance. These names have been particularly recommended for chanting in this age.

**ISKCON**—the abbreviation for the International Society for *Kṛṣṇa* Consciousness; the Hare *Kṛṣṇa* Movement. The society was founded in New York, 1966, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who came by boat, the

Jaladuta from Calcutta in 1965, with just forty rupees and a trunk full of books. Sumati Morarji kindly donated his passage. [See also: **Śrīla Prabhupāda**]

**Īsopaniṣad**—one of the 108 principal *Vedic* scriptures known as the *Upaniṣads*.

**Jīva Gosvāmī**—one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana and the nephew of Rupa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. His father, Anupama, died when the boy was very young. He grew up absorbed in the worship of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Lord Caitanya instructed him in a dream to proceed to Navadvīpa, and there he toured that sacred place in the association of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. He then went to Benares to study Sanskrit, and from there to Vṛndāvana to be under the shelter of his uncles. He became a disciple of Rūpa Gosvāmī and wrote eighteen major works on *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy, comprising more than 400,000 verses. He is considered by many philosophers and Sanskritists to be the greatest scholar who ever lived.

**Japa**—a form of chanting normally on beads

**Jīva-tattva**—the living entities, atomic parts of the Supreme Lord.

**Jīvan-mukta**—a person who is already liberated even while living in his present body.

**Jñāna-kāṇḍa**—the division of the *Vedas* dealing with empirical speculation in pursuit of truth; also, such speculation itself; the portions of the *Vedas* containing knowledge of Brahman, or spirit.

**Jñāna-mārga**—the cultivation of knowledge.

**Jñāna-yoga**—the process of approaching the Supreme by the cultivation of knowledge; the predominantly empirical process of linking with the Supreme, which is executed when one is still attached to mental speculation.

**Jñāna**—knowledge. Material *jñāna* does not go beyond the material body. Transcendental *jñāna* discriminates between

matter and spirit. Perfect *jñāna* is knowledge of the body, the soul and the Supreme Lord.

**Kali-yuga**—the "Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy". The fourth and last age in the cycle of a *mahā-yuga*. This is the present age in which we are now living. It began 5,000 years ago and lasts for a total of 432,000 years. It is characterized by irreligious practices and stringent material miseries. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the age is personified as an evil black man who tries to kill a helpless cow and bull. The four legs of the cow represent the four principles of religiosity—namely, truth, cleanliness, mercy and austerity. The bull represents religion itself.

**Kapila**—an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared in Satya-yuga as the son of Devahūti and Kardama Muni and expounded the devotional *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, the analysis of matter and spirit, as a means of cultivating devotional service to the Lord. (There is also an atheist named Kapila, but he is not an incarnation of the Lord.)

**Kāraṇa Ocean**—the corner of the spiritual universe in which Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu lies down to create the entirety of material universes.

**Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu**—Mahā-Viṣṇu, the expansion of the Supreme Lord from whom all material universes emanate. He lies within the Causal Ocean and breathes out innumerable universes.

**Karma-yoga**—action in devotional service; the path of God realization through dedicating the fruits of one's work to God.

**Karmātmaka**—one whose mind is colored with fruitive activity.

**Karma-kāṇḍa**—the division of the *Vedas* which deals with fruitive activities performed for the purpose of gradual purification of the grossly entangled materialist.

**Karma**—1. material action performed according to scriptural regulations; 2. action pertaining to the development of the material body; 3. any material action which will incur a subsequent reaction; 4. the material reaction one incurs due to

fruitive activities; This Sanskrit word means 'action' or, more specifically, any material action that brings a reaction binding us to the material world. According to the law of *karma*, if we cause pain and suffering to other living beings, we must endure pain and suffering in return.

**Kirtan:** loud chanting of songs or *mantras*

**Līlā-avatāras**—innumerable incarnations, like Matsya, Kurma, Rāma and Nṛsiṃha, who descend to display the spiritual pastimes of the Personality of Godhead in the material world.

**Līlā-śakti**—Kṛṣṇa's internal potency, the energy that helps to enact His pastimes.

**Līlā**—a transcendental "pastime" or activity performed by God or his devotee.

**Mahā-mantra**—the great chanting for deliverance: *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*; is the great mantra composed of the principal names of Godhead in their vocative forms. This mahā-mantra is found in the *Purāṇas* and *Upaniṣads* and is specifically recommended for chanting in this age of Kali as the only means of God realization. Lord Caitanya personally designated it as the mahā-mantra and practically demonstrated the effects of the chanting.

**Mahābhārata**—an ancient, Sanskrit, epic history of Bhārata, or India composed by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, the literary incarnation of Godhead, in 100,000 verses. The essence of all *Vedic* philosophy, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is a part of this great work. Maha-bhārata is a history of the earth from its creation to the great Kurukṣetra war fought between the Kuru and Pāṇḍava factions of the Kaurava dynasty, which took place about 5000 years ago. The battle was waged to determine who would be the emperor of the world: the saintly Yudhiṣṭhira, a Vaiṣṇava king, or the evil-minded Duryodhana, the son of Dhrtarastra.

**Mahājana**—one of the twelve great self-realized souls, authorized agents of the Lord whose duty is to preach the cult of devotional

service to the people in general; one who understands the Absolute Truth and throughout his life behaves like a pure devotee.

**Mantra**—(*man*—mind + *tra*—deliverance) a pure sound vibration when repeated over and over delivers the mind from its material inclinations and illusion. A transcendental sound or Vedic hymn, a prayer or chant.

**Manu-saṁhitā**—the scriptural lawbook for mankind, written by Manu, the administrative demigod and father of mankind.

**Māyāvāda**—the impersonal philosophy first propounded by Śaṅkarācārya, which proposes the unqualified oneness of God and the living entities (who are both conceived of as being ultimately formless) and the nonreality of manifest nature; the philosophy that everything is one and that the Absolute Truth is not a person.

**Mayāvādī**—one who propounds the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya, which basically holds that God is featureless and impersonal, that devotion to a personal Godhead is false, the material creation of the Lord is also false, and the ultimate goal of life is to become existentially one with the all-pervading, impersonal Absolute.

**Māyā**—illusion; an energy of Kṛṣṇa's which deludes the living entity into forgetfulness of the Supreme Lord. That which is not, unreality, deception, forgetfulness, material illusion. Under illusion a man thinks he can be happy in this temporary material world. The nature of the material world is that the more a man tries to exploit the material situation, the more he is bound by māyā's complexities.

**Naiṣkarma**—another term for *akarma*; action for which one suffers no reaction because it is performed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī**—one who has been celibate since birth.

**Navadvīpa**—the topmost holy place, ninety miles north of Calcutta. In the 15th and 16th centuries the city became the



greatest center of Sanskrit learning in all of India. Lord Caitanya, the *yuga-avatāra*, appeared there in the late 15th century and propagated the chanting of the Holy Names all over India. His appearance made Navadvīpa the crest jewel of all holy places in the present age.

**Nitya-baddha**—the eternally conditioned soul, bound in the material world.

**Nitya-līlā**—Kṛṣṇa's eternally present pastimes.

**Nitya-muktas**—souls who never come in contact with the external energy.

**Nitya-siddha**—one who has attained eternal perfection attained by never forgetting Kṛṣṇa at any time; an ever-purified associate of the Lord

**Nityānanda Prabhu**—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared as the principal associate of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Nyāya-sāstras**—*Vedic* textbooks of logic.

**Nyāya**—logic. See: Gautama.

**Om tat sat**—the three transcendental syllables used by *brāhmaṇas* for satisfaction of the Supreme when chanting *Vedic* hymns or offering sacrifice. They indicate the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead.

**Oṃkāra**—om, the root of *Vedic* knowledge; known as the *mahāvākya*, the supreme sound; the transcendental syllable which represents Kṛṣṇa, and which is vibrated by transcendentalists for attainment of the Supreme when undertaking sacrifices, charities and penances.

**Pañca-tattva**—the Lord-Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His plenary portion-Nityānanda Prabhu, His incarnation-Advaita Prabhu, His energy-Gadādhara Prabhu, and His devotee-Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura.

**Paramparā**—the disciplic succession through which spiritual knowledge is transmitted by bona-fide spiritual masters.

**Parikrama**—the path that circles a sacred tract such as Vṛndāvan or Braj

**Parikṣit**—the son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Arjuna. When the Pāṇḍavas retired from kingly life, he was crowned king of the entire world. He was later cursed to die by an immature *brāhmaṇa* boy and became the hearer of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and thus attained perfection.

**Prayojana**—the ultimate goal of life, to develop love of God.

**Purāṇas**—the eighteen major and eighteen minor ancient *Vedic* literatures compiled about five thousand years ago in India by Śrīla Vyāsadeva that are histories of this and other planets; literatures supplementary to the Vedas, discussing such topics as the creation of the universe, incarnations of the Supreme Lord and demigods, and the history of dynasties of saintly kings. The eighteen principal *Purāṇas* discuss ten primary subject matters: 1) the primary creation, 2) the secondary creation, 3) the planetary systems, 4) protection and maintenance by the *avatāras*, 5) the Manus. 6) dynasties of great kings, 7) noble character and activities of great kings, 8) dissolution of the universe and liberation of the living entity, 9) the *jīva* (the spirit soul), 10) the Supreme Lord.

**Rādhārāṇī**—Lord Kṛṣṇa’s most intimate consort, who the personification of the internal, pleasure potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa. She appeared in this world as the daughter of King Vṛsabhānu and Kīrti-devī and is the Queen of Vṛndāvana. The most favorite consort of Kṛṣṇa in Vrindavana, situated on Lord Kṛṣṇa's left on altars and pictures.

**Śabda-brahma**—transcendental sound vibration; the injunctions of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*.

**Śabda-pramāṇa**—the evidence of transcendental sound, especially of the *Vedas*.

**Śabda**—transcendental sound.

**Sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha** [Bs. 5.1]—the Lord’s transcendental form, which is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss; the eternal transcendental form of the living entity.

**Sac-cid-ānanda**—the natural condition of spiritual life: eternal, full of knowledge and bliss.

**Sanātana-dharma**—literally, the “eternal activity of the soul”, or the eternal religion of the living being—to render service to the Supreme Lord, which in this age is executed mainly by chanting the mahā-mantra. [See also: **Bhāgavata-dharma**]

**Sambandha-jñāna**—knowledge of one’s original relationship with the Lord.

**Sampradāya**—a disciplic succession of spiritual masters, along with the followers in that tradition, through which spiritual knowledge is transmitted.

**Śaṅkarācārya**—an incarnation of Lord Śiva who appeared in South India at the end of the 7th century A.D. to re-establish the authority of the *Vedic* scriptures. He was a philosopher and lived about three hundred years before Rāmānuja. He did this at a time when India was under the sway of Buddhism, whose tenets deny the authority of the Vedas. He took *sannyāsa* at a very tender age and wrote commentaries establishing an impersonal philosophy similar to Buddhism, substituting Brahman (Spirit) for the void. He traveled all over India defeating the great scholars of the day and converting them to his doctrine of Māyāvāda, the *advaita* (non-dualism) interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta*. He left the world at the age of 33.

**Sāṅkhya-yoga**—the process of linking with the Supreme by intellectually tracing out the source of creation.

**Śāstra-cakṣuḥ**—seeing everything through the medium of the *Vedic* literature.

**Śāstra**—the revealed scriptures, obeyed by all those who follow the *Vedic* teachings. *Śās* means “to regulate and direct” and *tra* means “an instrument”; *Vedic* literature.

**Sāṣṭāṅga-pranāma (Daṇḍavat)**—a respectful obeisance executed by prostrating eight limbs of the body, namely the thighs, feet, hands, chest, thoughts or devotion, head, voice, and closed eyes.

**Sat**—eternal, unlimited existence.

**Sat-sandarbha**—six Sanskrit works on the science of devotional service or *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. These works present the entire philosophy and theology of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism* in a systematic form. The six *Sandarbhās* are as follows: *Tattva-sandarbha*, *Bhāgavata-sandarbha*, *Paramātma-sandarbha*, *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha*, *Bhakti-sandarbha* and *Prīti-sandarbha*. The *Sat-sandarbha* is also called *Bhāgavata-sandarbha*, as it is an exposition on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The first four *Sandarbhās* are devoted to *sambandha-tattva*, which establishes Kṛṣṇa as the highest Deity and the most exclusive object of worship. The *Bhakti-sandarbha* deals with *abhidheya-tattva*, which is bhakti (devotion to Kṛṣṇa), and the *Prīti-sandarbha* is concerned with *prayojana-tattva*, pure love of Godhead.

**Saṁhitās**—supplementary *Vedic* literatures expressing the conclusions of particular self-realized authorities.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**—(1896-1977) His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. He is the tenth generation from Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Founder-*ācārya*, spiritual master of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON). Śrīla Prabhupāda was the widely-acclaimed author of more than seventy books on the science of pure bhakti-yoga, unalloyed Kṛṣṇa consciousness. His major works are annotated English translations of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. He was the world's most distinguished teacher of *Vedic* religion and thought. Śrīla Prabhupāda was a fully God conscious saint who had perfect realization of the *Vedic* scriptures. He worked incessantly to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. He guided his society and saw it grow to a worldwide confederation of hundreds of ashrams, schools, temples, institutes, and farm communities.

**Śrīla**—a title indicating possession of exceptional spiritual qualities. The most beautiful (spiritual) person.

**Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**—the foremost of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, the complete science of God that establishes the supreme position of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It was glorified by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the *amalam purāṇam*, “the purest *Purāṇa*.” It was written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva as his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and it deals exclusively with topics concerning the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Lord Kṛṣṇa) and His devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda has given Bhaktivedanta purports in English and wonderfully presented it to the modern world, specifically to give a deep understanding of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**Tamas**—the material mode of ignorance.

**Tamo-guṇa**—the mode of ignorance, or darkness of material nature. It is controlled by Lord Śiva.

**Tapasya**—austerity; voluntary acceptance of some material trouble for progress in spiritual life.

**Tapas**—austerity or penance. There are many rules and regulations in the *Vedas* which apply here, like rising early in the morning and taking a bath. Sometimes it is very troublesome to rise early in the morning, but whatever voluntary trouble one may suffer in this way is called penance. Similarly, there are prescriptions for fasting on certain days of the month. One may not be inclined to practice such fasting, but because of his determination to make advancement in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he should accept such bodily troubles when they are recommended.

**Tapah**—the acceptance of hardships for spiritual realization.

**Tilaka**—sacred clay markings placed on the forehead and other parts of the body to designate one as a follower of Viṣṇu, Rāma, Śiva, *Vedic* culture, etc.

**Tri-daṇḍa**—a staff, made of three rods, carried by Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs* who are devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, signifying service with mind, body and words.

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**Tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī**—a member of the renounced order of life who accepts the personal nature of the Absolute Truth.

**Upaniṣads**—one-hundred and eight Sanskrit treatises that embody the philosophy of the *Vedas*. Considered the most significant philosophical sections and crest jewels of the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads* are found in the *Āraṇyaka and Brāhmaṇa* portions of the *Vedas*. They are theistic and contain the realizations and teachings of great sages of antiquity.

**Upāsanā-kāṇḍa**—portions of the *Vedas*

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2. Non-*Vedic* Texts
3. Articles, Papers and Internet References
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