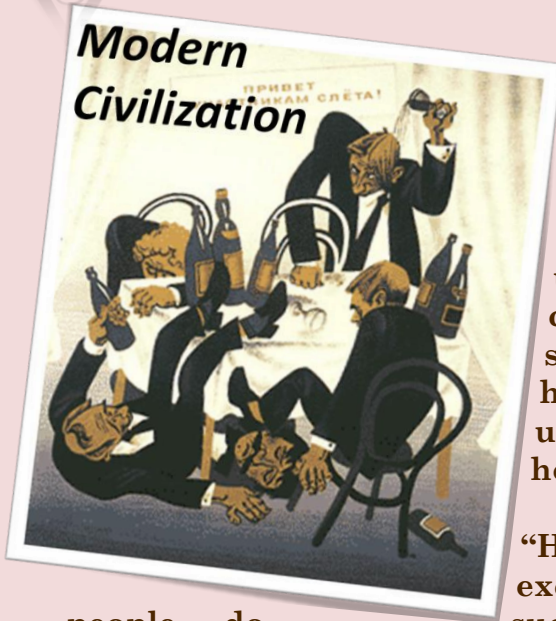




INTOXICATION

Destructive or Divine ?

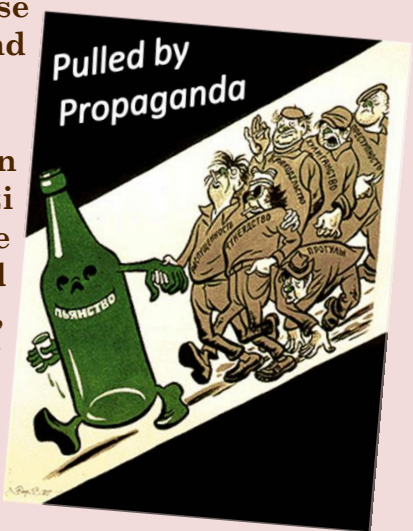


Imagine a tribal who drinks a stinking toxic liquid, goes crazy, shouts insensibly, topples into dirt, falls unconscious, returns to consciousness after several hours with severe headache and stomach upset and vomits helplessly in agony.

“How horrible,” we will exclaim, “What kind of such things? Why?” But

people do such things? Why?” But isn't that what an extra-terrestrial being will exclaim about a common – and perverse – modern pleasure? Yes, its drinking. If we just remove the ad glamour from it, intoxication is nothing but a modern ritual of self-torture. And drunkards' self-torture continues long after the ritual ends because they also squander fortunes and ruin their health.

Joseph Goebbels, the German propaganda minister in Nazi Germany, advocated that if one repeats a lie long enough, loud enough and bold enough, everyone will end up believing it. Few things illustrate this truth the way the lie of the pleasure of intoxication does.



Everyone knows drinking kills, yet, victimized by propaganda, they imagine that they will be exceptions. Sadly, there are no exceptions.

Some of us may have saved ourselves from intoxication. Still we can all identify with the desire to experience a higher state of existence and enjoyment that intoxication falsely promises to fulfill. That desire to be intoxicated

with happiness stems from our spiritual essence. In our original pure existence in the spiritual world, we as souls are intoxicated with love for God and live in eternal happiness, oblivious to everything except our beloved Lord. We can all experience that spiritual intoxication of divine love here and now by singing *bhajans* and *kirtans*, as many traditional Indians can testify. Indeed the holy names of God like the *Hare Krishna mahamantra* bring so much joy that even addicted drunkards can quickly get rid of their addictions just by chanting regularly. No wonder Prof Stillson Judah commented about Srila Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON and the greatest exponent of chanting, "I am simply amazed by your ability to transform hippies into servants of God and humanity." Let us all experience the intoxication of divine love and free ourselves – and others – from all destructive intoxications.

