

'Lack of spirituality making world evil'

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An interview of HH Bhakti Charu Swami by Irene Kuppan

A leading spiritual leader, currently visiting the country, believes that the reason for all the world's problems are because of a lack of spirituality and the excessive need for material things.

His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami, one of the leaders of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), was in Durban this week.

Hailing from India, Bhakti Charu Swami, who was previously the minister of arts and culture for ISKCON, is responsible for the translation of various spiritual texts into Bengali and also produced a documentary called Abhay Charan, based on the life of the founder of ISKCON, AC Swami Prabhupada.

Asked whether he thought South Africans were spiritual he replied: "No. There is no education about spiritual reality. Just going to temples, mosques and churches are not enough. Behind those actions there needs to be proper understanding of God."

However, Bhakti Charu Swami was quick to point out this was not specifically a South African problem.

"These are problems facing the whole world. South Africa is a young nation and is doing very well. This country has enormous potential to create a harmonious society."

Bhakti Charu Swami said most of the problems in the world were caused by "religious misconception".

"What is religion? It is about giving information about God and showing us the way to reach and approach him. Different people came into the world and spoke about God and how to approach him."

He said it was unfortunate that religions were at war with each other because they didn't understand their teachings.

"The worst battles are fought in the name of religion," he said.

Bhakti Charu Swami had the following Diwali message for Daily News readers: "Go deep into understanding the spiritual reality. Consider who you are. Recognise your spiritual identity and realise God is here."