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Village Focus



Highlights of the issue:

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- Twin Celebrations at Hebri Farm
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Vrindavan Life

Srila Prabhupada: The villagers, they have cows and land. That is sufficient for their economic problem. But the industrialists, they are alluring them, "To get more money, come here." So they are going to the cities. And the food production in the village is neglected. And therefore the food grain price is rising. Actually, everyone should be engaged to produce food, but the modern set-up of civilization is that few people are engaged in producing food, and others are eating.

[Conversations: July 25, 1973, London]

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Srila Prabhupada Speaks on Village Life

Be Satisfied with the Simple Village Life

“In the *Bhagavad-gita* also Krsna says *vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*, the real purpose of Vedic knowledge is to come to the understanding of Krsna consciousness... So this Krsna consciousness movement is trying to revive the original, constitutional position.

So one of them in the Krsna consciousness movement is **village organization**, as you're trying here. Krsna, in his natural life, is a village boy in Vrndavana. Vrndavana is a village. There is no factory, there is no motorcar, there are no big, big sky-scraper buildings; it is village. That Krsna likes. In the sastra it is said, “Vrndavan parityaiya padam ekam na gacchati.” Krsna is so fond of that Vrndavana village life, with His cowherd boys and cowherd girls, His gopis, mother Yasoda, father Nanda, and Upananda, uncles, and big family, and the calves, the trees, the Yamuna river. He is satisfied in that life. So, at least those who are Krsna conscious, they should be satisfied with the simple village life. That is part of Krsna consciousness. But it does not mean that we shall avoid city life or town life, no. Everything, every place is Krsna's place. Everywhere there should be Krsna consciousness. We should keep ourselves within the village and properly as Krsna personally showed us the example. He was personally taking care of the calves. When He was a child He was taking care of the calves. When He was grown up He was taking care of the cows, even though He was the son of a very rich man, Nanda maharaja, the village king. But still He was working hard the whole day, going in the morning to the pasturing ground and returning in the evening. Then He used to take His bath, change dress, and immediately go to sleep. This was

Krsna's pastime. So we should follow His footprints. What is that verse? *asraddadhanah purusa/ dharmasyasya parantapa/ aprapya mam nivartante/ mrtyu-samsara-vartmani* [BG 9.3]...” [cf. an evening lecture at the Gita-nagari farm community in Pennsylvania on July 15, 1976]



Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



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• HH Bhakti Raghava Swami on 'Villages'



*Annād-bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḍ anna-sambhavaḥ
yajñāḍ bhavati parjanyo yajñāḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

“All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of yajña [sacrifice], and yajña is born of prescribed duties.” [Bhagavad-gita 3.14]

The basis of “Simple Living and High Thinking”, the norm for civilized human beings, lies in the acceptance of village life centered on the performance of sacrifice, yajna, which is born of prescribed duties as delineated in the scientific system of varnas and asramas. Such a social system, being very intimately connected with land, cows and higher consciousness, namely Krishna consciousness, is the most perfect and holistic way to live. When human society, due to neglect, bad leadership or misfortune, all based on lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness and envy, deviates from this established norm, a norm scientifically designed and created by the highest of authorities, Lord Krishna Himself, a system meant to uphold, protect and foster the universal principles of dharma or religiosity, we should know for certain that only chaos will prevail and immense suffering must follow.

In any discussions on varnasrama dharma, the importance of village life and social organization are a must. Village life needs to be clearly outlined and strongly promoted. Vedic leadership which will give shape to social organization needs to be explained and strongly advocated. As we have heard many times Srila Prabhupada explain, the very foundation of varnasrama dharma begins with cow protection for without cows the brahmanas cannot perform their duties within the varnasrama system and without following the various samskaras within the varnasrama system, the aim of life cannot be realized, the result of which is varna sankara and ugra karma at its worse. In such a degraded condition the dependent members of society, namely the cows, the brahmanas, the children, the women, the diseased and the elders cannot be protected:

“Without protection of cows, brahminical culture cannot be maintained; and without brahminical culture, the aim of life cannot be fulfilled. The Lord, therefore, is described as go-brahmana-hitaya because His incarnation is only for the protection of the cows and brahmanas. Unfortunately, because in Kali-yuga there is no protection of the cows and brahminical culture, everything is in a precarious position. If human society wants to be exalted, the leaders of society must follow the

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instructions of Bhagavad-gita and give protection to the cows, the brahmanas and brahminical culture.” [SB 8.24.5]

What follows are quotations from various sources which support the basic premise enunciated above, i.e. without the majority of people taking up to the simple standard village lifestyle which allows for a natural execution of prescribed duties [traditional occupations largely connected with land and cows], which in turn favours the appearance of regular rainfalls which will guarantee the production of natural and wholesome food grains, no society can prosper or maintain itself for long, no society can protect its citizens from even simple calamities, no society can lead its members to the goal of life, self-realization, in brief no society can consider itself to be civilized. Hence the great need to remain in or return to the traditional village lifestyle as enjoined in the sastras and as advocated by all spiritual mentors and all responsible social leaders.

Srila Prabhupada [ISKCON Founder-Acarya]

“Our philosophy is that you produce your food anywhere you stay, and keep cows, take milk, produce vegetables, food grains, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. That’s all. This is our philosophy. Make your life successful. By becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, you become free from all these troubles of material condition. This is our education. Don’t be after these motorcars, television, and all nonsense things, sporting, wine, women. Don’t be after these. Simply eat sufficiently, keep your health nicely, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, realize Kṛṣṇa, and go back to home. This is our philosophy.”

[Conversations: May 25, 1974, Rome]

In the above exchange, Srila Prabhupada clearly stresses the need to produce our own food and to learn to be satisfied with this more simplified rural lifestyle. In other conversations, Srila Prabhupada makes it abundantly clear that life will be more healthy and peaceful if we learn to depend on agriculture produce and live in the villages. He discourages people from leaving the villages:

“Nobody should take to very hardship labor. The modern civilization has discovered severe types of dangerous industries, and laborers are attracted for high wages. But they should not accept such work. Then naturally there will be less capitalistic idea. Because the laborer cooperates, therefore demoniac persons they take advantage and make unnecessarily increase of artificial demands of the body.” Better one should be satisfied with agricultural produce than go into large cities to be engaged in industry. Peaceful life depending on agricultural produce can bring him real happiness and prosperity, not otherwise. The more persons will be satisfied at their home, with home economics, not to go outside the home; that is peaceful life. In India, Mahatma Gandhi tried to organize villages in that way so that not to drag the people to the town. So, peaceful atmosphere can be attained only when there is large scale village organization, actually village life. Not to borrow the ideas from the cities in the village life; poet Cooper said that country is made by God,

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and the cities and towns are made by man. So that is the distinction. [Letter to Rayarama dasa, 17 October, 1968, Seattle]



Ethics of Chanakya (On Principles of Provincial and Local Governance)

As we know, Chanakya Pandit was a great diplomat and wise moralist whose writing are greatly appreciated by politicians, educators and people in general. In the book Ethics of Chanakya, the author summarizes some of Chanakya's thoughts regarding the importance of statesmanship in terms of village self-governance, village sustainability and village autonomy:

“While an effective control was kept on towns, villages were free from the active jurisdiction of royal officials. They were rather autonomous bodies and were administered by local men. They were not only self-sufficient units economically, but politically, they were self-governing. Under such a system, villages continued to exist as self-sufficient little republics, which remained the basis of higher political existence. They survived successive turmoil or changes of fortune, and continued to maintain the prosperity of the people, in spite of the change of dynasties or the rise and fall of empires. The village was regarded as a co-operative social unit, and its head was the Gramika. From the evidence of one passage, this man seems to have been invested with minor magisterial authority and was empowered to expel thieves, criminals, adulterers and other undesirable persons.” [Ramesh, T. Y. Ethics of Chanakya, Sahni Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p. 178]

It is clear from the above descriptions that villages were the norm for most people and that these villages prospered following principles of self-governance and self-sufficiency.

M.K. Gandhi [Extracts from VILLAGE SWARAJ]

As often quoted by Srila Prabhupada, Gandhi was a strong advocate of village organization.

“In the future set-up we shall have only two things, the village and the world. We may have the names of countries on the map for the sake of convenience, but in reality, there will be no intermediary between the world and the village. All the authority concerning the material side of life will rest with the village. The village will have power to order its own life. The power of moral advancement of the whole world will rest in the world centre. The districts or the States will only be the agents of the village community. Thus we shall have the village at the base and the world Authority at the Centre. Human society will be organized on the basis of small village communities

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of say, 2 to 3 thousand souls each. There would be real fraternity and co-operation in the village community. There would be no private ownership. The village will be a model of corporate life. The world centre will be the ultimate co-ordination link between these primary communities.”

and from Preface....

“The experience of mankind testifies to the fact the collective life is more genial, varied and fruitful when it is concentrated in small units and simpler organizations. It is only small units which have had the most intense life. Collective life diffusing itself in vast areas would be wanting in cohesiveness and productiveness.

Ancient Greek City States and Village Republics of India provided specimen of all-round development of rich and puissant life. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: “This system of village self-government was the foundation of the Aryan polity. It was this that gave it strength. So jealous were the village assemblies of their liberties that it was laid down that no soldier was to enter a village except with a royal permit....

As late as 1830 a British Governor in India, Sir Charles Metcalfe, described the village communities as follows: “The village communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself... is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence.”

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or Panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. P. 69

I want to resuscitate the villages of India. Today our villages have become a mere appendage to the cities. They exist, as it were, to be exploited by the latter and depend on the latter's sufferance. P. 83, from Village Swaraj.

"I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India, the WORLD also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth.”

Nepal Villages

In a recent conversation with a former Gurukula boy from Nepal, the following description was given. “Even today many villages in Nepal have their own blacksmith, their own barber, their own tailor and other skilled workers. They serve the villagers as and when needed throughout the year. When harvest time comes these different labourers come to the land and are remunerated with grains and other produce from the land. This simple lifestyle and this simplified economics still prevail in many villages of Nepal today. It is the remnants of the ancient Vedic varnasrama system.”

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Benjamin Franklin (one of the founding fathers of America):

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

Daniel Webster (American lawyer and politician with great interest in agriculture)

“Let us never forget that the cultivation of the earth is the most important labour of man. Man may be civilized, in some degree, without great progress in manufactures and with little commerce with his distant neighbours. But without the cultivation of the earth, he is, in all countries, a savage. Until he gives up the chase, and fixes himself in some place and seeks a living from the earth, he is a roaming barbarian. When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization.” [Speech delivered to the Massachusetts Legislature (Boston, 13 January 1840) [From Madhava Ghosh's <http://yogaofecology.blogspot.com>]

Conclusion

The meaning of varnasrama dharma and its practical application will remain largely concealed as long as individuals do not leave their present comfort zones in the cities. This requires the accommodation of another paradigm, the village lifestyle paradigm. Only by spending quality time in the villages will the inner truths and secrets of varnasrama dharma become revealed. The principle of self-sufficiency and sustainability will only become manifest when one learns to live in a localized way. As boldly stated by Srila Prabhupada, one must learn to live “on the lap of material nature”.

This will require tremendous courage and determination on the part of those taking up the mantle given to us by Srila Prabhupada. The varnasrama mission or daiva varnasrama dharma means re-introducing village lifestyle as the norm within all of societies, the most ideal norm which can best facilitate the advancement of our Vaisnava practices in devotional service. Education and training at the village levels must be re-introduced and for this reason both Gurukula and Varnasrama Colleges are of paramount importance. The Varnasrama Shikshalaya programs introduced in India are meant to serve as forerunners to these educational reforms.

Let us know, let us realize and let us demonstrate the importance of village life. Let us become convinced that village life, based on the eternal principles of Krishna consciousness, is indeed part of our eternal philosophy, our eternal education and our eternal lifestyle.

- *HH Bhakti Raghava Swami*



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Indian Village May Hold Key to Beating Dementia

- By Jane Hughes, Health Correspondent, BBC News

Ballabgarh in northern India has unusually low levels of Alzheimer's disease. More than 820,000 people in the UK are living with dementia, a number that is expected to double by 2051. Is there anything that can be learnt from this region to slow the trend?

As the sun breaks through the morning mist in Ballabgarh, the elders of the village make their way to their regular meeting spot to exchange stories and share a traditional hookah pipe. These men are in their sixties and seventies, while their faces bear the evidence of years of hard work in the fields, their minds are still sharp. In other parts of the world, people of their age would be at some risk of developing dementia. But here, Alzheimer's disease is rare. In fact, scientists believe recorded rates of the condition in this small community are lower than anywhere else in the world.

76-year-old Parshadi Lal says: "I feel good, I feel healthy, I have a walk every morning, even though my knees do now give me a bit of trouble." His friends nod in agreement.

Record low rates

Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh spent several years studying over-55s in this area. They tested more than 5,000 people for Alzheimer's disease, using screening processes designed to fit in with local culture, and relevant for people who could not read or write.

They wanted to be sure they did not miss any cases of the condition. It is an area where people do not tend to live as long as they do in wealthier, more developed areas, so you would expect rates of Alzheimer's disease to be lower. But even after the scientists factored in the lower life expectancy of people in this area, the rate of Alzheimer's disease was significantly below those in the UK - and less than a third of those in parts of the US.

"We had a hunch that rates here would be lower," says Dr Vijay Chandra, one of the study authors. In fact, they found what appeared to be among the lowest rates of the condition ever recorded by scientists.

So what is it about the people of Ballabgarh that is protecting them from a condition that affects about 36 million people worldwide?

Gene search

Dr Chandra told me they tested people to see whether fewer of them carried the APO4E gene, which predisposes people to Alzheimer's disease. They did not.

When compared to people living in a community in Pennsylvania, US, they found almost exactly the same proportion carried the gene.

But in contrast with lives in Pennsylvania and other parts of the world, the people of Ballabgarh are unusually healthy. It is a farming community, so most of them are very physically active and most eat a low-fat, vegetarian diet. Obesity is virtually unheard of.

Life in this fertile farming community is also low in stress, and family support is still strong, unlike in other, more urban parts of India.

"It all leads to a happy body, and a happy mind and hopefully a happy brain," says Dr Chandra. "Cholesterol levels here are much lower. We believe that is what is protecting the community."

Life in Ballabgarh could not be more different from the complicated, stressful existence many of us lead in the rest of the world. But perhaps this community has something to teach us.

(Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8492918.stm>)



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One Acre and a Cow for Self-Sufficiency...



- By HG Sachikumar Das

Of course, the consumption of various cereals, pulses may differ for each family according to the tradition, geographical location etc. The yearly figures of all the listed item mentioned below are the requirements in an average family of 4 (including serving to the guests on different occasions).

01) Cereals

- a) wheat - 120 kg
- b) rice - 40 kg
- c) bajra - more or less 5 kg
- d) rajgira (amranthus) & sama (both on fasting days) - 20 kg

02) Pulses

- a) tur dal - 30 kg
- b) chana dal (for dal & besan flour) - 20 kg
- c) mung beans - 10 kg
- d) mogar dal - 10 kg
- e) urad dal - 10 kg
- f) Misc. like moth beans, rajma, dry peas etc - 10 kg

03) sabjis (different varieties including potato) - 250 to 275 kg

04) oil (we use groundnut & til) - 60 to 65 kg

05) milk (including required for making curd) - 675 to 700 Ltrs

06) ghee - 60 to 65 kg

07) sugar - 50 kg

08) jaggery - 25 kg

09) fruits (different varieties) - 80 to 100 kg

10) flowers (for worship & for other purpose) – variable factor

11) spices and condiments (chilly, jeera, dhania, fenugreek, clove, dalchini, cardamom, mustard, tamrind, amachur powder, kokam, turmeric, pepper, coconut for chutney etc) - 20 to 22 kg

12) pickles (mostly from mango) - 3 to 4 kg

13) cloth - 250 to 300 Mtrs

14) chipped rice, puffed rice, rawa, maida - all together 18 to 20 kg

As far as possible, I have tried to include all the requirements except items like dates (which in India it is not possible anyway), cheese etc. As mentioned above quantity of some items will differ especially that of rice compared with wheat.

Srila Prabhupada mentioned many times in his books and conversations that if a family has some land and a cow, one's economic problem is solved. This is possible if one has an acre of land and a cow. The following is a way how an acre of land should be used to produce the yearly requirement of a family (I assume this as 4 members). There are few prerequisite like ample water supply (through water harvesting

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and other methods of organic farming supply can be used) which helps to cultivate throughout the year, fertilising the land by spreading atleast 5 tons of manure yearly. If we use indigenous seeds and follow several methods we will not face problems of pests and climatic changes (yes, it is possible even by following the vedic and traditional ways), cow giving atleast 10 Ltrs of milk per day (several indigenous breeds of India give even more than this), selling organic produce in cities through well organised efforts.



In order not to complicate the whole matter for you to understand, I will not (at this time) give details of what grows in which season (kharif, rabi & in summer).

An acre of land = 43560 Sq Ft.

01) land required for house construction - 1500 Sq Ft (house with a terrace)

02) road to and fro reaching the house set aside - 1500 Sq Ft

03) a pond (as much deep as possible) for water harvesting and in future to grow lotus, water chestnut, makhana etc) - 1000 Sq Ft

04) miscellaneous purpose - 500 Sq Ft (like for well, borewell, cow shed, parking bullock cart etc)

05) vermicompost making unit - 200 Sq Ft

06) land to provide grass to a cow through out the year (App 30 kg a day) - 6000 Sq Ft (assuming cow gives Min 10 Ltrs per day for 8 months/240 days a year = 2400 Ltrs per day less (-) 700 Ltrs for yearly consumption = 1600 Ltrs. 20 Ltrs make 1 kg of ghee. Thus 80 kg of ghee from 1600 Ltrs of which 60 kg used for a Fly & the balance 20 kg sold (@ Rs 400 kg = Rs 8000 (income).

07)wheat - 2500 Sq Ft (yield @ 2500 kg per acre)

[Note - other cereals like jowar, bajra, corn, ragi, millets other than bajra, ragi etc is not seperately included as if a family consumes these other cereals naturally they will consume less of wheat and rice]

08)rice (assuming 120 kg yearly requirement + 10 to 12 kg for making chipped & puffed rice) - 1500 Sq Ft (yield @ 5.5 tons per acre - through various ways/methods like SRI & good fertility yield @ 8 tons per acre has already been achieved).

09) pulses which includes all dals mentioned above all together required growing space will be - 8000 Sq Ft (yield ranging from 600 to 1000 kg per acre of different pulses)

10) spices & condiments - 1500 Sq Ft (not all items can be grown in one geographical location)

11) rajgira & sama - 1500 Sq Ft

12) oil (groundnut & til) - 4000 Sq Ft (each time for kharif & rabi season, yield @ 1000 kg per acre)

13) sugarcane - 400 Sq Ft (yield @ 100 tons per acre - in Pune & Kolhapur

In districts, some farmers have achieved 200 to 250 tons per acre. Out of 1 ton of sugarcane 500 kg may be used for making sugar – 10% recovery. The rest 500 kg of sugarcane may be used for making jaggery - 15 % recovery which means 75 kg. Out of 25 kg for household requirement the balance 50 kg can be fed to a cow throughout the year).

14) Subjis - 5000 + 1500 Sq Ft (subji for household will be grown on a house terrace - 1500 Sq Ft which will be more than daily requirement thus can be sold and on the ground - entire produce for commercial

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selling - yield @ 5 kg per day per 1000 Sq Ft . [For further details one can refer one square foot gardening that details how to grow vegetables, fruits]. Out of 30 kg of subji which will grow daily, 10% should be exotic fetching; The minimum rate of Rs 50 per kg, 20% should be specialised items fetching a minimum of Rs 25 per kg and the balance 70%, ie. 21 kg can be sold at Rs 15/kg [Our entire produce is organic and should thus fetch much higher than this but we are considering the prices on the lower side]. Thus total amount generated from subjis will be Rs 615 per day. Assuming expenses of Rs 65 per day, profit will be 550 per day, yearly profit from the sale of subji will be Rs 200,750).

15) fruit trees of different kind (20 coconuts + 1 each of mango, chickoo, litchi, orange, kokum, jackfruit, mulberry & sweet lime + 2 each of pomegranate, lime, fig & guava + 5 to 10 each of banana, papaya & pineapple + several plants of muskmelon, watwermelon, strawberry etc) - 3000 Sq Ft

16) cotton - 3000 Sq Ft (yield @ 300 kg+ acre, ie 30 kg cotton from 3000 Sq Ft = 30 kg cloth = Min 300 Mtrs of cloth).



[Note: Between fruit trees dye plants can be grown, some can be used as fodder or as raw material for ayurvedic medicine + atleast 11000 Sq Ft of space will be available during summer season and approximately 2500 to 3000 Sq Ft space is available for kharif & rabi season as different crops grows in different season. Also, 90 kg oil cake will be available from groundnut and til + approximately 80 – 100 kg of cotton seed + approximately 150 kg of groundnut leaves + dry grass of rice of approximately 250 kg + dry matter of all pulses of approximately 300 kg and sugarcane molasses + leaves of various subjis and skins of various fruits will be for free for a cow.]

After 6 years of planting, 20 coconut trees will yield a minimum of 6,000 coconuts yearly, which if sold @ Rs 5 will fetch Rs 30,000 yearly + all other fruits producing fruits at appropriate time) made in jams, jellies, preserves will fetch approximately Rs 25,000 per year. In total apart from a family's yearly requirement one can earn approximately Rs 200,000 after deducting all related expenses. Also, as the fertility of the soil increases, yields will increase which in turn implies more profit.

It may seem too good to be true, but it is very much doable and achievable. But it requires some incubation period and thus patience. This will be my upcoming project from coming rainy season. In the course of putting it in action many things can be learnt or realised like how to achieve the goal or even simplify it. The yield figures mentioned are mostly Indian national average or averages achieved by several zealous farmers in India and abroad. Of course they have achieved the high yields using chemicals, but we can in due course of time achieve more yields using different indigenous traditional methods together. I have full faith in the words of Srila Prabhupada that some land and a cow are enough to solve one's economic problem. Also the earth can produce 10 times than required for the population. Lets enthusiastically & patiently wait for this day.

- By H.G. Sachi Kumar Das



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Twin Celebrations at Hebri Farm

February 27, 2010- March 1, 2010

- By Vrndavanlila Dd



February 28, 2010 witnessed twin celebration of Gaura Purnima and HH Bhakti Raghava Swami's 25th anniversary of accepting renounced order of life. Sahyadri Sri Krishna Balrama Kshetra, Hebri, head quarter of Daivam, was fortunate to have the physical presence of maharaj on the occasion and thus planned for three-day (Feb'27-Mar 1, 2010) festival in the farm. The otherwise silent farm was bustling with activities to accommodate more than 200 devotees from various states across the country and the continents. On the first day, the small nondescript village of Hebri witnessed an ecstatic nagar sankirtan led by Maharaj and his god-brother, HG Haripad Prabhu. The highlights of the day included invigorating lectures, interactive sessions spearheaded by HG Madhava Prabhu (managing Gokul Dham farm community in Belgaum, Karnataka) with the congregating youth members, inauguration of sugarcane ghani in the farm, competitions and nagar sankirtan.

The next day being the day of the main festivities saw a surge of activities. There were interesting competitions like making of cow dung cakes, cleaning the cows, mud structures, bulls working to extract sugarcane juice and water from the well. At the same time there were enlightening lectures on varnasrama by Maharaja and HG Haripad Prabhu. The youth forum of Shimoga and Manipal enacted a breath-taking play on Lord Chaitanya taking sannyasa, abhisheka of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai deities, arati, initiation ceremony, topped by serving of sumptuous prasadam.



The last day of the festival was marked by a visit to Vodabandeshwara (Lord Balarama) near Malpe beach, Udipi Krishna Math, and to Pajakaksetra (holy place of Sri Madhvacharya's appearance), where all the devotees got an opportunity to honour delicious feast.

The festival gave everybody an opportunity to come under the same roof and jointly put their efforts to promote varnasrama. The SSKBK devotees had to happily content themselves by offering their place as the venue of the festivities. Rest of the administration of the festival was taken over by Gokul Dham (Belgaum) team headed by HG Madhava prabhu, supply of vegetables and other groceries for the function was taken care by Shimoga team (headed by HG Govind prabhu) while other miscellaneous festival management was taken care by other members from Bangalore, Secunderabad, Manipal etc.



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• Village Out-Reach Program



Village Out-Reach Program - Nizamabad

- By HG Ram Lakman Dasa



Unlike our past “Make Vrndavan Villages” program this came as a surprise package, triggered by my desire to meet my god-brother, HG Shankar prabhu from Nizamabad, a town in Telangana area. I also had a desire to have darshan of Mother Saraswati in Basar (not so far off from the town), also known as Vyasa Puri. I accompanied by HG Nitya Tripta prabhu started. It was not a good note of beginning, the train was running late by 3 hours (though very common in India). We reached the place at an unfriendly hour of 1 am. Another godbrother, HG Shambhu prabhu was there to receive us and we walked through the silent streets for about 2 kms in the darkness of the night.



Next morning we were up, anxious for Mother Saraswati’s darshan. After completing our chanting rounds, we headed towards Basar. Soon we were at her doorstep and had a eyeful darshan. The local priest told us that Vyasa muni used to worship her in the very place we were standing. We also went to the cave, where he used to meditate. By noon we visited Bodhen, which is famous for sugarcane production and visited a few farms. Surprisingly we met a family that served us with prasadam that was offered to Sri Sri Radha-Damodar! This was followed by a hearty soul searching interactions from either side.

We soon left for Nizamabad, where the local devotees had arranged for Sunday evening program comprising reading from Bhagwad-Gita and love feast. We (myself and Nitya-Tripta prabhu) were fortunate to have spent about a period of 2-3 months with HH Bhakti Raghava Swami at Cambodia, the present Indian ISKCON Varnasrama minister. The close association with his holiness had afforded us many precious understanding and insight into the importance of village as a social, political, economic, and spiritual unit. This Sunday meeting offered us an opportunity to share those realizations and take a step, though a small one in the direction of “Making Vrndavan Villages.”



लकड वरुदववन गौडगुडइ





Soon, broadband in every Indian village: Sachin Pilot (Source: *NewKerala.com*)

March 10, 2010. New Delhi. India is charting a grand scheme targeting its rural outback to reach telecom and broadband services to each of its 626,000 villages, using funds to the tune of 3.5 billion dollars lying unutilised in a dedicated fund.



Village Gets BPO, its women jobs (Source: *Times of India*)

March 24, 2010. Gurgaon. Lines creased Suman Devi's forehead as she furiously typed on her computer. A project associate with a business process outsourcing (BPO) firm, the 28-year-old is a pro when it comes to back-office work. Nothing unusual about it except that Suman Devi is a simple village woman from Tikli Akilampur a few km from Gurgaon and was barely literate even a few months ago. But all that changed when the country's first rural BPO which employs only women set shop in the obscure village. The result: The world opened up for 500 village women like Suman Devi who had never stepped out of their houses till the BPO happened.

The BPO was formally inaugurated by Gurgaon deputy commissioner Rajendra Kataria on Monday. It has been started by a company called 'Harva' which aims at empowering women and harnessing rural values. The BPO project involved an initial investment of Rs 30 lakh and currently has several insurance and legal firms as clients including a US-based company for which data-mining is done by these women.

Of the 500 women hand-picked for training, 50 have been employed, while the rest are still being groomed. The company is also trying to hire voice and e-mail processes when the women are trained enough to work on those fronts.

For now, the women are more than happy. Mala Yadav, who now earns Rs 2,500 per month, said: "Till a few months back, I had not seen a computer. Now, after the three-month training, I feel like I am working in an urban office right in the middle of the village and that too with my limited education. I am so happy."

The rural BPO is the brainchild of entrepreneur Ajay Chaturvedi, an engineer and management graduate

from USA. "I have worked in various countries. I always wanted to start a company which aims at tapping talent from the rural sector in the fields of community-based farming initiatives, rural BPO opportunities and micro finance."



Pollution Fine Sought Against Coca-Cola (Source: *The NewYork Times*)

March 23, 2010. Plachimanda. A state government panel recommended Tuesday that Coca-Cola's Indian subsidiary be fined \$47 million for damage to the water and soil in a southern Indian village that it said had been caused by one of the company's bottling plants. The plant, which opened in 2000 and closed five years later, polluted the groundwater and soil around the village of Plachimada, in the state of Kerala, the panel said. Coca-Cola said in a statement that it was unfortunate "that the committee in Kerala was appointed on the unproven assumption that damage was caused, and that it was caused by Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages." According to the panel, the bottling plant discharged a sludge that contained toxic chemicals like cadmium and lead. After villagers complained that the water table had dropped and farms were less productive, the village council decided not to renew the plant's license.



Anand Sharma calls for integration of rural areas (Source: *SifyNews*)

March 23, 2010. New Delhi. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Anand Sharma on Tuesday said that we have to integrate our rural areas with the economic processes that are transforming our country at a rapid pace

Addressing the India Rural Business Summit here, Sharma said that nearly 70 percent of India's population resides in the rural areas and nearly two-third of the population is still dependent on the agriculture sector for sustenance.

Highlighting the details of various steps taken by the Department of Commerce to promote rural business, Sharma informed that under the Foreign Trade Policy 2009-2014, the focus is on increasing our percentage share of global trade and expanding employment opportunities.



He further said that under Special Focus Initiatives, rural employment intensive sectors such as (i) agriculture and village industries, (ii) handlooms (iii) handicrafts (iv) leather and footwear (v) exports from North-Eastern region, (vi) sports goods and toys. have been identified.

Sharma also informed that the Department of Commerce regularly supports Export Promotion Councils focussed on the rural sector such as Handloom Export Promotion Council, Shellac EPC, Carpet EPC, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Self Employed Women's Association SEWA).



Varnasrama Seminar February 14-17 at Sridham Mayapur Concludes

February 18, 2010. Mayapur. The 4-day Annual Global Varnasrama Seminar, presided by HH Bhakti Raghava Swami, Varnasrama Minister for the newly formed DAIVAM concluded on an encouraging note. February 14-17, 2010, saw good participation where senior devotees, sannyasis, and renowned delegates across the globe presented their papers on the occasion to the eager audience which turned out in good number.



India's Wealthy Go Back to Nature (Source: BBC News)

January 14, 2008. Some of India's richest people are paying \$150 a night to live like peasants at a "native village" in the southern state of Karnataka.

The village, Hessargatta - just outside India's IT capital, Bangalore - is designed to encourage the preservation of some of India's rural traditions. It offers visitors the chance to qualify in tasks like milking cows and looking after the other animals, such as turkeys, ducks, chickens and dogs.

Ram Kumar, who came up with the idea and who runs the village, told BBC World Service's Culture Shock programme.

Transport around the village is by bullock cart ride - "probably the slowest ride you'll ever go on". "You get to notice so much more when you're on a bullock cart. You are able to see butterflies, bees, the turkeys walking next to you. Because of the slow pace, you notice so much more of life. It's quite philosophical in my view," Mr Kumar added.

Trend analyst Martin Raymond, director of the Future Laboratory, told Culture Shock there is a hankering for a simple life across the world. "It's an attractive lifestyle, one that you can't remember, but one that your parents told me about. "It is this thing about reconnecting - you're finding it in every city and every culture, this recreation of the farmland ideal for the city person."

This urge to "reconnect" is described by some psychologists as the "Marie Antoinette syndrome" - recreating ideals that never actually existed - after the French queen who masqueraded as a dairy maid and build a vast farm to "live as the peasant lived".

Mr Raymond said that it is a "paradox" that people are paying \$150 a night to live in the conditions that others are seeking to escape.



Farm suicides: A 12-year saga (Source: Indiatogether.org)

February 03, 2010. In 2006-08, Maharashtra saw 12, 493 farm suicides. That is 85 per cent higher than the 6,745 suicides it recorded during 1997-1999. And the worst three-year period for any State, any time. The loan waiver year of 2008 saw 16,196 farm suicides in the country, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. Compared to 2007, that's a fall of just 436. As economist Professor K Nagaraj who has worked in-depth on farm suicide data says, "the numbers leave little room for comfort and none at all for self-congratulation." There were no major changes in the trend that set in from the late 1990s and worsened after 2002. The dismal truth is that very high numbers of farm suicides still occur within a fast decreasing farm population.



Farmers sour on sugar cane (Source: Indiatogether.org)

September 11, 2010. The handling of sugar production, sale and external trade by the government shows a complete absence of strategic planning on an issue that critically affects the *aam aadmi*. Sugar prices have doubled over the last 15 months. A severe shortfall in production is forcing massive sugar imports on India at a time when the world market prices are at a 28-year high. The government has laid the blame on a poor monsoon and the "cyclical nature of the sugar industry", factors that it presents as beyond its control. Curiously, a year ago, it was actually subsidising sugar exports.



● **Mails to the Editor**



...I wish you all the best with your dedicated service.

- HH Bhakti Vikasa Swami



Your publication appears to be very nice mataji. You have made the whole production very attractive and readable. Keep up the good efforts, it is a valuable service to Srila Prabhupada.

Your humble servant,
- HG Hari-Sauri Dasa



My dear Vrindavan Lila devi dasi,

... Many thanks for the newsletter which I am so happy to receive. Your newsletter is so poetic, yet scholarly and philosophically sound. By the grace and guidance of Shrila Prabhupada, you have put your finger on the pulse of the solution to the real problems of the world, and those solutions are Hare Krishna, the cow, the bull and the Mother Earth.

Devotees had best take this message very very seriously as the oil crisis is becoming worse, so much so that governments need to stage fabricated terrorist attacks so as to "get permission" to invade oil rich countries ("to spread democracy, freedom, and happiness").

There are some internet accessible films on the horrible state of affairs of the oil-centered Earth-exploitative situation now. Of course, none of these films offer solutions (other than "buying guns") and only we have the solution. But by getting the big picture we can see that the problems have been incrementally orchestrated in order so that the demons that represent the powers that be can seize total global control, the so-called New World Order. This is nothing new, and Indians have seen it coming for some years now, since the British, Divide and Conquer, and World Wars one and two. Anyway, things are getting tense in the West and a new wave of tyrannical totalitarianism appears to be on the rise. ...

Most of them center on America, but that is where the demonic government of Kali is centered. But the domino effect that America, who is now invading Pakistan, will affect the entire world in due course.

... your work is very important and the suggestions herein will give you a look at the other side of the world and the desperate need for Varnashram Dharma right now.

...Regarding agriculture, the Rahu in power have conspired to displace all the American farmers by luring them to the cities and buying up their farms now run as mega-farms using petrol-based insecticides and fertilizer. They waged a campaign alleging that farmers are illiterate fools, and city folks are smart and sophisticated. Now everyone has been lured into this false society, trapped like insects in a jar. The vegetables in America look great but are like eating hollow gourds, no taste. They only have ornamental value. Through incrementalism, the government has wrenched bit by bit the power of the individual, the voter or citizen. It has created the boogey man of terrorism to further assault rights. When the government wishes to totally clamp down, by declaring martial law and withdrawing resources like petrol, it will be too late for the oil dependent city slickers...

- HG Patita Pavana das

Make Vrindavan Villages





Hare Krishna Mataji!

All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

Once again a lovely, colorful and very informative new's letter. Thank you so much for this tireless effort, please keep up the good work! This issue is special also because of the sweet personal details of our Guru Maharaj enjoying his day visit to New Govardhan, has been shared so well!

Thank you once again and all our best wishes are with you for this Newsletter to reach great heights, since we all know that this effort pleases our Guru Maharaj so much.

- HG Manasaganga dd



The news letter is good, but how are you reaching to the masses? Can somebody stand in secuderabad rly station with copies for distribution for a meager price?

- HG Radha Vallabh Dasa (Prof. Ghanakota Venkateshwar Rao)



Thanks for the issue of Govind Mas, ... when I was scrolling down the pages, one article that caught my eye was "Papaya turned into Mango" this article was very nice when I was reading I could remember the day you have served me papaya halva on one of Ekadashi day.

The issue is so nicely reflecting your sincerity, hard work, and true devotion.

One again thank you very much Mataji for all your efforts.

- Bhakta Murali Kothakota



Hare Krishna Mother Vrndavanlila,

Please accept my humble obeisance! All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

Thank you for the content. ...

Thank you again!

- HG Navin Dasa

Editor- ISKCON- News



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