



TRANSFORMING HEARTS

The Eco-friendly Way



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj for his enlightening discourses on the topics of Simple living and the vision and purpose behind the making of Govardhan Eco Village and Govardhan Ashram. The book 'TRANSFORMING HEARTS, The Eco Friendly Way' is based on his talks.

Our sincerest gratitude to the transcription team comprising of Bhakta Mohan Menon, Bhakta Rohan Shetty and Bhakta Rakesh Kolapkar. Their transcriptions were of immense help in compiling these notes.



'TRANSFORMING HEARTS, The Eco-friendly way' is based on the talks given by HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj about the vision and purpose behind the making of Govardhan Eco Village and Govardhan Ashram on various occasions. These notes are not the complete word-to-word transcription of the talks given by HH Radhanath Swami maharaj. They are compiled based on our personal notes taken during the lectures, and are categorized under various topics namely cow protection, organic farming, natural building, retreat center etc. The motivation behind the compilation of this book is to offer the devotees an idea of the purpose behind creation of a farm community like Govardhan Eco Village and a retreat center like Govardhan Ashram in the words of HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj. We humbly apologize for any errors in the presentation and we hope that this attempt pleases the Vaishnavas.

Your servants Avatar Lila Das Ananda Caitanya Das Gauranga Darshan Das



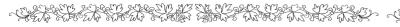
"While you are doing work here, I will be praying for you in the yatra. We will be visiting holy places. You will be creating holy place."

(HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj to the Brahmacaris at GEV who were staying back during the South India Yatra 2010)



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SIMPLE LIVING HIGH THINKING



Principle of Simple Living

From the very beginning of ISKCON one of the objectives was to create agricultural communities. The reasons were as follows.

- To make tremendous spiritual progress by developing this type of consciousness of compassion and service to our Mother Earth and to all of her children.
- As an example, an alternative way of living, to display to the world.

In the west, in the colleges among the thoughtful students, the number one concern is not how to make money – its how to deal with the problem of the ecology and the environment, because they are thoughtful enough to understand that no matter how much money people make, they are going

to be diseased, miserable and going to die unless Mother Earth provides. We have created a society that is unsustainable, unnatural and offensive to the human spiritual values. Srila Prabhupada explained the principle of simple living and high thinking for these communities and actually this is the principle of Vrindavan.

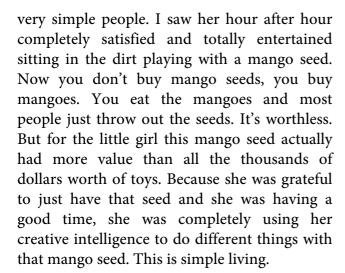
Simple living and high thinking is based on the highest values of humanity. It is based on the values of respect, love and devotion. And compassion naturally emerges from those values.

What is the meaning of Simple Living?

Simple living is not just about being poor and simple living is not about being rich either. Simple living is about being simple. What does it mean to be simple? – *It means to be content with what we have.* We may work for more. That's all right. But we don't need it. We don't

require unnecessary necessities. Simple living means we are finding pleasure in the purpose of our lives. We can just think about Krishna.

There was one multi millionaire's family that had an entire basement of toys for their son and daughter. I think there were tens and thousands of dollars of toys. I was walking through it. It was unbelievable. There were games, all kinds of computer toys, computer games different kinds of riding things, throwing things and guns where you press the trigger and different lights go off. And whenever I looked at the children, they were always throwing one toy down and looking for another one. That's why they always had to get newer and newer. The parents were both working. So to keep the children occupied they just kept giving them all kinds of televisions, radios and music. Unbelievable! And a few days later we saw a little girl. Her parents were



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You could be living in a palace or under a tree. But it's neither the tree nor the palace that's going to bring you happiness. It's the simplicity of your consciousness; its your sense of gratitude for what you have.

Greed! Its like kama or lust which burns like fire. The more you have, the more it consumes and the more you need and need. It's an addiction. Santi or peace means to be content with small things. Just like somebody says 'Haribol!' and you are happy. Little things like that can make you happy.

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If you need glorifications of others, then there is something wrong. But if you are just content with the little things – I don't need respect, I don't need honor, I don't need wealth, na dhanam na janam na sundarim, we are content just with the opportunity to serve, with the opportunity to chant God's names, the opportunity to read.

To be grateful for what we have is simple living and high thinking and in this way we can connect to Lord Krishna.



ECO-FRIENDLINESS

Meaning of Eco friendly lifestyle

For ourselves 'eco friendly' means

- Living in harmony with nature and according to the way Krishna wants us to live on material level and spiritual level.
- Living with respect for Mother Earth, Bhumi devi, who is the consort of Lord Varaha dev, Lakshmi herself and honoring her and living in ways that replenish her resources rather than exploit her resources, and then utilize whatever resources she gives us, by her grace, for the service of Lord Vishnu.

So that's our understanding of the term 'eco friendly.' It's thoroughly Krishna conscious and we have such developed philosophical and spiritual concept of eco-friendly living that can be modeled. So we could do that. Now that we have the land, we should really focus and really get it done as soon as possible.

Holistic view of 'Eco-Friendly'

It is our hope and prayer that we can create a wonderful community of people who are really united and happy. Actually even if we are doing everything totally eco-friendly but if we are politically fighting with each other or envious with each other, it's all just a show. Eco-friendly is much deeper than just fighting over who is going to do what to make everything organically nice.

We also have to be eco-friendly with each other.

Yes! You see being kind to the birds, bees and the plants and mother Earth doesn't exclude humans, but sometimes that happens.

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One devotee told me that the diet of a big spiritual leader of another religion was so many meat products. He said, "Look at this, he eats cows, goats, pork and he eats this and that so many..." I said, "Well, he is kind to other humans. You may be kind to animals but I don't see that you are very kind to humans. I am inclusive, there may be a deficiency in his ahimsa for not considering the feelings of the cows, sheep, chickens and fish but there is a deficiency in you. You may ne nice to the fish but you are criticizing your own brothers and sisters in this world, you are harsh with them. That's violence." Real ahimsa is a spirit, para dukha dukhi. Another's happiness is my happiness; another's suffering is my suffering that is God Consciousness.



WORLD SCENARIO



Vegan Movement in the west

One of the biggest movements in America and Europe is Vegan (means vegetarian). They will drink milk and eat cheese if it's from a cow that is protected now and throughout their lives. But they think it to be ugly, sinful and immoral to find milk from a company that is going to later on slaughter the cows and the bulls. The companies slaughter the bulls because they do not giving milk. They either slaughter the cows or it's not fully humane in the way they care for the cows. In most cases it's not. They keep them in very clustered places and give them hormones. They inject them with things that spoil their health for the sake of getting more milk. When they are sick, instead of taking care of them they simply give them horrible injections just so that they keep giving milk.



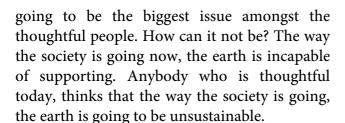
In the colleges I go to, most of the people that come for the programs are like that. Vegan movement is growing all over America, Europe and Australia. It is based on Ahimsa, selfless compassion. Now there are young people who are idealistic. So we have to have a Goshala and cow protection program that really shows them that we love our cows, bulls and whatever animals we have, we will protect them for the rest of their lives.

Environmentalism – A Big Concern

Among the open-minded college students in the west, environmentalism is the number one subject. They are really interested in it because the world is being plundered. What is human being doing to the world? The rivers are so poisonous today that someone dropped some fire and instead of putting off, the river caught fire. So in the current scenario every one is longing to see practical examples of people living in harmony with Mother Earth.

This is my sincere request to all of you. Whether you are here in the Radha Gopinath temple or travelling for preaching or distributing books or you are actually on the farm, I request we should make that farm a part of our heart, understanding its integral importance. All together we should be thinking and praying to make that as our current priority.

This is the number one issue among college students of America and Europe right now. It used to be that India was way behind the west, now it's just beyond the west. Right now it's really not the issue in India. In India right now in most of the colleges the issue is software and engineering and becoming westernized. But very soon the same crunches are going to happen in India that are in the west and it's



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We have to change the consciousness of the human population if we want to survive. Even people in western countries can see that and that's why it's an issue. Not because it is fashionable, but they see that it's the ultimate necessity of the planet. It's a platform to preach on practically. It's going to come in India and when it comes in India we could be ready with our alternative model. That could be tremendous preaching in India and the world too. People from India will see that college students from all over the world are coming to our place to see alternative ways of living. We should do it. We have the people, we have the

energy, we have the money, all that we need is to have the focus.

That's all we need - FOCUS.









Purpose of developing Govardhan Ashram

To really serve Prabhupada's mission, like Prabhupada wanted it, we have to not only improve our cow protection and agriculture, but we also need to have a place that is built according to pure natural principles that will attract people from all over the world to come, to experience it, to associate with devotees in that environment, and to learn.

Also as service to our Brahmacari ashram, students and congregation, we want to create a facility away from the passionate city life of Mumbai. We should have a place close by, where devotees can get away from everything, and be in a clean river, in fresh air, the mountains and the cows. Preachers can bring their students that they are preaching to and retreats can be organized. Congregation devotees could leave their jobs and come there for some time to rejuvenate.

Different educational and yoga groups from all over the world will definitely come there and see these exemplary principles that show agriculture, cow protection and alternative energy utilization. It will be one of the most effective influential ways of transforming people's hearts – our own existent devotees as well as new people.

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Cultivating Guests from Abroad

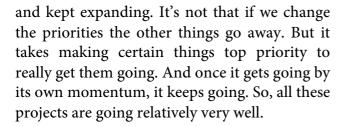
One of Srila Prabhupada's desires was to cultivate people from all over the world who come to India looking for God. There are millions of foreigners that come to India looking for God every year. We can affect them; we can affect the whole world. And here at Radha Gopinath temple, we would like to have some type of presentation for those people. It has to be specialized for them where they would love to come on a retreat in a

natural environment and learn the science of bhakti along with so many other natural sciences.

So this GEV can serve in such a significant way on so many levels. It's our duty to give a place like this to our congregation. They have given their lives to us. It's our duty to give a place like this to the college students so that they could really have a focus in a totally conducive environment. It's our duty to provide a facility like this to the foreign people from all over the world and all over India. And if we do it in a right way, it will be an extremely attractive place of pilgrimage for many people.

Topmost Priority

In the past we have seen that whenever we made some project as a top priority, Krishna reciprocated and that project flourished very nicely. It developed, expanded, and sustained



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Now our number one priority is developing the farm community. We want to put our best men and resources to develop that project into a wonderful place where we could demonstrate to the whole world the glories of protecting cows and living with respect and harmony to Mother Earth.

Now we need devotees who are committed and enthusiastic to blissfully and gratefully go there and develop the infrastructure, make first class kitchen, make first class guest reception and so many other aspects there.

Power of a Small Beginning

In the world history major changes that took place are because of a few people who actually lived by their ideals. Sometimes the effects are good and sometimes they are bad. For example Carl Marx wrote his ideals but nobody really cared for it. But gradually people started taking interest in it and soon a major part of the earth was communists. Indian independence was made possible because few men like Gandhi, Bose, Patel were convinced and they were willing to go to jail for it.

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Just like India, America was a British colony. But at a certain point of time few people started to speak about independence and now America is one of the most powerful countries in the world. But it just started with a few people who believed what was impossible and lived by it.

Jesus was just one man who believed in what

he was saying. But as he walked around and preached, people began to believe him. In the first year of his preaching he only got a few disciples and nobody really took him seriously but it gradually grew little more and little more and people started taking him seriously. And now it's the largest religion in the world. Now two thousand years ago when Christ started preaching no body every dreamed that he would change the world in the way he did it.

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So what we have to understand in the whole history is the few people who really believed in something, it could be good or it could be bad, can change the course of the history of the planet and effect millions of people.

Beginning with Faith

If you look at the world history, just a few people have the ideals and the right vision of how to present it to others, make it relevant to the lives of others and then some certain types of environmental, social, political situation happens and all of a sudden people started to take it very seriously. It can have a massive impact on the world. Prabhupada had faith that things like farm project will have massive impact on the world. We have to understand that if we follow the directions of Srila Prabhupada wholeheartedly, we will be empowered by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

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We should expect the impossible to happen if we have the faith in the higher power that is directing. If we don't have faith that it could happen, it won't happen. But if we have faith that it could happen, it will happen, if we just do it right.

Greatest Need

Wherever devotees gather together in the loving service of the Lord with congenial

feelings towards one another, then all holy places are present at that place. Yes, this place (HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj referring to GEV) is not just named after 'Govardhan,' but when we come here in a spirit of devotion, spirit of unity to chant and hear the glories of the Lord, Govardhan manifests, Vrindavan manifests and Sri Mayapur dham manifests. Our purpose is to accept the shelter of Prabhupada, the previous acharyas and the holy names so that our hearts can be transformed. The purpose of developing these communities is to create an atmosphere that will transform other people's hearts because that in fact is the greatest need in this world. We can change so many things but unless there is a genuine transformation in people's hearts all the changes and improvements are at best superficial. We need to transform the

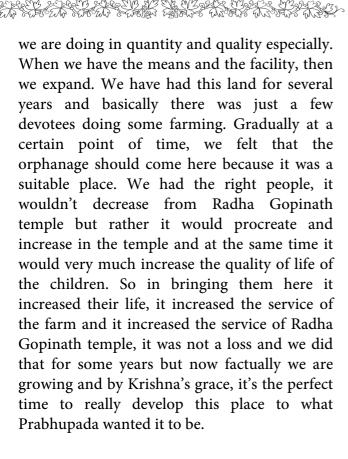
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exploitative selfish propensities built on the foundation of *avidya* or ignorance into the qualities of a genuine desire to serve with love based on the knowledge that 'I'm not this body. I'm the eternal soul and as a soul I'm the eternal part of God – servant of Krishna." To love Krishna and to share that love with others, unmotivated or uninterrupted by any material conceptions is real happiness. That is Real wealth.

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Expansion of a project should not diminish other existing projects

From the very beginning, Sri Sri Radha Gopinath temple has built various projects on a foundation of the principle that – as we try to expand to do something, we never diminish the quality or quantity of what we have already established. We should be building upon what we already have, always trying to increase what



Not to Impress but to Transform

What we are doing here is not just some nice natural living place where people can come and say that this is organic food and by saying 'its organic food,' it's good for preaching and people will be impressed. It's not about building things just to show that we are following the fashion of environmentalism, which is so popular in the world today.

This is the matter of the very core of expressing our love and devotion to God through developing and promoting genuine concern for all living beings, including Mother Earth. Mother Earth is a living being; she is not just dead matter. Everything growing on this earth is coming by her grace, this is what the Vedic literatures teach us.

This project is what Prabhupada wanted. Why did Prabhupada want? Because he wants to

teach us how to actually be Krishna Consciousness, he wants to teach us what is Bhakti. For him these natural communities were not just details, they were essential parts of his presentation of how to inspire real God consciousness within the world and let all beings be happy.

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Smiling Butterflies

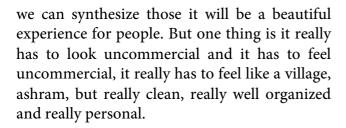
We should be happy in pleasing other living entities by honoring and loving them. If we can create a little spiritual world here, every time we see a flower blooming, grown by natural methods, we should be happy because the flower is happy blooming for Krishna. Seeing a happy butterfly should make us happy. It is not just about smiling humans. We should also like to see smiling humans but we should like to see smiling butterfly and smiling birds that are being honored and respected and loved.

Although a child doesn't have much intelligence one thing that a child responds to is care and love. If you show love for children, they smile and are happy. If you don't show love for them there isn't anything else you can do for them. It is inherent within the soul. We are searching for love. We need love. And souls in the plants, in the trees, in the insects, in the animals and in all class of human beings... it's our inherent need to be loved and to love.

So these communities that Prabhupada wanted us to establish are based on philosophical foundation, very attentive to the detail of offering honor, respect and affection to all living beings and this natural process is the way to do that.

East meets West

The cleanliness and organization of the west with the simplicity and sweetness of the east, if



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Preserve the Principles

We should begin cloth making to preserve the Village Art. Even if people don't buy it or don't wear it, we will do. Try to start it as soon as possible. Get the matajis here to do both Kakhra & Khadi. Just establish the ART & Tradition in the community, skills will improve. We can't be detached from this. This is a beautiful example to the world.

This community is not just based on economics, but on principles. And ultimately principles are the best economics.

Young people is the west – see there is no future. We show them that we survive like this. Srila Prabhupada said, "Civilization based on oil is not sustainable" in 1950s.

We like to make profits. But purpose is really in the principles. Even if we lose money, preserve the principles.









Practical Demonstration

We have to understand that we are not just preaching but we practically present Srila Prabhupada's principle of cow protection. People see that the cows are practically dancing and smiling that they have such a good quality life. That's why we should not have too many but whatever cows we have should be like that. And by agriculture we are taking care of the bulls. When they get sick, we have veterinary to take care of them. We have to check on the cows every few days. Every one of the bulls and the cows must be in good health.

There are two reasons why we should do cow protection – (i) Krishna likes cows, (ii) Primary platform of Farm community is Cow Protection. We should give people the understanding of how precious the cows are.

Display the value of cows and bulls

Srila Prabhupada was very disappointed to see machines. He said, "If you are going to use the machinery you are not going to use the oxen and bulls. What are you doing with the oxen and the bulls? They should be ploughing the fields, they should be producing energy. If we don't teach people how to utilize the oxen and the bulls for developing crops and agriculture, if our devotees are not sensitive and educated in this way, then people will just live in the cities and eat the cows and bulls." Prabhupada was very strong. He didn't want the modern stuff so much, he wanted agriculture. He

wanted crops, cow protection and full utilization of the cows and the bulls.

Spirit Behind Cow Protection

We have to develop systems where we really give them freedom to move and graze. We have to design a Goshala in a way that they are really happy and not just tied up by a rope around.

Real cow protection means giving the cows real quality life and much freedom, within the jurisdiction of keeping them properly tamed and protected.

From Srila Prabhupada's perspective cow protection is two fold.

- To protect the cows because they are dear to Krishna
- They are the mothers of humanity and they represent innocence; cow represents dharma.

So for that reason we want to actually make the cows happy. Protected woman is not the woman who is not beaten everyday, protected woman is a woman who is happy because the husband is giving her such good shelter. So similarly protecting cows doesn't mean that they are not slaughtered but that they are loved.

He wanted cow protection to be foundational pillars of preaching within ISKCON. He preached in his books again and again, he preached in his lectures again and again. He wanted that the world, the whole world will see that Krishna consciousness is very much pleasing. It was not a detail project but was one of the foundational principle of society which he emphasized.

Cow protection is the foundation of what we represent. Cow protection is not just to not slaughter the cows, but to make them happy from the moment

they are born till they naturally leave their bodies.

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Give quality life to the cows, treat them like your own children – one doesn't allow one's children to sleep on rock floor. The Retreat centre and Eco-friendliness are centered on Cow Protection and Agriculture.

Research for Goshala

I think someone should also go to Hungary because they have a really good Goshala. What I believe is different people have different experiences, revelations of doing something better for the cows. A lot has to do with how you layout the Goshala. So I think it's very important to build our Goshala as soon as possible, but I think we should get a really full and comprehensive understanding of many Goshalas before we put our first brick. Because we want to do it right. Because once it's done,

it's done. We should really go to some of the good Goshalas in India, and also in the west. People are full of praise in Hungary, Sivaram Maharaj, we should definitely look at it. Bhaktivedanta Manor just spent a fortune doing the Goshala. We don't have to spend so much but at least we can see some of the features.

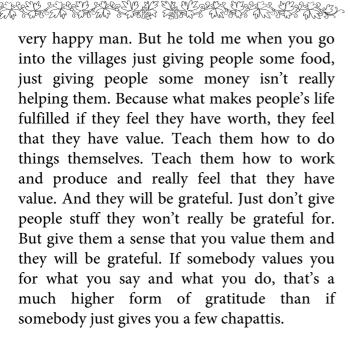
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Make Them Feel Valued

Prabhupada said using tractors is dishonoring and disrespecting the oxens and the bulls. It means you guys are useless, out of the way. We have found a better way. They have nothing to do. And because they have nothing to do and we don't know what to do with them we kill them because they are just eating. They are just eating and they are not doing anything. They are not doing anything because we don't allow them to do anything. When Prabhupada saw tractors, he started crying. What about the

oxen, what about the bulls? They are unemployed now and worse than being unemployed they don't feel worth now.

At Krishna Chandra Prabhu and Radha Priya Devi's house in Pune I used to regularly meet Manibhai Desai who was in many ways more than anyone else the person who really took the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi into his life. Mahatma Gandhi didn't want industrialization or big politics. He taught this person when he was a teenage boy that I want you go to the villages and teach them how to be happy in the natural environment of a village and to upgrade their lifestyles through proper education. And he told him you should never marry. I want you to make all the people your family. If you get married you won't be able to help everyone, only your family, you won't be able to extend yourself completely. He never married. Perhaps he was in his 80's. He was a



So for Srila Prabhupada protection of cows was to give them real sense of fulfillment by making them feel valued. That's the way of making person feel loved and God created them that way.

Making them feel cared

It's the place to come together and invite other to join us to nourish our hearts with devotion and to do it in as pure and spiritually idealistic way as possible. I remember when I use to take care of cows, after milking them I would take them out to the pastures with little stick but before taking out to the pasture I would brush every single hair of the cow's body exactly in the direction that the hair naturally went. We used special cow brushes made out of steel and you brush them and that takes all the dirt of their body and makes them clean and also makes the hair shine. The cows were so happy, because cows are girls and girls like to look nice they practically dance into the pasture every day. It wasn't that they looked nice, it was that they felt cared for. Just the fact that you are spending so much time they felt love, they felt cared for and that was there happiness. Now within an hour their hair were all messed up again, so why waste all that time when it's just going to be messed up anyway and there was no bulls looking up at them, there was just cows in the pasture, why spend so much time. Because in that time the cows felt loved, they felt protected, they felt happy.

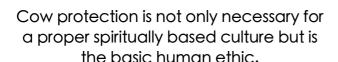
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Cow protection is not about not killing them but making them happy. Protecting your child is not just about not killing them, its about making them happy and what makes everybody happy, whether you are a cow or a child or a old man or a young woman, you are happy when you are loved. We feel loved when we are cared for. And little things, its little gesture that actually transmit that intention and that's really what bhakti is about.

Basic Human Ethic

The first farm community which Srila Prabhupada established in India was in Hyderabad and there he installed Krishna Balarama Deities. He explained that Balarama carries a plough to symbolize natural agriculture. Tractors may be good on short term, but it is not sustainable. So much energy is required. You need oil. You fight wars for oil. Oxen are Krishna's gift and Balarama has the plough. He is offering to share His plough with all of us. Sometimes Balarama killed demons with His plough. In this sense with this plough of Balarama we want to kill the demoniac mentality that is exploiting and destroying Mother Earth, the demon of ignorance. Krishna plays flute to attract the cows. The cow is also our mother. We drink her milk when we are young and then when she grows old, human society cuts her throat, drinks her blood and eats her meat. Is that the way to treat our mother? Is that the way to treat Mother Earth, Mother Cow?

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What difference does it make?

Srila Prabhupada put tremendous amount of emphasis on cow protection. Now someone may ask that if we are protecting a 100 cows there are still tens and millions slaughtered all over the world. What are we really doing? But we are doing something very tremendous. We are living by our ideals, we are doing our part and we are living in harmony with Krishna's wish. And beyond that, it is an example. If we can show people that we really care, people are going to take our message very seriously.









Grow food for devotees

Once when Srila Prabhupada was in New Talavan, which is a farm community in Mississippi, US, he was looking through the fields and very seriously asking what was being grown in the land. Prabhupada's idea was that every inch of land should be used for growing something because its Krishna's land and He gave it to us and it should be utilized. So the person explained that they were growing sorghum, which is a food for the cows. So Prabhupada asked, "Are you growing food for the devotees?" He said, "No, cows eat their food and they give milk, and the milk is for the people." Prabhupada was quite strong. "Not only should there be cow feed, but there must specifically be agriculture to grow food for the devotees." He was putting emphasis on it.

Educational trips

Gaur Hari Prabhu: Maharaj! Many colleges in India have field trips to places where the students can be educated about organic farming and natural way of living. Recently when I was in New Vrindavana, Tapopunja prabhu, your beloved god brother had a demonstration plot where he would get students from vicinity and almost half a day workshop on how to plant, and make people get really interested in these things. They may not be directly interested in Krishna Consciousness. So given the widespread interest even in India, will it be a good idea to have small dedicated piece of land here just for demonstration and education?

HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj: Yes definitely, educating people in agriculture will be one of the prominent features of the project. It's amazing how many people want to learn that.

In the colleges of America, environmentalism, ecology and natural living are prominent in people's mind. Tapopunja prabhu, my very dear god brother has really developed a fantastic vision of how to promote it to the college students in America and they come. Sometimes they stay with him for days and he gives them the theory eloquently from a thoroughly Krishna conscious perspective and then he had all of them for days on their knees planting vegetables and pulling weeds. Because they have such a philosophical basis to what they are doing, they really feel that by planting these squash, they are changing the world. It's thrilling because it's so practical, so logical and so deeply philosophical. It's Bhagavad Gita in action.

Something special

You can buy food in the market and it's a lot easier then growing food on a farm. Growing

food in the farm, if it doesn't rain, so much trouble and water restoration is a big challenge and dealing with the insects, big challenge, dealing with the boars and the ground hogs and the deers eating it, farming is really a challenge. If we have money why not just go to the stores, let somebody else do all this stuff. But there is something very deeply special about eating prasad that was sowed, grown, harvested, cooked, offered to Krishna and served to you in the purest possible devotional way, something very meaningful, we can actually savor that prasad. We are not only eating the thing but we are meditating on the energy of that food and just by having that consciousness is so uplifting and purifying and brings us so much closer to God. But our tendency is we just want to do things cheap and quick, isn't it? That's the way city life in the 21st century in kali yuga, it's the way it programs us. We have so much to do, let's just do cheap and quick.

When I was a young boy my mother made an entire feast for the family for seven evenings a week. She spent at least four hours everyday cooking dinner and she had no help, she did all the cleaning and shopping single handedly but still she cooked every night. She could have just brought us to the fast food place or just ordered it and brought it home. In certain ways it may have tasted the same. But why did she work so hard? It's the matter of love, it's the matter of quality life.

Family culture

I remember years ago Krishna Chandra Prabhu told me something, he said that there is major propaganda by these cereal companies who want to convince Indians to just take a box and shake some cereal in a bowl and put some cold milk on it and eat it and be healthy and good. Many of you may do that. But he said India's

culture is that the mother and the daughters soak daal overnight and then they make their idlis and they make their dosas or they make their paranthas and they are putting their love and devotion. And I remember Krishna Chandra Prabhu telling me that this is going to, a large extent, ruin the culture of family life in India. The feeling, the emotion of that extra work to show love is going to be substituted for something that's cheap, efficient and quick.





ECO-FRIENDLY CONSTRUCTION



Alternative model of Building

We want to develop this community according to the vision of our acaryas, our scriptures and thoughtful people throughout the world. It would be a model of sustainable natural agriculture and cow protection.

More and more as the human society begins to crumble by its own unnatural ways, people are going to look for practical and real alternatives. And also the building materials which we will use and the methods of building, through sustainable natural methods, that don't exploit and deplete the earth but rather, honor, respect, replenish and nourish the earth. Actually natural building



materials are more sustainable to the environment and if done right, it is healthier and more enduring than the modern styles.

People from all over the world go to Humpi to see the ancient buildings and structures of the Vijaynagara empire which are all made of stone. There are temples and buildings that are thousands of years old, made of natural substances and built of natural processes. Now we are using all sorts of shortcuts with steel and chemicals and different types of modern cement. How long are these buildings going to last? Even the architects and engineers know that they are only going to last a century at the most or may be two if you put a large amount of money into it. And when they fall, its all stuff which you can't replenish the earth with. You just add to all the waste that cannot be accommodated or transformed to any good use. It only causes permanent pollution.

So through natural construction processes, not only will we have the best facilities that are natural but also have a vibration that awakens God consciousness within us.

Never too late

Factually the early in seventies, Prabhupada had this concept of natural houses made out of natural local materials. In the farm communities he personally made architectural plan and told what material should be used. He told to use wood and mud and he wanted grihastas to stay in those houses. And about 6-7 houses were made and grihastas were living in them and they were known as Srila Prabhupada houses. And they were happy, so natural and beautiful. Srila Prabhupada came and he was in tears of pride, because this was the first step to present this virtue to humanity.

But then what happened is in the passion for fast progress, we replaced the oxen with tractors and heavy machinery, we brought milking machines for milking cows, we replaced the beautiful natural Prabhupada's houses with buildings of unsustainable materials, thinking that this will bring fast progress. But the result was that the whole community eventually collapsed.

Srila Prabhupada had a vision and if we had carried on that vision then those farm communities would have been a shining example for the world today. Nobel laureates would be coming there to see that this is the answer to this most complicated dilemma, a happy civilization with sustainable organic, natural living. Srila Prabhupada had the vision, but we didn't follow it. But it's never too late. Most of you are from Mumbai or Pune and our temples there are very much fulfilling Srila

Prabhupada's instructions, his prayers, and his dreams. But there is something we have completely neglected. And that is a model community based on real Bhumi puja. And if you worship Bhumi nicely she will offer the fruits of all of our efforts to Krishna.

Comfortable living

From the preaching perspective, if we are trying to satisfy Srila Prabhupada, it's not just a nice place for the people who live there but an opportunity for the world. The biggest subject among the educated people today is environmentalism; eco-friendly alternatives and we have the opportunity to make that mark. We can bring the most sensitive, refined, pure hearted people from all over the world to come here. They are not going to come the way we want them to come, so we have to see that we offer them a comfortable existence while still honoring Mother Earth.

In New Vrindavan, Srila Prabhupada told to make mud houses. Devotees were very happy living there but unfortunately they were not comfortable enough, so they moved out of those houses to more comfortable places. But if we can make them on the same principle that Prabhupada gave, very comfortable and nice then congregation and people from all over the world will come to live there.

Retreat Centre

To build it, promote it in a very dignified way, to actually take care of the people who are coming from the congregation and from all over the world is a serious responsibility. It won't be difficult for us to have simple living and high thinking farm. But it's not going to attract anybody potentially. We have to bring the world to simple living and high thinking. That means comfortable. We wouldn't have brought Chitra here if we were not thinking of

simple living and high thinking. We are not trying to be having parties here.

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Retreat center is basically going to be completely eco-friendly housing, very comfortable and nice where people learn Ayurveda, yoga, bhakti, gardening and environmentalism. If we don't have a good retreat centre then nobody will come.

The retreat centre is going to be a medium by which Prabhupad's vision could be expressed. They may be separately managed just so for practical purposes so that we can do both of them qualitatively. There is no reason for the retreat centre without all the agriculture and there is not much reason for the agriculture from the preaching perspective without the retreat centre. They are completely interdependent. So we have to harmonize these and the orphanage and all of the other preaching.







Transforming effect

What's going to transform people's lives? The setting is going to be so peaceful, so natural and so pure and so educational that people's minds and their hearts would open up. And in such environment and association of devotees, they take nice prasadam and hear Srila Prabhupada's philosophy, and Mahaprabhu's philosophy. When they chant the holy name, do japa and kirtana, when they walk through the different forests of Vrindavan while devotees are taking them on tours telling them about each pastime, place, what the stories are, what the goswamis did, what Radha and Krishna did and what Krishna and Balarama did, about the trees, peacocks and birds, people's lives will be transformed. Hare Krishna!

So the first step is going there where there is hardly anything and just working in the spirit of great devotion with faith in the potential of what will happen.

Creating a proper Atmosphere

For people to hear philosophy we have to bring them into an environment where its working and where they can see it, experience it and can speak to people who are doing it. Then that will actually help and many people will take it very seriously. Because people can't take theories so seriously but when they see it, feel it, they experience it, and they talk to people who are doing it, then they understand that 'this is possible.'

Making it a place of Pilgrimage

We want this community to be a place of pilgrimage. If we do the agricultural side, but

we don't have a place of pilgrimage where people can come to feel it, to see it, to live it, it will be a message that will not go beyond ourselves. We want to recreate the spirit of Vrindavan. We will have Balarama with the oxen and the plough and we will have Krishna with the cows.

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We are also going to be developing replicas of the 12 forests of Vrindavan. There will be walkways, auspicious trees, dioramas where people can actually come and feel Vrindavan. Devotees can walk into the forests and come to Gokul Mahavan. There will be dioramas of some of the principle lilas that took place in Gokul Mahavan and each one will have a forest garden area with sitting places and caves like structures to do your bhajan. If you mediate on that place sincerely, that place literally becomes Gokul Mahavan. It is no more a replica, it is that place. It is really Mahavan, the way it was when Krishna was there 5000 years ago. And

there will be Govardhan with the parikrama of the different places of Govinda Kunda, Radha Kunda, Shyama Kunda etc. where we could go on a pilgrimage and discuss the beautiful pastimes that took place there. There will be Barsana where we will visit Srimati Radharani's home, there will be Nandagram where we will visit Krishna and Balarama's home. A place where we could actually get away from the passionate ugrakarma lifestyle of Mumbai and Pune and be in Vrindavan. Live in natural homes, walk through the forests. Just as Bhaktivedanta hospital is a hospital to heal the body, mind and soul, this will be a place of pilgrimage to heal the body, mind and soul.

Attracting people

We are planning to have an Ayurvedic clinic where people could come here to get ayurvedic massages, therapies, pancakarma and meanwhile perform their bhajans, walking through the beautiful forests of Vrindavan. There will be natural walks for one's health. We can climb these mountains. We can go to bath in waters of the Vaitarana River. It would be a beautiful place for rejuvenation of one's health and at the same time there will be kirtans, kathas and Deity worship. All of you who sit behind computers all day will get a chance to work on ox, do some gardening, grow some vegetables, flowers and come in contact with the earth.

In the Mayapur dham, Srila Prabhupada would have his sannyasis working with the oxen. Just to give a feeling of connection away from the hectic responsibilities we have in our homes and office. To be in this environment would be so emotionally soothing, physically rejuvenating and spiritually empowering and inspiring. On behalf of Srila Prabhupada we are begging and praying that we can have the

chance to create such a place of pilgrimage for our congregation. Counselee groups, individual families and students could come, but beyond that, we have sincere belief that this will be a place that will attract people from all over the world. Millions of Americans and Europeans regularly perform yoga and because they connect to asanas and pranayamas they naturally want to understand more.

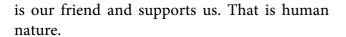
One of the biggest cravings in the yoga studios today all over the western world is to understand bhakti, the yoga of the heart, the yoga of life. There is no doubt that yoga students, college students, alternative energy people will be coming here, to live in this beautiful peaceful environment and to see that we are not just speaking but trying to seriously live by these principles of natural sustainable life based on pure spiritual principles. I believe in this environment people's hearts will be transformed. Bhakti, devotion to God will

naturally awaken within their hearts if they are in a devotional atmosphere that makes so much sense to them.

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Making friends with Neighbors

If we try to do something for ourselves and have quality life, we need to share that quality life with others. Then however much we grow and develop and how many ever people start coming, people are going to like us because they don't feel that we are something different from them. Same situation at New Vrindayan, every neighbor at New Vrindavan was our enemy for years and years and it kept on growing. I was on the hill, I was not involved so much but the attitude was 'they are karmis and we are devotees.' After everything started collapsing, devotees realized that thay were not so much greater than them, although they have been given something very great. So we started reaching out to them and now every neighbor



Sensitivity

We are going to explain love of Krishna through environment and people are going reciprocate. We were at the Rainbow gathering feeding 3000 people in the middle of a forest, 3 hours walk from the nearest road and about 10,000 - 20,000 people living in the forest in tents. And for cooking you have to walk a mile with 20 - 30 people carrying buckets and then collect water and walk back to the place where you were cooking. You have to cut down tree to cook and carry pots to cook for 3,000 people. 5 course feast, huge effort! We were making halwa and other preparations in a wak which could cook for several thousand people. Cooking like that with wood and the smoke in my eyes! So we were serving like that and

people were calling us a bunch of hypocrites. Why because they distributed some nectar drinks and served it in plastic cups. That's how sensitive they are.

When the last time we went to Farm, after the whole program was over, I was talking to Chitra and one devotee came upto me and gave me a lamination of Sri Sri Radha Gopinath to give it as a gift to her. But when I gave that to her she said, 'laminations and plastic,' she just put that away. And that's the way all this people in the western world.

People are looking for experience

There would be people coming here in small groups for spiritual elevation. People are yearning for this experience. They really want to get away and get educated and get an experience. People want experience. People want to be disciplined.

I was with Goenka ji. He had 20 students, he has millions of students because of a 7 day retreat and I know what that retreat is, I was on it and is no different now. He basically gives them techniques of how to do the process of meditation and there are three group meditations in a day and he gives one talk a day and then rest of the day you just meditate and you are not allowed to talk to anyone and millions of people want that experience of just meditating all day and not talking to people. And he gives a little lecture probably for half an hour, that's it, that's all. They give two meals a day and you eat what you get, you don't have a choice.

I went to another retreat centre of Jain Buddhist monk and all he gave us to eat was Barley soaked in water, not cooked and in the morning you get two bananas. This is in Bodh Gaya. And then people are like anything, foreigners, Indians, they wanted to do it because it's a retreat, it's an experience. Goenka ji just comes out and teaches these techniques. For the whole week he may spend just an hour teaching techniques and he gives a half hour lecture every day. That's about 3 hours and an hour of techniques, that is the time he spends with the people. For the group meditations he comes every day, he just sits there. He begins the meditation by saying some Buddhist mantra and then after an hour another Buddhist mantra and then everyone leaves. Simple but millions of people have become his followers because of this retreat.

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We have so much philosophy, so much stories and so much beautiful kirtans and bhajans and we have deity worship and we also have yoga and pranayama as part of the Vedic system. We have so much that they can experience and get transformed. What to speak of doing organic farming, great source of manpower? People want to learn about how to take care of cows.



People from the west, they would love to learn about things. When Gadadhar Pandit Prabhu brought these people from Columbia university to New Vrindavan, they just want to learn how to milk a cow, how to brush a cow, and how to take care of the cows. Most of the time they were either in the Goshala or learning organic farming. Fascinating for them. It could really be very potential. But we really do have to preserve that real simple sweet village environment. Whether we want this structure or whether we want to modify, we should be attached to what is ultimately good. We really have to emphasize to the architects, it has to be like a village, it can't be a highly polished garden. It need to be very beautiful with many flowers and everything and architectural designs. It shouldn't be like a 5 star hotel, it should be like a beautiful village. The idea is Vrindayan and not Dwarka.

It could be such an intimate, blissful and effective way of educating people with so many of the principles that Prabhupada has established, with experience. Philosophy, chanting, ox and cow protection, simple living high thinking, living with the earth. In India and people all over the world really want to experience. We have so much and we have the facility and the means. At this moment Prabhupada is waiting for it, ready to bless us.

Bhakti is about making the effort to do things that are beyond our comfort zone and in doing so blessings come.

Any great thing that we have achieved here has come when we came out of our comfort zone and later on it becomes an integral part of the system. We have to come out of our comfort zone.

Bhagavad Gita is like Gardening

Gardening is like Bhagavad Gita. The Kurus are the weeds. Somehow or the other we have to fight against them. Gardening is war, it's very peaceful type of war in mode of goodness, but actually it's war, battle against too much sun, too much rain, not enough rain, different types of insects, different types of animals. So he (Tapopunja Prabhu) teaches gardening from the perspective of Bhagavad Gita, it's thrilling. That's something we can do. Actually many college groups come to India from Europe, America, Australia, this could be a beautiful place to come where they can have some seminars, and we can also teach our own congregation these things.

Cultural Experience

People want to come for an experience. People could stay in hotels anywhere in the world, and

they could get good rooms and service. They want an experience, not only a visual experience but also a cultural experience and that's how we treat them. The values that they feel are being represented by this place, like an ashram where we are really not concerned with their money, we are really concerned with giving them a beautiful experience of being a part of our family, that's going to change people's hearts.

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Holy place

We are presenting simple living and high thinking and at the same time we are a preaching movement. We need to bring people to experience the yoga retreats. They would be so popular if we really create an ashram type atmosphere, people will absolutely just love it. I would think when people come to a city from abroad or from some other parts of India, they are very happy to come to a restaurant but

when they come to an ashram, they want something different. They go into a restaurant everyday. But to sit in a communal hall and eat with everyone else is something they never get to do. How many people in India get to do that? How many people in the west get to do that? But it's an ashram, the food is very delicious, it's very hygienic, it's very healthy, they really feel that they are in a holy place.









City centers

From New Talavan, the next day Srila Prabhupada went to Detroit, Michigan. Devotees were looking for a new place and they explained about Fisher mansion and Srila Prabhupada wanted to go and see the mansion. It was completely opposite to making simple mud houses in a farm. Prabhupada went there and in 1974-75 they were asking \$50,000, today's value may be probably \$4 million! After the whole tour, Prabhupada really liked the place. He asked the devotees what did they think. And they told Ambarish (Alfred Ford) will be the only person who would be able to afford pay for it. They said he didn't like the place, he said, "this place is maya." Prabhupada said, "Maya can be used in Krishna's service too." Prabhupada says to the owner, "I am a sannyasi.

I have no money. I am a beggar, you should give it to me for free!" This was a negotiating technique and they were so caught off guard and so disoriented by that. Prabhupada made an offer of what he wanted to pay and the owner accepted it, because it was better than free.

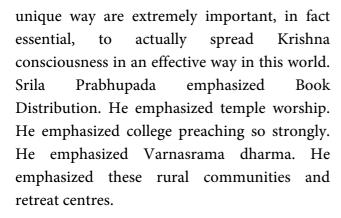
So here is Prabhupada, who one day, is in a simple farm and telling people not to use machinery and to just use the oxen, do agriculture and grow food; and the next he is purchasing one of the most opulent mansions in the most industrialized city of America. He was willing to use sky-scrapers in New York, he was willing to use all the possible best technology in Krishna's service and at the same time he wanted to use in a different situation the ancient natural technologies. For his books he was using the topmost technology, but he didn't even want any tractors or machines in

his farms. He wanted oxen. He wanted devotees carry things on their heads. And Prabhupada considered them both equally important.

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Srila Prabhupada would emphasize different aspects according to the place where he was. Practically everywhere in the world he was emphasizing book distribution. But in the three times he came to New Vrindavan, I don't remember him ever talking about book distribution. Besides talking Srimad Bhagavata philosophy he was talking about developing farm community and developing a retreat centre within that farm community that would reveal the spiritual world when people would come.

So we as Prabhupada's followers have the responsibility, the sacred obligation of trying to fulfil all these different orders of Srila Prabhupada. Each one of them in their own







PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS



Bhumi Puja

Significance of the ritual

Today we will be performing Bhumi puja. This ceremony will be the inauguration of a temple and a whole project and community that is centered around this temple. It is very significant to understand the spirit behind the Bhumi Puja. Any ritual has as much value as the content of the intention of those who are performing. A ritual is like an envelope, which should be addressed to God. But if you send God even with the right address the envelope is meaningless unless it contains a sincere message. Many rituals today are just empty envelopes with nothing inside. The message that the ritual is supposed to carry is our sincere intentions.

Atha pumbhir dvija srestha varanashrama vibhagasah... Whatever is our occupation, varna, ashrama, our success is our intention to please Krishna through our efforts. Bhumi is the feminine energy of the Absolute Truth. In our Vedic scriptures as well as the mystical traditions of the other spiritual paths, we understand that the Absolute Truth manifests in many features, Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan. That one Absolute Truth is both male and female. Within this world we understand that everything exists on the basis of the interaction of male and female. Every human being, animal, lizard, fish, plant, tree, is coming about due to this natural attraction between male and female energies of material nature. It's the basis of creation. What is the origin of this? The Bhagavad Gita explains that this material world is like the reflection of a banyan tree on the lake, which looks like the real banyan tree. But the difference is, if you try

to eat the fruits of the reflection, you will not get the same result. Similarly this whole material existence is the reflection of the eternal spiritual existence. The basis of spiritual existence is ever lasting, ever increasing enjoyment between the male and female aspects of the Absolute Truth. The feminine energy of the Lord is the energy of compassion. The feminine side of God nourishes and brings about compassion and real love. Bhumi is an expansion of the feminine divinity of the Absolute Truth. That is why they call her Mother Earth. She is the consort of Sri Varahadev. Just as we approach Krishna through Sri Radha, on a practical level we have to approach Krishna through Radharani in her expansions as well. Living in this world, we approach Krishna on a spiritual level through Sri Radha, by showing respect and living in harmony with Bhumi devi.



Exploiting Mother Earth

Never before in history has the world been in a more dangerous situation than it is now. We have made progress through technology and science but at the same time, what are we doing on the other side. We are creating other diseases due to pollution and unnatural lifestyles. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in the coming century, one of the three greatest causes of suffering and death will be depression and mental illness. Due to the green house effect the solar ice caps are melting. It's creating dramatic and tragic climatic changes. Some geologists have explained that it appears that soon there may not be a Ganges or Yamuna, which is the main means of sustenance for hundreds and millions of people. With the ice caps melting, the oceans rising, many of the major cities may be under water.

We take the gifts of Mother Nature and due to our perverted ignorance we utilize those gifts to create weapons of mass destruction, which are meant to massacre the children of Mother Earth. If you look at it realistically the world is in a hopeless state. Politicians don't want to tell you and we don't want to hear about it, because we are just caught up in our petty pursuance of fulfilling our greed. It is a big problem when scientists compromise their values and ethics for funding purposes, when politicians compromise their values for the sake of votes, and when business men and industrialists compromise their human values for profits.

Ravana wanted to exploit Sita. Bhumidevi is Sita. Humankind is plundering, exploiting and raping our Mother Earth. She is providing all nourishments and facilities for our lives. From a spiritual perspective it is highly offensive and from a material perspective it is suicidal. If your

mother provides you everything in life and if you take what she has to give you and use it to abuse her and neglect her, is that humanity? But that is the situation of the world today.

By performing Bhumi puja we are worshipping, honoring and serving mother earth. Everything that the earth produces is meant for the physical, emotional and spiritual health of the children. That means everything has to be used as an offering to God for the welfare of everyone. So this Bhumi puja concept is critical for the emotional, physical and spiritual well being of entire humanity.

Attention to Details

Bhakti means devotion, love; bhakti refers not just to what we do, but the intent and the purpose in what we do, speak and think. In this sense bhakti refers to being very attentive to each and every detail. The expression of love is very much in the detail of what we speak and what we do.

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Hospitality! You can invite someone to your home. But all the little things you do are important – the gestures, the words, giving some water, giving some food; not just any food, details to try to please the person by giving the food that they want.

In a flower garland, the most beautiful garlands are the ones that have such detail, even the little tiny flowers that hardly anyone will see.

I remember one time, Indra Sharma, one of India's greatest devotional artist was showing me a painting in his house. He said that it was an offering of great love and devotion to Krishna and Radha. It was like a mural, it was very big. I looked at it and thought, "This is fantastic, a wonderful work of art." Then he gave me a magnifying glass and asked me to

look at it in the magnifying glass. It was a whole dimension of art. He painted the entire thing with a magnifying glass. The real art, the real beauty was in details that the eye cannot even see without a magnifying glass.

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When I saw this, it awakened with in my mind what we really read about in the scriptures and in the histories of great saints.

Attention to details is an expression of real love because it really shows that you care beyond the formalities, sometimes even beyond what a person recognizes.

Bhakti means that attentiveness of details for Krishna's pleasure.

Krishna Is Pleased With Compassion

What pleases Krishna is when we show compassion and respect to all living beings.

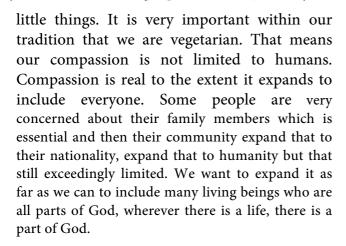
That is Krishna's order, that is Krishna's will.

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How we show compassion for other living beings is very much in the detail. Do we really care? Sometimes Srila Prabhupada would chant a particular Vedic verse at marriage ceremonies and the translation meant, "May all living beings be happy." That's Krishna's will.

In the material world or duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam (BG 8.15), where there are endless sufferings that are inflicted upon people just in the form of old age, diseases, death, ādhyātmika, ādhidaivika, ādhibhautika suffering caused by one's own body and mind, suffering caused by other living beings, suffering caused by natural conditions. In this situation, how are we supposed to make all living beings happy?

Our devotion to God is to the extent we are really trying both in the big things and in the



Real God Consciousness

If we are actually God Conscious we will see the presence of God in every living being and we will be respectful, we will honor that living being, we will honor that living being's right. This is not just a political movement, this is actual spirituality to honor and respect life, whether it be a man or women, an Indian or

Pakistani, Palestinian or an Israelian, American or Russian, a man or a woman, a Jew or Christian or Muslim or a Hindu or a Jain or a Sikh or Parsi or an atheist or an agnostic or someone who they are or what they are or a cow or an elephant or a dog or cat or insect or a bird or plant or a tree wherever there is life.

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vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaņe gavi hastini śuni caiva śva-pāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ (BG 5.18)

In Bhagavad-Gita Krishna tells, what is the definition of a learned person? A learned person is not someone who has a MA or a PhD. By God's estimation a learned person is one who sees every living being with equal vision. He doesn't see only humans, every living being that includes humans, with equal vision

because mamaivāmśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ (BG 15.7), because the spirit soul, the source of life is a part of God. If you want to love God you have to love His parts and love begins with respect, honor and concern.

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Meaning of Yoga

The word yoga means to reunite, to reconnect that means reconnect Our consciousness with divine consciousness, to reconnect the soul with God, the supreme soul, but it also mean to reconnect our motivation and our intention in a spirit of service to every living being, to reconnect with the Sun, Moon, stars, mountain, oceans, rivers, streams, trees, plants and all the life forms within it. This is not a theoretical idea, to reconnect means to feel oneself a respectful, honoring servant, to reconnect means to treat each other in a spirit that I am your servant.

Anyone can say I am one with you and you are one with me. To feel one with someone means, I will treat you the way I want to be treated, I will care for the way I want to be cared for and to understand and caring for you there is greater pleasure expecting someone to care for me, this is Bhakti, to get out of the ego of expecting things for one self, so that we can extend ourselves to feel for others.

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The more you feel for others the more you forget any problem for yourself and forget the problem for yourself that means you have no problems, because the problem is just a mental interpretation of a situation, you can transfer a problem into solution just by how you interpret it, a curse can interpret to be a blessing and then it is a blessing, if we see the opportunity.

So it is our hope that through the way we are trying to fulfill this dream by the process of our building, by the process of our farming, by the process of our social interactions we are showing respect, honor and love for Krishna through the way we are showing honor, respect and love to His creation. Creation is the medium through which we connect with God.

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After all we have these bodies and minds which is nothing but gross and subtle matter but it is through them that we connect to God. For example what is the tongue? The tongue is just a slab of flesh and water and some other elements. There is nothing so inherently divine about the tongue, if you have gross consciousness. But if you are Krishna conscious you see that there is something very inherently divine in everything that exist. It's all Krishna's energy. Even dead matter is Krishna's energy, to honor and respect that and to use it to its highest purpose. But through this tongue when we chant God's names, when we chant God's glories we enlighten people's consciousness with this tongue. We are using the tongue as a medium not only to connect with God but to connect, yoga, with other living beings and enlighten.

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The whole creation is here to help us to reconnect and there is a science on how to actually do that, through compassion, through respect, through honoring the value of the tree, through honoring the value of how the insects may be helping or harming the situation, through using our intelligence to discriminate the details for the purpose of real bhakti, real devotion and real love.





THE RETREAT CENTRE



Serving the people

The retreat center is important because we are simply the servants of the congregation and it's our responsibility to provide for them a shelter outside the city that is purely Krishna Conscious. And since they are people of the city it should have the feel of ancient traditional India, but it should have the comforts in which they can be happy. It doesn't have to be opulent but it should be comfortable enough so that they could be happy. Also we would start cow protection and alternative styles of energy, whether it be cow dung and cow urine, gases or other alternatives that are there; creating full electricity to power places through windmills, no need of coal or oil or gas or anything, it serves simpler.

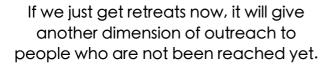
Many yoga groups from the west would love to come to Yoga retreats here. And if its really comfortable and really aesthetic and they really see wonderful cow protection and learn the value of protecting cows; as they are doing the Yoga they see the oxen ploughing the fields, they see how we are really trying to get alternative energies, and they eat all natural foods that are grown there, a few people like that can bring about a tremendous amount of attention in the whole world and whole nation.

That's what Srila Prabhupada wanted from the very beginning. That's what he wanted at New Vrindavan, at New Talavan, but it didn't happen, just didn't happen. As far as self-sufficiency is concerned, that's not really our priority now and may take a lot of time. Prabhupada really wanted that too, but we could just create the retreat center balanced with a very eco-friendly model; that is very doable. But an eco friendly growing system, eco

friendly way of building things would be extremely impressive. What we want to do here is make a very comfortable facility and give good experience for people to live in from any part of the world, at the same time in a very natural and eco friendly way.

Excellent Preaching Opportunity

Please know that when we say that people are going to come for all over the world, it is not that there will be groups of buses coming with hundreds of people a day. But instead it will be groups of like 20 – 30 people coming in a week. It's not going to upset the villagers. It's not going to be a tourist attraction. It is going to be serious people like various students and environmentalist people who will be looking for spiritual retreats. Its something I have been seeing, not only our temple but ISKCON as a movement we are included.



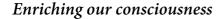
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That's how anybody joins spiritual movement these days. They are attracted by a retreat where they go for seven days because people really want to get away. Now in our temple, we bring our congregation, college students, western people to the temple, and they like the kirtan and hear a class and then they don't know what to do. But here we can have a fantastic retreat, we can't do it at the temple because there is no space. At the retreat centre we can have retreats where there are really nice seminars, kirtans, Ayurveda and Yoga. We can get really sensitive people who could influence much of the world favorably towards our movement or become devotees. We can get a lot of people from foreign countries. A lot of friends can become Krishna Conscious on a

certain level if we have retreats for them. But now you preach to them at their homes, you tell them to come to the temple, they attend the arati and then they go home. But actually we can capture them for a week or three days. It's actually the most successful way of reaching out to the people, both in India and the west.

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As soon as the place becomes a tourist centre it's no longer a retreat centre for Yoga or spirituality. We want to keep that place like this. Popular all over the world but the only people there are the people who are allowed to be there. No body can be coming in their cars, we will become a motor shop. We want people to come from all over the world not as a tourist but only serious people coming for serious spiritual upliftment. Also our congregation, not that people will be driving every day, they will be making prior reservation and coming at a certain time under the management of the retreat centre.



We want to create a community based on these principles where there is honor and respect for each other in a broader spectrum because every living being and every non-living being here is part of our community and ultimately there is a global community, there is a universal community. That's from the philosophical perspective.

From an ecological perspective we have to learn to respect what is being given by the Earth and not exploit. Exploitation creates greed and it creates a dangerous imbalance in our environment but a caring service attitude towards the environment actually creates real prosperity, longevity and hope. So from every level material and spiritual these are things, these are principles that are sacred and we want to enrich our own consciousness through this awareness and through this practice and we

also want a type of retreat center where people could come and actually understand how to live in harmony with nature and how to live in harmony with God, not just theoretical but they see it, they hear it, they smell it, they taste it, they feel it because it's for real.

Ashram... not Business!

To fulfill our purpose, there has to be a careful balance – that's a challenge. The idea of a retreat centre and people coming to ecovillage is that there should not only be a sight of an ecovillage but also a feeling and a spirit of ecovillage. With oxen ploughing field on one side and on the other side offering 5 star professional treatments is a total contradiction. Merging it is to be done very nicely. Is the purpose money or transforming hearts? We are not even strained financially; the funds haven't been given to make a business but to create an environment.



Retreat is for our congregation, college students and yoga groups from the west, who basically are not the people who will be affording costly rates. The retreat center is like a yatra, is a service., not a business. Even if we break even, with not so much loss, but just break even, that's enough. We should have more of a feel of an ashram – not a hotel. An ashram has a common dining hall, even in Hrishikesh etc, people like to sit in a common hall. Paying individually for food is not an ashram.

For the feel of an ashram and for our congregation, meals should be included in the tariffs. There may be exceptions for corporate retreats, as far as everybody else we want to keep it personal, giving a spiritual ashram experience.

People are not coming here for a vacation, but for a spiritual experience.

Giving people Cultural Experience

We want to be seen not as running a business/retreat, but as charitable people spreading divine message. We don't want to take from them but we want to feel that they are a part of our community. We need to define the mission statement. We need to check if our mood is going to be affordable. People coming here should not be discriminated; it defeats the purpose of community living.

In one sense, we have a community there growing food, taking care of cows. We are inviting people there to be a part of that community, not a commercial resort.

People want not just a visual, but cultural experience, values like not being concerned about money etc. When the people in the west travel, they stay in hotels, what I feel is we may

find major revenue in breaking even. We don't want to lose a lot of money, but we want to give people the experience. Even having Mid Day Meal there is an experience.

Today the most popular guesthouse in ISKCON is here in Chowpatty. Gauranga Priya Prabhu and Nitai Prasad Prabhu are changing people's hearts. Taj and Oberoi don't change.

We must run the place not so much as a profitable enterprise, but as a heart changing village experience, very loving experience with very loving devotees – the combinations that really conquer hearts.

East meets west – cleanliness and organization of the west with the simplicity of the east. It really has to feel non-commercial.

Train people in the right vision. Less cost for labor. Training in the vision of the standard of cleanliness. Disney land is spotlessly clean everywhere. If you drop anywhere anything – within 15 seconds it would be picked up. Cleanliness is godliness – needs effective management.

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Important thing is "Taking care of people" – train and form a good team at GEV. Whether we charge or not is to be experimented – some research to be done – the atmosphere and the loving relationships of the devotees is actually the point.

Srila Prabhupada's idea is based on simple living and high thinking. Alternative energy, farming, cow protection – Sanat kumar Prabhu did well. One of the primary reasons to make it really a retreat is to bring people from different parts of the world and India. Purpose is to give that experience. That's what Srila Prabhupada

wanted these farm communities for. We need to bring people to experience this, for people to come.

When people come to ashram, they expect something different from restaurant – they don't get to do that outside. Eating in a community hall with so many people. This is a holy place.



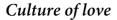






Taking care of Details

Many people who come to Sri Sri Radha Gopinath temple and stay for some days, the comment they give is not about the classes which are quite fantastic, not about the kirtans which are very fantastic, not about the architecture, and carved stone and the marbles which are very nice, nor about the Prasad which is excellent but most people are really moved by *cleanliness*. They say everything is so clean, because it's just so different than most of what they see in India, especially temples. Why does cleanliness move them so much? It's not just the hygiene, but to keep something clean takes tremendous amount of care, a tremendous amount of attention to detail and that awakens their Bhakti, because it's done for Krishna's pleasure.



It's the little things that parents do that very much influence the children. The mother goes out to work and just put the kid in front of a TV or buys them some games to play with and go. But the child needs some love, the child needs care. If you want to imbibe appreciation for Krishna in children, we have to give the children these little things. Kaliyuga generation is a generation of short cuts. But the problem is these short ways, they really do cut us and they really cut others too, cut us off from our conscience, our own hearts, our own loved ones. Culture of care, culture of devotion is a culture in action.

Taking care of Children

Taking care of children, their education and protection against abuse takes a lot of focus. We have to have a very strong focus to make sure there is no child abuse. Child protection can't be taken for granted. There can be no nice system, unless we put priority and attention into it. A Gurukul needs lot of attention, for their emotional and spiritual protection. We need a team of people who are really working out of their way, it could be people from Bombay too who are just overseeing. And then we have our men there who are executing.

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Devotee Care

Devotee care is itself a huge responsibility. Looking after their material needs, looking after the quality of their lives, making sure that their families are properly taken care of, is going to be much more intensive here. If we want a nice community then the whole counselor system concept plus all that physical, emotional and all other type of support must be there. It's a very immense responsibility and we can do it, we have the people to do it, we have



to allocate people and as we are putting more energy in this place, obviously more capable people, more qualified people will come there.

Older Devotees

Krishna Naam Prabhu: Iananivas Prabhu explained that Srila Prabhupada in his purport, was talking about how farm community or village is basically a place which is in the mode of goodness. The whole purpose of our practice in Krishna Consciousness is to gradually elevate the whole consciousness to come from the lower modes to the higher modes and particularly as we are becoming older we need to be more and more situated in the mode of goodness as much as possible. So from that point of view particularly for those who are staying in the cities, a place like Govardhan Eco Village or Mayapur or anywhere we have a farm community would be an ideal place where

a person who is becoming old, aged should settle down. But at the same time there is also a need for such a person to be properly engaged. So my question was that would Govardhan Eco Village facilitate movement of the devotees from the city to GEV so that they could spend the rest of their life in the mode of goodness as much as possible? So could we also think on those lines of creating facilities over here?

HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj: (You are still quite young Krishnanama prabhu!) That is one of the objectives of developing this property. We will be having guests, students, tourists, as we are having various dynamic seminars, lectures, kirtans, health retreats and cottage industries. So as this project actually becomes a community and a pilgrimage center, it will provide more and more valuable services for people to render. At this time it's basically the school, orphanage, farming and a little bit of



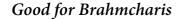
deity worship. But as we develop there will be dozens of various types of services that will require capable people. Hopefully we will have it all available while you are still young. But other people who are either young or enthusiastic to come or elder want to settle in, live their lives here it will be the spiritual world. It's a beautiful atmosphere, beautiful devotees, wonderful preaching opportunities, and many many varieties of devotional service.

Krishna Naam Prabhu: But the concern, particularly, for the old people is health and always there is a need for a good medical facility available nearby or at least in the vicinity. So there is always a fear that 'suppose I really become very sick then what happens?'

HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj: Bhaktivedanta hospital is going to open up clinic possibly very close by. Are you convinced? Madhavanand

prabhu, would you like to say something in this regard what possibilities there may be?

Madhavananda Prabhu: As per the plan we had just discussed with Maharaj, there will be a sub-center here in this village, not on the property but in the village where our doctors will be coming regularly and also we will have some local people who are little educated, trained in primary care, plus we might have an ambulance service which is like between the hospital and GEV. Because recently also we had one boy who had a serious accident, was brought from here to the hospital and treated very well and because of that the schools nearby who were little bit antagonistic to us, have opened their hearts to our preaching. So this is how it will manifest school health check ups, a clinic and over a period of time we might have a doctor permanently staying here.



Factually the brahmcharis include the ashram, the BTs and the VTAs, it's all the brahmchari ashram. At this time in that little old hundred and twelve year old building there are 200 brahmcharis and many more want to come, so by sending some brahmcharis here will help our ashram, it will give the brahmcharis more air to breathe, more space to sleep, less congestion. At the same time it will provide a wonderful retreat center for the brahmcharis where they can regularly come to rejuvenate their health because two hundred people living in that little ashram is very difficult for health. So some will live here permanently and others will come here on a regular basis, do seva here and it will be a thrilling opportunity to improve their health. So we are not diminishing something, we are actually increasing what's already there by expanding here.

Kind Words

I have seen when very powerful people welcome someone to their house they give gifts. But it does not affect the heart as one or two really kind words that come from the heart. We should be sensitive to whom we are speaking.

Factually anyone regardless of one's educational qualifications, economic status, sex, nationality, religion can speak with care from the heart.









An offering of compassion

Today we are inaugurating this vision, this plan, this prayer, on behalf of our Gurudev who wanted it so dearly.

This potentially could be one of the greatest offerings of our society for the health of our own devotees, devotees all over the world, and the people in general. It's a small step, towards a sublime destination.

We may need more land, but that will not be a problem. If there is a desire without ulterior motives, Krishna provides, Krishna empowers and it will be a success. The most important thing is that we cannot compromise our sacred values. We have to be what we are trying to teach. We have

to be what we are striving to offer to the world. It should be done very purely. This is my very sincere and humble proposal to all of you.

Let us work together to make this dream of Srila Prabhupada a divine reality.

Expressing Gratitude

By Srila Prabhupada, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda's causeless mercy we have such a potential to expand and increase this wonderful project that Prabhupada really wanted without taking anything away from what we are already doing. This is such a blessing that we should be so grateful that we have a chance to do this and we should show our gratitude by doing it. All the counselors should be thinking what we have, let us utilize it to expand Mahaprabhu's movement in ways that Prabhupada smiles and showers his

blessings. But we cannot compromise any of the projects that we are already working with, that's essential.

United Effort

What would make it beautiful is that it is a united effort. It's not one person's project or two or three people's project. We want it to be our family's project. We have quite a large family, which begins with the counselors. We should be so happy. If we put so much effort and if we get in return a bowlful of rice we should be ecstatic.





