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Education Focus



Highlights of the issue:

-  Trapped in the Education 'Cell'
-  Closer to Academia, Farther from God
-  Schooling in the realm of Stupidity
-  Vedic Technology Arts & Crafts



What good will their education do?

We must develop our Krishna Consciousness school ... to be the model for education in all the world, and let anyone see our Krishna Consciousness children and they will immediately understand the importance and necessity for such education amongst the citizens at large. Otherwise, the children of your country and other countries, they are simply growing up to be sophisticated animals, so what good will their education do? But if they will agree to try to understand our Krishna Consciousness education or way of life and allow their children to be educated by us, they will see them come out as the topmost citizens with all good qualities such as honesty, cleanliness, truthfulness, loyalty, etc. So that is a very important work and you are especially responsible to make it successful. All other GBC men should give you all assistance for building up the standard there. [Sri Prabhupada in his letter to Satsvarupa - Los Angeles 1 July, 1972.]

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Srila Prabhupada Speaks on Education

*A conversation with His Divine Grace A.C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Disciple: Srila Prabhupada, the universities nowadays don't teach any courses in the nature of the soul.

Srila Prabhupada: Therefore, the young person says, "What is the wrong if I become a dog?" Because there is no education. He does not know the difference between the dog and the human being. Therefore, he says, "What is the wrong if I become a dog? I will get more facility for sex without any criminal charges." This is the advancement of education.

Dr. Mize: How does the mind, then, come to know that there is a soul?

Srila Prabhupada: You have to be educated. How are these people, my students, convinced about the soul? They have been educated by knowledge and by practice. Everything has to be learned by being properly educated. And therefore, the Vedic injunction is *tad-vijnanartham*—"In order to know that science"—*sa gurum evabhigacchet*—"you must go to a guru, a teacher." So the answer is that you must go to the teacher who can teach you how the soul is there.



Srila AC Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada



Did You Know?

When Srila Prabhupada incorporated the first ISKCON temple in 1966, he stated the first purpose of ISKCON as:
"To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples 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."

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Closer to Academia, Farther from God

- H G S Yamanda Dasa

A recent 'study' revealed the 'fact' that the higher you climb the academic ladder, the lesser your belief in God. The automatic conclusion was: As you become more and more intelligent you can see the truth for yourself. God simply does not exist for the highly intelligent people.

The above is a good sampling of the so-called research studies undertaken nowadays, which simply foster atheism under various guises. This study did not admit that after banning prayers in schools, not encouraging any sort of discussion on the topic of God how is it possible that someone can believe in God without proper training?

Another aspect of this 'study' was the finding that the younger you are the more willingly you may believe in God. Thus researchers admit that some belief in God is in-built or wired-in our system. It is in growing up in this material world that we become non-believers. One famous American humourist had observed that "I was born a genius but schooling spoiled me." At least in the context of our current discussion the above statement holds water. Srila Prabhupada warns us, "Modern civilization has advanced considerably in the field of mass education, but the result is that people are more unhappy than ever before because of the stress placed on material advancement to the exclusion of the most important part of life, the spiritual aspect."

What then is the exact way of understanding God?

Srila Prabhupada states in his *Bhagavad-Gita* commentary: "In the *Bhagavad-Gita* (10.11) the Lord says that in order to show special favor to His pure devotees, He personally eradicates the denser darkness of all misgivings by switching on the light of pure knowledge within the heart of a devotee. Therefore, because of the Personality of Godhead's taking charge of illuminating the heart of His devotee, certainly a devotee, engaged in His service in transcendental love, cannot remain in darkness. He comes to know everything of the absolute and the relative truths. The devotee cannot remain in darkness, and because a devotee is enlightened by the Personality of Godhead, his knowledge is certainly perfect."

This is not the case for those who speculate on the Absolute Truth by dint of their own limited power of approach. Perfect knowledge is called *parampara*, or deductive knowledge coming down from the authority to the submissive aural received who is bona fide by service and surrender. One cannot challenge the authority of the Supreme and know Him also at the same time. He reserves the right of not being exposed to such a challenging spirit of an insignificant spark of the whole, a spark subjected to the control of illusory energy. The devotees are submissive, and therefore the transcendental knowledge descends from the Personality of Godhead to Brahma and from Brahma, to His sons and disciples in succession. This process is helped by the Supersoul within such devotees. That is the perfect way of learning transcendental knowledge. (Source: From "Back to Godhead", December 2008, p.32.)

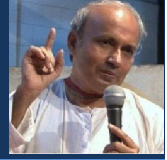


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Trapped in the Education 'Cell'

- HG Rasamandal Das



Over the past century or so we have seen tremendous information explosion and the scientists in every field have been able to scale newer heights in their pursuits. As more and more research initiatives are underway we see celebrations in the scientific community. The present-day research is getting closer and closer to the smallest unit of creation but at the same time losing what we call the "common-sense" understanding on the subject matter.

Let us take agriculture for instance. Decades ago, the farmer used to be the center of knowledge with regard to his land, soil condition, seeds, weather, growing season, harvesting, pest control, etc. He was all in all and though may not be possessing any qualification according to the present day standards, he was well-equipped for his requirements. He could manage his activity of cultivation based on the knowledge handed over to him from his family environment and confirmed by practical experience. He had the knowledge of weather condition and took advantage of it for sowing seeds and managing irrigation based on moisture condition. He had knowledge when to look for pests and what care to be taken in case of pest incidence. He had full knowledge of the predators in nature and also the available protective mechanism in nature which would not require much external interference. He knew that the yield of crops was dependent on the condition of the soil and he could see a relationship with all the entities in the nature. This means he had a holistic knowledge of what is required in his field of activity. Contrast this with the present day agricultural sciences. Over the decades we have created so many "specialists" and we are adding more and more to the list. We have the breeders, soil scientists, entomologists, pathologists, nematologist, germplasm experts, biochemists, nutritional scientist and of course the sterile laboratories. Each of them are becoming so specialized in their field that they do not understand the relationship that exists between one specialization and the other specialization. It is like the cardiologist, who specializes in his field but does not know what consequences his prescription drugs will have on the lungs, liver or other parts of the body. First it was the anti-biotics and now it is pro-biotics. So the modern education with "specialization" is confining us into narrower and narrower bandwidth of knowledge. Somewhere in the 60's and 70's we had the breeders in focus who with some advances in breeding technology established that breeding holds the key to improving crop yields. So they introduced hybrid seeds and with that came the need for use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The debate is still on the extent of damage the "green revolution" has caused to the environment in the most exploited northern states of India. With further advances in biotechnology, genetics, molecular biology, the emphasis is on genetically engineered seeds. It is argued that this is the only way that the growing population could be fed in the coming decades. The GM seeds have only thrown open more issues than it seeks to address. As is evident, in the absence of holistic knowledge the implications of introducing such a technology are not known unless its damages manifest at some point of time. A common-sense understanding is enough to establish that chemicals in the direct food chain will cause irreparable damage to health and progeny in the coming decades. From these advances in the knowledge what is imperative is that these are based on the exploitative nature of human nature and become more pronounced due to the influence of "kali". The move now is towards mechanization or factory farming of food with control vesting with a few corporations or individuals. Meanwhile, the Varnasrama setup is non-exploitative in nature because everything is dovetailed with the design of the Supreme Lord. The farmer tends to understand his relationship with nature and is dependent on it for his needs and he is confident that all his needs will be fulfilled. Because he understands that he is part of the "living nature", he develops an understanding and respect for it which is lacking now.



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Traditional Education

• H H B hakti Raghava S wami

Traditional education is practically a thing of the past, something most of us have never even seen, what to speak of having lived or experienced such a life-style. We are generally totally ignorant of what it may be or what it might have been. Whatever little we have heard about traditional education has often left us with negative impressions and reservations about it, as we were likely exposed to the so called short-comings and even "backwardness" of such an educational system.

In the university where I took up my post-graduate studies in education just a few years ago, the traditional gurukula system found in India and the traditional pondok pesantren system found in Indonesia were classified under "non-formal" education. The specific term used to describe the course in the Indonesian language was Pendidikan Luar Sekolah - PLS", which literally translates as "Education Outside of School". The irony is that, traditionally speaking, what is classified today as "Education Outside of School" (non-formal education) was previously the "only" education taught in school settings such as gurukula or pondok pesantren and that was considered then as "formal education". All other education was "outside of school" through the equivalent of what we call today "vocational training" and "apprenticeship" (non-formal education). We have basically done a full somersault here, accepting today what is non-formal education as formal and what is formal education as non-formal. Today's science and technology promote studies and research which deal primarily with advancement of vocational trades (computer and other machine oriented technology), and give less importance to the academic fields of philosophy and humanities. How has this come about and what kind of results can we expect? A good part of the answer lies in the following statement- "The effects of the Sophists on education necessarily make one wonder whether it is wise to entrust education to the technicians rather than the philosophers." (Pratt, 1980: 18)

We have indeed allowed the policies of education to be influenced and dictated by the interests of political leaders, powerful industrial magnets, technocrats and scientists, all of whom tend to lack in wisdom and depth. Due to a primarily materialistic training, such "leaders" are either prone to personal motivation, allured to ever increasing profits, lacking in philosophical insights or short-sighted by nature. The root of the problem in education lies in not knowing or not understanding the basic principles which are meant to govern any and all educational pursuits, beginning with the very definition and purpose of knowledge and education. Put simply and plainly, when education is used primarily to promote materialistic pursuits and ambitions, there must be shortcoming and failures because the very meaning and purpose of education are not understood or followed. In the name of so-called education only, teachers and students are simply playing a costly game.

How we live and where we live also help shape our education. As mentioned in the Preface to VARNASRAMA EDUCATION, unless we understand the essence of what education is and the basics of what makes for an ideal society (varnasrama), any attempt to develop effective and meaningful educational systems will fail. It is of crucial and paramount importance to understand the intimate working relationships between education and society, not only in the early years of one's formation, but indeed throughout one's entire life. The ancient Vedic system of varnasrama dharma is the most ideal, most scientific and most fulfilling educational institution which can help make one vastly learned, well organized, productive and highly skilled, and above all, cultured and wise.

[Source: From author's 'Preface' to *Forgotten Principles of Education*.]



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Schooling in the Realm of Stupidity

- H G K esava K rsna Dasa- GRS

Albert Einstein had the insight to observe that two things were infinite: [1] Human stupidity and [2] The cosmos. But he wasn't too sure about the second one. What in the solar system does schooling have to do with exalted arcane 'facts' such as the big-bang and evolution? Nothing at all really, but everything to do with sanity and the theft of knowledge.



There was one sagely looking fellow, a Mr. Darwin, who when analyzing the complexities of an eye, saw the absurdity of his own evolution theory, but has to his credit, convinced of the subsequent need to institutionalize his theory in school text books worldwide. Acknowledged by opponents as his unholiness, his undivine grace, the founder a-charlatan of evolutionanity ki boooooo!, he has blessed humanity with the 'noble' contention that our something great grandparents were hairy, half-brained grunting louse infested tree dwelling brutes, whose 'glorious' creation sprung up from a lowly obnoxious puddle. His admirers exult such an incredibly illustrious heritage. That many people are convinced of this, though they do not understand, definitely says something about blind faith. A faith which average religious people say is aligned with Satan, or some obscure madman, while the evolutions will accuse religious people of retarded intellectual deficiency, whose 'holy' scriptures originated with uncivilized savages. Both sides feel justified. Two sides of the same planet.

When our children go to school to be indoctrinated with the thesis that we are just walking mechanistic soul-less bags of chemicals, which yell ouch! when its c-fibers are firing, being mere units of stardust hurtling mindlessly through outer space for no reason whatsoever, except through the velocity of the fateful detonation at the beginning of time, a nasty trend is set.

When a child comes home from school, the parents inquire, "My dear child. Oh glory of the family, upholder of the family tradition. Oh future hope for the entire world. What did you learn today?" At least this is the ideal. A kali-yuga enquiry would more accurately be, "Oil! Wat did yer lern t'day little 'un?"

The 'sacred' evolution textbooks would have the child believe, and respond in this way, "Good day to you who produced me. I learnt that I am an evolved biological system, who is blindly programmed by indeterminate physical laws to selfishly preserve my genes by means of reproduction. I have no purpose on this earth. I exist thanks to a sheer mathematically impossible random chance occurrence which set in motion the phenomenon of evolution. Ultimately, I am a piece of animated left-over debris from the almighty big-bang which happened X billion years ago. I am your by-product born out of a symbiotic pairing of male and female Y and X chromosomes." How sweet! Compare this statement with verse, BG.16.8. "They say that this world is unreal, with no foundation, no God in control. They say it is produced of sex desire and has no cause other than this."

Lord Krsna is describing a typical demoniac viewpoint of the world around us. This is to say, that within the barriers of demoniac thought territory, attempts are made to teach young minds the same thing, but couched in Disney-like fairy-tale technological attractiveness.



In fact, a response like this would more likely come from a programmed robot, created by zealous proponents of artificial intelligence, who certainly subscribe to the above type of thinking. A robot like the famed 'terminator.' What do I mean – terminator?

It is known that such a demoniac outlook has devastating effects upon people and society, contributing to a major breakdown in the social order. When the deterioration reaches a certain stage, BG. Verses 1.39, 1.40, and 1.41 explain how with the destruction of family values, irreligion leads to – Varna sankarah – unwanted children. Abandoned, uncared for, and unloved people generally make life hellish for all concerned.

When regimented killing of animals en-masse is considered normal, when abortion is seen as valid, when chopping down dwindling forests is economically productive and so on, quite contrary to Vedic ideals, are signs of convoluted thought of the type only terminators will perform with glee. Without spiritual guidance, people are apt to do horrendous brutal things. Yet it is considered progress. The wise however, will see this as the progressive deterioration of a dead body. A corpse is also progressing, but towards a stooily end as the worms evacuate.

Among the plethora of theories tied to the premise of evolution and big-bang, one is called the anthropic principle. It stipulates that the whole universe was so fortuitously designed to facilitate man as the undisputed, pre-eminent prime being. Does this sound somewhat arrogant? In reality, it means that MAN, yes the MAN, can, even in the name of religion, absolutely exploit nature and her resources, the animals and 'inferior' fellow humans, at enormous cost to the environment, with resultant freakish weather, water and food shortages, imbalanced bio-diversity, not to mention social disorder and the rest. According to Einstein's reckoning, when the anthro-stupid justifies the supremacy of stupidity, can we expect peace and harmony?

When military establishments purposely or inadvertently kill civilians, they call it collateral damage. When future generations are taught we are all blobs of collateral animation, in principle no different from a cardboard box, potential trouble is forever brewing. What can we do with a cardboard box? We can pummel it, kick it, and smash it, whatever. What is the harm if we pulverize a brother blob, or sister blobini, Mamablob or Dadblob, or even blobiji? This is insidious terminator philosophy. Each day, more and more terminators are participating in what many scientists warn, of the ability to adapt in an increasingly deterministic world. Adapt or die. Terminate to survive. Survival of the fittest. Doesn't this sound like kali-yuga? I thought so.

Isn't this all so bleak and gloomy? Why are all these things happening? It is the result of grand theft. Theft? Divine theft to be precise. We all know how Krsna's divine stealing of yoghurt and butter is the source of unlimited bliss to those pure in heart. But to the unclean heart, the heart of an individual who envies the Supreme Lord, who seeks to delete Him, and replace Him with a theory incompatible with Godhood, his knowledge is stolen by illusion, who is Maya, the divine energy of the Lord. BG.7.15, tells of the types of people who do not surrender to Krsna.

Lord Krsna reserves the right to reveal Himself or not BG.7.25. But it hurts Him to see His servants, in this case, the demigods not being accorded the respect they deserve BG.3.12 – "In charge of the various necessities of life, the demigods being satisfied by the performance of yagna [sacrifice], will supply all necessities to you. But he who enjoys such gifts without offering them to the demigods in return is certainly a thief."

Srila Prabhupada writes: "...if we forget the purpose of human life and simply take supplies from the agents of the Lord for sense gratification and become more and more entangled in material existence, which is not the purpose of creation, certainly we become thieves, and therefore we are punished by the laws of material nature. A society of thieves can never be happy, because they have no aim in life..." BG.3.12 purport.

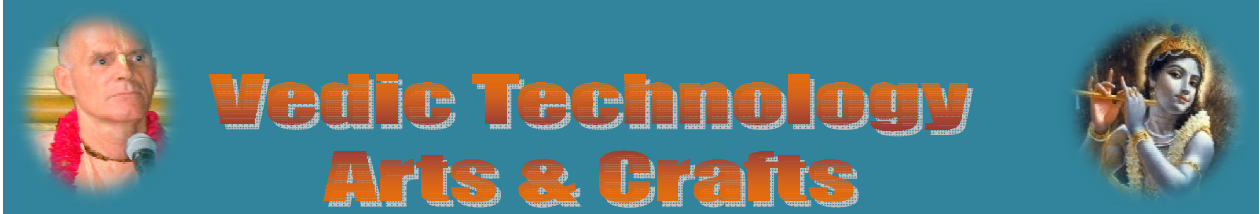
The scientific theories aligned to diversions from – satyam – truth, clearly do not give respect to anyone or anything, and compulsory schooling amidst the unpleasant consequences of mans deeds is required in a secular society. The challenge for parents is to keep the balance by sorting out the facts from fiction thereby synchronizing the developing intellect. Those who fail to do this are being party to a crime which can render a person 'stupid.'

(Source: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=1400>)



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Srila Prabhupada on Technology

Srila Prabhupada speaks of the simple technology which existed prior to modern industrialization. From a very young age, young children would naturally and easily learn the trade of their father or elders. This kind of easy technology is called *silpa-karma* in the Vedic scriptures and does not require for one to attend formal school. Actually, when technology remains simple, the learning process is also not difficult. The following exchange took place on July 14, 1977 in Vrindavana, India.

Prabhupāda: In India the caste system was very good. From the very beginning the children would learn the technology of their paternal. Just like potter. You'll see the children of the potter, they are also making a small bird, a small fruit, and they would be sold. A small playing utensils—small glass, small plate—they're also sold. Other children would purchase. The whole family used to earn something. Nowadays they're sent to school, wasting time, and then unemployment and idle brain. What is the use of sending a potter's son to school?

Tamāla Kāñēa: No, everything he needs to know, he can learn at home.

Prabhupāda: That's what I... Similarly, weaver, that cloth weaving, "kat, kat." The wife is spinning, her husband is weaving, the children is weaving, and combinedly at the end of the day there is a cloth. And people were satisfied with simple necessities. They would not charge very much for the labor. And one nice cloth requires half a pound cotton. Half a pound cotton means maybe one rupee. Another one rupee for the labor. So now they are paying twenty to thirty rupees. Unnecessarily he has to earn this money and pay to the millionaires, and he will keep three dozen motorcars, so another man will be engaged in motorcar industry. In this way time is being wasted without any search after spiritual realization. Time is wasted in such so-called technology advancement. And the real purpose of life, *jévasya tattva-jijñāsā*, that is missing. And when you present that "This is the most important business of life," they say, "It is brainwashing." And they fight to check us, Communists and others, that "It is useless, God consciousness." [break] (long pause) So... *Jāniyā çuniyā biña khāinu*. Because they are missing the aim of life, they are committing suicide. And this *varēçrama-dharma* was planned in such a way that everyone would be spiritually advanced. The weaver will get, the potter will get, the blacksmith will get, the *brāhmaēa* is already there, *kñātriya* will get—everyone.

What is Vedic Technology?

Before defining "Vedic Technology", let us first understand the word "technology". The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines technology as "(the study and knowledge of) the practical, especially industrial, use of scientific discoveries". The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines technology as the "(science of) practical or industrial art". The same dictionary refers to the Greek root word "tekhnikos" as "art". We can thus understand technology as the way of doing something which yields practical results. The definitions above indicate there should be a certain "art", "expertise", "know-how" and "science" attached to the process or activity performed. It is not that before today's industrialized "development" and "modern" inventions, there was no technology existing in the world. Technology, or the art of doing things intelligently, efficiently and in harmony with nature, in a variety of fields, has existed since a long time. Factually, technology can be traced to many of the ancient civilizations known to mankind, in particular to the oldest recorded of such civilization, the Vedic culture. Vedic technology, as we will come to understand, is



that technology which has remained simplified and easily practiced without causing any ill effects to individuals or to the environment in which it has been practiced or applied. In the context of agriculture, for example, the simple process of ploughing the land has traditionally been done using the power of the oxen as opposed to our modern system of machines such as tractors. Tilling the land requires some kind of technology. In so many spheres of life, some technology is required. Vedic technology is that technology or know-how or art which has been the least expensive and the least harmful to both the user and his environment.

We would like to present an extract from an overview presented by editors of the website, **Indian History of Science and Technology** (The authors share some interesting information in relation to technology).

Overview

It is now recognized that western criteria are not the sole benchmark by which other cultural knowledge should be evaluated. While the term 'traditional' sometimes carries the connotation of 'pre-modern' in the sense of 'primitive' or 'outdated', many of the traditional sciences and technologies were in fact quite advanced even by western standards as well as better adapted to unique local conditions and needs than their later 'modern' substitutes. In countries with ancient cultural traditions, the folk and elite sciences were taken as part of the same unified legacy, without any hegemonic categorizations. However, modernization has homogenized various solutions, and this loss of ideas is similar to the destruction of biodiversity. Colonizers systematically derogated, exterminated or undermined the local traditional science, technology and crafts of the lands and people they plundered, because of their intellectual arrogance, and also to control and appropriate the economic means of production and the social means of organization. Modern societies created hegemonic categories of science verses magic, technology verses superstitions etc., which were arbitrary and contrived. But many anthropologists who have recently worked with so-called 'primitive' peoples have been surprised to learn of some of their highly evolved and sophisticated technologies. The term 'Traditional Knowledge System' was thus coined by anthropologists as a scientific system which has its own validity, in contradistinction to 'modern' science. (<http://www.indianscience.org>)

Soft-Technology as Ego-Friendly and Eco-Friendly

Today's world of advanced technology has created an artificial, unstable and ever changing work force whereby one must continuously take up specialized training in order to meet the demands of a growing industrialized and technological society. Whereas previously one would generally learn a trade and maintain that one particular occupation throughout one's entire life, today's "modernized" world forces ordinary workers to learn new skills, many of which are sophisticated and time consuming to master and which often become obsolete within a few years, thus forcing that same individual to again learn yet another skill which will often end with the same result. To become an ordinary farmer in today's world, one must study for many years at college and university, learning to operate all types of machinery based on computerized and high-level technologies, and only then will one become equipped to perform his task of farming.

The *Vedic* way of life is based on a much more simplified system of "soft-technology" which is simultaneously both ego-friendly and eco-friendly. Ego-friendly means that the apprenticeship and performance of traditional skills are both pleasing and satisfying to the individual. One learns in a natural environment and with a person who generally enjoys his work and has practical experience. One does not face the kind of dangers modern machineries threaten the worker with all the time. The more traditional skills are also eco-friendly in that they do not cause harmful and destructive effects to the environment. The ox will only add opulence to the soil by emitting his urine and dung whereas the tractor kills the soil with its oil and petrol dripping on the land, not to speak of its spoiling the top soil with its heavy weight.

Both Gandhi and Economist E.V. Schumacher advocated the use of small-scale technology which centers on using both local manpower and local resources without causing damage to the environment. Such soft-energy technology is based on renewable energy and thus ideal for promoting and realizing the concept of self-sufficiency. There are many other advocates who support the need for a return to soft-technology and a more simplified way of life. In this way, Vedic Technology has much to offer our present day society.



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New Gokula Dhama: A Report



• H G Dhaneshwar Dasa

New Gokula Dhama is our first effort to establish varnashrama culture here in Ukraine. Since the country has been the breadbasket of Europe for centuries, and since there are still thousands of villages where people live simply to this very day, our efforts here have a ready-made preaching field. We are just in the beginning stages, having acquired about 5 hectares and 3 houses less than three months ago. The project is based on the concept of living the philosophy of Bhagavad-gita: Krishna is the owner of everything, we are His servants, this valuable human life is meant for executing pure devotional service, and going back to Godhead. Our Deity is Sri Partha-Sarathi, Whom we pray to bless us to follow His instructions completely. We want New Gokula Dhama to be a sort of Cosmodrome where its members all participate in inter-galactic missions, that is to say, we want all of our participants to go back home, back to Godhead.

The icon of our project is tulasi devi. There are three items there: Tulasi, the pot and the soil. Tulasi represents the devotees, the pot represents the place, and the soil represents the activities. Of the three Tulasi is most important but without the pot and soil there is no Tulasi. Here the devotees are the project, not the agriculture, the building, or the cows, although they are also important because without them there would be no devotees here. The activities give us something to do to learn how to get free from our anarthas, and become qualified to enter into the spiritual world.

There are some things that we don't want here: fruitive work and fruitive workers, and almost everything of the dominant atheistic culture. We feel that it is important to separate the two cultures so that we don't unconsciously mix in things of the dominant culture that are anti-thetical to the Krishna culture. So we don't want their money (within our own group), we don't want their sense of proprietorship, we don't want their sense of fashion, dancing, thinking and ways of living, automobiles, and materialistic values.

We need to learn how to live a different culture, the complete Krishna culture. This varnashrama project thus includes drama, dance, music, the fine arts, education at our Abhideya Cultural Academy, cow protection, and brahminical culture, besides agriculture and self-sufficient living. Our intention is to learn how to solve the economic problem with the land and cows as instructed by Srila Prabhupada. Initially the focus must be on agriculture and building to provide the means to grow the community. As it fills out the focus will shift to preaching, with the intention of bringing people here to teach them by our own example the advantages to this simple and devotional way of life.

I've been at the village for just over a month now and it has been a transforming experience, to say the least. I am getting to know the cows, the birds, the earthworms. Most of all I am getting to know the Ukrainian mentality and their culture by seeing how the members work, act, and inter-relate. In general the Ukrainians are very wonderful and warm, have big hearts, and I feel myself fortunate to be in their association. I love the peace and quiet of the village. No more than 6 cars pass down the street on a typical day.

Make Vrindavan Villages



More land is being purchased almost regularly. See photos on flickr.com, searching for dhanesvara (people). That school has 11 large rooms which we will use for ashrama and temple, and we will have the school on lease for ten years. We will soon purchase a huge barn, big enough to house more than 100 cows with an accompanying 3 hectares. Yes, we will eventually have a herd that big. :-) Formerly this area supported a collective dairy farm and more than 5,000 cows. One devotee who has been caring for 6 cows will come for a visit soon to see our community and see if he would like to live here. If so then we will immediately be having 4 milking cows, 2 bulls, and 4 heifers. (presently we have 3 cows, (2 milking) and 1 young bull calf). It is so nice to have milk straight from the cow to offer to the Deities morning and evening everyday! And nicer to know that it is not tampered with, adulterated or containing any additives, hormones, or other strange chemicals. Just pure goodness!

The village people love us because we are bringing life back to their village which was about a third deserted before we came. The money-making prospects of the city beckon. But the hangers-on genuinely like village life and are intent to continue. They want one of our group to be the village bookkeeper because they think they can trust us more than anyone they know here. They have also asked us to manage the crumbling water system. Although we haven't shown it, they found out that we were Krishnites (as they call the devotees here) from the veterinarian. He heard us calling our cows - Prema and Bhava - and told the villagers that the Krishnites will bring money to pay for the cows treatment. They are so nice and innocent here. They asked Oleg, our ksatriya, at the next village meeting what Krishnites were. He gave a simple explanation saying that we followed Vedic culture, which is the historical culture of Ukraine (and most people are aware that this is their heritage) worshipped God, and had four principles --- we don't take intoxicants, we don't eat meat, we don't gamble or steal, and we don't have illicit sex. Upon hearing that several of the ladies quipped "can you take my husband to join your group?" We don't yet show the external vaishnava symbols such as dhoti and tilak until we have solid and good relationships established. Once our neighbors know who we are, in the way that they can know things, we can begin to teach them more about ourselves and the culture we represent.

New members are coming to join us, and some are leaving. We have now 6 men and 1 woman. One fellow who read my small book came from Israel for a month to check us out. He is going back to fix up a longer term visa and return. Ukraine apparently doesn't want Israelis here as they must pay \$150 a month for a visa. Maxim, who has been my translator for the past 2+ years is going to study the healing arts and I must now find a new translator. It will be difficult to find someone as steady and good as he is. Pray for me on that one. One man with his wife and two and a half children (one in the oven) will come for a month's stay to see if they like what we are doing and want to move here. He has a good reputation as a hard worker and stalwart preacher, having traveled as far as Vladivostok (east coast of Russia - 11,000 km away) on his own volition to preach. Great, we need good preachers. Another two men joined us in the past two days as well. Otherwise, we got a late start planting, and there is much to learn: cow care, planting, harvesting, how to cut and store hay and food for the winter, how to live and work together as a team, etc. There is always too much to do it seems and not enough time. But that will change with the weather, and in the cold months we will have plenty of time for hearing, chanting and Bhagavat-katha.

(Source: www.varnasramaeducation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80:new-gokul-dham-report-by-hg-dhanesvara-prabhu&catid=53:vedic-farming&Itemid=143)



Make Vrindavan Villages





Village Reach Out Program - Suddapally Visit

My brief stay at Cambodia inspired me to explore the near by villages. On Govardhan puja, I met one of my senior god brothers who happily invited me to his village. I shared the invitation proposal with a few of my godbrothers and godsisters, who readily agreed to join on karthik dwadashi. We started early morning from HG Gour Gopal prabhuj's house in Bhakta Mohan's car and broke our fast at Bhakta Narsimham prabhuj's house. After taking stomach full prasadam resumed our journey to Suddupalli. We crossed big buildings, many colleges, open fields and small hillocks, few cows, working farmers.



HGRam Laxman Das



After an hour of journey we reached the village, where we were greeted by HG Nanda Gopal das and his family. On Nand Gopal prabhu's request, Gour Gopal prabhu led the Kirtan. Slowly a few villagers began trickling in making the kirtan go bigger and larger. It went on for more than an hour. Later on we discussed the importance of cows, to our amazement the villagers did not know the medicinal value of panchagavya products. We also shared the information related to ongoing Vishwa Mangal Gou Gram Yatra, and requested them to participate in that. The discussion harped on the need to protect cows, how Krishna loves cows, and how nanda maharaj maintained his cows. We also enquired about local method of cultivation and educated ourselves about the local weather and



cultivation, traditions festivals. HG Nand Gopal prabhu explained how he came to Krishna consciousness he has been fixedly continuing his sadhna since eighteen long years without any association from outside. Later we had wonderful darshan of mother cow and her beautiful calf. We named him as Ramudu (Rama). We took lunch prasadam at Nand Gopal prabhuj's house. His determination and strong desire to serve their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Gopinath had been very inspiring experience for us. The day was spent in the association of land, cow, Krishna and His beloved devotees. We came back to the city thinking how later on we can

simply live on land with cows and chanting hare krishna, following Srila Prabhupad's instructions. The nostalgia made us pray for our success in being a part of *Making Vrndavan Village* mission in future while living life in simplicity and high thinking.

● *By HG Ram Laxman Das*

Make Vrndavan Villages



Varnasrama offers a conducive atmosphere for spiritual evolution and realizing Him, the eight varnas, living life closer to God, farming, cow rearing.... Besides these perspectives I slowly realized another very important dimension of life-style called 'varnasrama'- its social dimension, its emphasis on society. While spiritual evolution remains an individual endeavor, it also connects to the society at large. It places 'man' in the broader social milieu, as a part of the bigger network of not only human beings, but the complete creation. It made me realize that society is not a hindrance as it is usually perceived but can be beautifully dovetailed to become stepping stone to Krishna-centric living- daivi varnasrama. Once that realization dawned, I tried to reach out to people instead of shunning them completely in order to sound more focused on my goal. I was inquisitive to know more about devotees living so far off in a simple set up of a village, without material comforts of life. They have been living for ages what we are so scared of doing even for a day! I was keen on knowing more about the life beyond city - a nostalgia. I shared my thoughts with Ramlaxman prabhu, he readily suggested that we embark on a village reach out program. Within a couple of days, he arranged for a program at HG NandGopal prabhu's house in Suddapally village, which was about 65kms away from Hyderabad. On Kartik dwadashi, October 30, 2009 - dwadashi our small group of 6 people set off- HG Gour Gopal prabhu, HG Ram Laxman prabhu, Narsimhamam prabhu, Mohan prabhu, my 6-year old daughter, Bhaktin Radhika and myself. We started at about 7 am in Mohan prabhuji's car. For breaking the fasting, Narsimhamam prabhu had graciously invited us all to his house, which fell on the way. His good wife and mother had lovingly arranged for a delicious prasadam served with loads and loads of love. After a brief break, we again set off. As our car raced on the highway, the polluted and smoke filled atmosphere gave way to fresh air, verdant surroundings, border of small hillocks, lotus filled ponds, green fields, cows grazing in open pasture lands... everything was very beautiful. But more beautiful was the warm reception that we received at NandGopal prabhuji's house. The humility and genuity in demeanor endeared him instantly despite the linguistic gap. HG Gour Gopal prabhu led a nice kirtan, which was joined by many neighbouring people. The lilting voice provoked even public shy devotees to sing and glorify the lord. We had enlightening dialogues with Nand Gopal prabhu, his family members, and other villagers. We reached out to others who could not come for the kirtan and also had a nice darshan of go-mata with her beautiful calf. We also felt the unfortunate invasion of materialistic city into the villages, the resultant abandoning of traditional professions, children going to local missionary schools, presence of cows restricted to just two-three families, even fewer who know how to take care of them with love and their significance. I had been wondering that at heart they are such simple people, but still why they are not able to offer selfless love to a gentle and giving creature like a cow? Little thought revealed that it is probably because materialism tends to usurp the place reserved for the Lord, we are not aware of the social aspect of 'knowing' the Lord. The joy that we people have felt after reading the message of Srila Prabhupada, we have not bothered to share with our brethren. For city dwellers, agriculture means a profession in which one cannot stay 'clean' or something that exists in the laboratory of scientists- from high breed seeds coming out the test tubes, mechanized farming, fertilizers, and pesticides to cloud seeding- thinking man can do a better job than even 'God'. Sometimes our exposure to little researches in 'varnasrama' and experience of having attended a few 'seminars' pushes us into the cocoon of inflated ego. Varnasrama is a social system and not an individual structure. It is spiritual realization in a social context. The glass wall that had earlier existed had crumbled down, we realized that there can be a barter system here too, we can exchange our learnings to help each other. We can tell them how important they are for us and how we also plan to go back to our roots. Only this way we can resist the invasion of materialism in our city and village lives. This village reach out trip rewarded us by cementing our relationship and expanding horizons of knowledge. Now I have more respect for the unknown villagers. Now I think I am slowly getting to understand the significance of Srila Prabhupada's journey to the West, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's munificent gesture of distributing the love of God, pulling it out from cave dwelling baba-ism to distributing it freely to everybody.



- By Vrmdavanlila dd

Make Vrmdavan Villages





The Vedic Way to a Photographic Memory (Radhika Chhotai for "Express Buzz")

November 5, 2009. Hyderabad. B Sai Kiran, the only Vedic memory trainer in the world, achieved an unusual feat recently, when he memorised 100 odd words from different languages like Russian, Sanskrit, German and many other technical terms as well.

"Ten scholars from various colleges were invited and together they came up with 100 words from their respective fields. I was given 10 minutes to memorise them, after which I had to recall them in the same sequence in which they were given," said Kiran.

So how did he manage to remember the words? "It is very simple. Mind understands the language of pictures and can remember only something that is tangible. All that I do is convert unimaginable things into pictures and decode them in pictorial forms," he says.

Kiran has also applied for the Limca Book of Records as no one else has attained this feat.

"I didn't try this task earlier as I wanted the students from my institute to be able to do it. Unfortunately when they were unable, I decided to attempt it," he said.

Kiran has been in the field of vedic learning since 2001, when he first began his institute, IMPACT (Institute of Memory Power and Calculation Techniques) in the city.

"After my graduation, I was not as successful in my job as I would have expected," he says recalling his earlier days when Dr Madugula Nagaphani Sharma and Das introduced him to the field of Vedic mathematics and vedic memory. After attaining a degree in the subject, Kiran started teaching the technique to children in his colony. Once the method became a rage and brought him fame he decided to make it his full-time profession. "Today, I have institutes in Dubai and Kuwait as well and I train more than 2 lakh students every year," he says.

Kiran now aims to help the education system in our country benefit from Vedic memory and adds that it was this method that aided our ancestors while doing calculations in the age when calculators were unheard of.

"Every calculation is done within 10 or what we call 'Dashamshav' and so one does not require a calculator for that. For example, if one is doing normal mathematics, and has to divide something by 34, then knowing the table of 34 is a must. But with Vedic mathematics, you can calculate it within seconds without knowing the table," he said and immediately scribbled the calculations and reached the answer in a jiffy.

He also says that this system will help children think out of the box as it gives scope for understanding and logically memorising.

"Indian education system is more powerful than any other, mainly because we still don't have to use calculators till a certain age, and insist on mental mathematics. This system will help the children more and they will never require a calculator," he declares with confidence.

Kiran's ID: humancomputer999@yahoo.co.in



75% Indian Engineering Students unemployable (Source: IANS, *The Economic Times*)

November 8, 2009. New Delhi. Discussing a report by software industry group Nasscom which says that 75 percent engineering students in India are unemployable, education experts here on Saturday said that the Indian higher education system must give skill building and practical training equal importance as academics to give them an edge.

A.D. Sahasrabudhu, director of the College of Engineering, Pune said that one of the major reasons why engineers, even from reputed institutes, are not easily employed because they lack hands-on skill.



"The focus in most institutes here is always on academics and theory. Thus a mechanical engineer may actually not know how to change a part of a machine. Therefore even if a high scoring student gets placed in a good company, eventually that lack of practical knowledge catches up," Sahasrabudhu said during a panel discussion at the sixth Higher Education Summit organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)



Delhi School of Music Teacher Sentenced to One Year in Jail

November 8, 2009. New Delhi. (Express News Service) A city court on Saturday awarded one-year imprisonment to a former teacher of the Delhi School of Music for molesting a minor student five years ago.

Metropolitan Magistrate Geetanjali Goel, rejected the teacher Dilip Soloman's plea that he be released on probation, noting that the move would send out a wrong signal to the society.

The court convicted Soloman under Section 354 (assault or criminal force on a woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and Section 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the Indian Penal Code.

The court, while pronouncing its order, relied on the testimony of the victim and ruled that the defence allegation that the girl had a motive to implicate could not be proven.

According to the prosecution, Soloman had molested the student on February 27, 2004 and March 19, 2004 during the lessons. She then told her mother about it and her parents lodged an FIR at Chanakyapuri police station. An in-house inquiry conducted by the music school reportedly went in favour of the accused.

The family then moved the Delhi High Court, which ordered a re-investigation. During the hearing, the child testified against the accused while Soloman had pleaded [innocence](#).



Badal wants youth to eat traditional food

October 24, 2009. Chandigarh. (IANS) Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal Sunday urged the youngsters to say good-bye to fast food culture of pizza, burgers and pastas, and eat traditional food that has a more nutritional value.

'Now it is high time to revive the culture of traditional food – 'the wisdom of our grandmothers'. Naturally grown and seasonal foods have always been intricately woven in our food culture, but unfortunately we have almost lost this,' Badal said.

The chief minister was addressing a gathering here after inaugurating 'Bebe di Rasoi – 2009, a traditional food festival jointly organised by Chandigarh Press Club in collaboration with Khedi Virasat Mission (KVM) and Millets Network of India (MINI).

'This rasoi (the festival of food) offers an opportunity to younger generations to have a feel of rich taste of our traditional food that have now become a matter of the past,' he said.

'Such traditional food festivals should be organised regularly to apprise our children especially with urban background about the rich nutritional value of traditional food,' he added.

In Bebe di Rasoi, there were different stalls displaying traditional cuisines of various states like Punjab, Haryana, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.



3-Month Residential Course on Land, Cows and Krishna

Varnasrama College at SSKBK (Sahyadri Sri Krishna Balarama Kshetra), Hebri, Karnataka (India) announced the commencement of its 3-month residential course on "Land, Cows and Krishna-II". SSKBK will also introduce a 1-month "Pottery Meddling and Molding" course in association with Khadi Village Industries and Commission, Ministry of MSME, Government of India. Both the courses are scheduled between January 2010 and March 2010. The primary medium of instruction will be English and optionally Hindi/Kannada/Telugu.



● **Mails to the Editor**



Thank you for the current newsletter which I found very informative. I would like to introduce the idea of a "Village Review". This would be an in depth analysis of each Varnashram Village under development by HH Bhakti Raghava Swami and his disciples, plus others. It would include information on village:

1. Government: How it is set up and how the decisions are made.
2. Economy: Income sources, where spent.
3. Education: How the school is set up, courses.
4. Legal system:
5. Land area
6. Number of inhabitants
7. Occupations

In this way, a person can look at each village and get an overview of how things are set up in detail.... Thank you for considering my suggestion. I think the newsletter is excellent, despite the technology limitations you must deal with.... The Varnashram mission is so important it must be attempted no matter what obstacles appear.

- **HG Prabhupad Das**



Srila Prabhupada wanted to establish daivi varnasrama. Where all orders of life becomes pure in their varnas and asrama and gets inspiration to become pure devotees. I was amazed to find out that Srila Bhaktivinoda thakura instructed ghrasthas to chant 64 rounds to become 'sat ghrasthas'. Varna asrama becomes possible when we all try our very best to become pure devotees of Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya..otherwise it remains mission impossible. With HH Bhakti Raghava Swami to head it up, there is much hope. Thank you Maharaja.

- **HG Payonidhi das**



Thank you Bhakti Raghava Maharaja for reminding us that this is, indeed, not an impossible mission. It is possible but to carry it out we will need the help of all of the devotees, not just a handful. As you rightly point out, what we do not see in the varnashrama endeavor are the capable men who can lead. We see brahminical types, and worker types, but the vaisyas who can organize and the ksatriyas who can lead are absent. We hope that when they read in Srila Prabhupada's purports that the proper activities of the vaishyas are cow protection and agriculture that they will realize this applies to them. The proper field of activity is the agricultural field, not the financial field. We must realize that this is what Srila Prabhupada wanted for us, for his movement, and for all of humanity. This is where our Movement is meant to go. Not to become moribund in the cities engaged in fruitive work at the expense of our spiritual lives. In the meantime we will keep ringing that bell. Hopefully the men of ability will hear the call and respond, before it is too late.

- **HG Dhanesvara Das**



Dear Vrindavanlila Prabhu, Thank you for sending me the newsletter- you have a wonderful project. ... I read with great interest the last issue of "Eight Petals". It was wonderful to see cow protection in action, such a vital part of spiritual evolution. However, I was thinking, "eight petals" is more than this- it is the four varnas and the four ashramas which cooperate to ensure social harmony and spiritual evolution. This, I have written about in detail in my own "Eight Petals", a book called "VARNASHRAMA, the Eight-Petalled Lotus" ... - **Niscala devi dasi**

The mails/ articles can be posted to eightpetalsnewsletter@gmail.com or vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com

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