

Living By Natures Gifts
His Divine Grace A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Gigantic industrial enterprises are products of a godless civilization, and they cause the destruction of the noble aims of human life. The more we go on increasing such troublesome industries, the more we squeeze the vital energy out of the human being and the more there will be unrest and dissatisfaction of the people in general, although a few only can live lavishly by exploitation.

The productive energy of the laborer is misused when he is occupied by industrial enterprises.... The production of machines and machine tools increases the artificial living fashion of a class of vested interests and keeps thousands of men in starvation and unrest. This should not be the standard of civilization.



'Factory' is another name for hell. At night, hellishly engaged persons take advantage of wine and women to satisfy their tired senses, but they are not even able to have sound sleep, because their various mental speculative plans constantly interrupt their sleep. The dungeons of mines, factories, and workshops develop demoniac propensities in the working class. Meanwhile, the vested interests flourish at the cost of the working class, and consequently there are severe clashes between them in so many ways.

Manufacture of the 'necessities of life' in factories and workshops, excessively prominent in the Age of Kali, the age of the machine, is the summit of the quality of darkness. Why? Because factually there is no necessity for the commodities manufactured.



What is the need of an artificial luxurious life of cinema, cars, radio, flesh, and hotels? Has this civilization produced anything but quarreling individually and nationally? Has this civilization enhanced the cause of equality and fraternity by sending thousands of men into a hellish factory and the war fields at the whims of a particular man?

The real problem is how to get free from the bondage of birth, death, and old age. Attaining this freedom, and not inventing unnecessary necessities, is the basic principle of Vedic civilization.

The modern materialistic civilization is just the opposite of the ideal civilization. Every day the so-called leaders of modern society invent something contributing to a cumbersome way of life that implicates people more and more in the cycle of birth and death.



Now people are very busy trying to find petroleum in the midst of the ocean. They are very anxious to make provisions for the future petroleum supply, but they do not make any attempts to ameliorate the conditions of birth, old age, disease, and death. The materialists ... think that they are advancing. But according to Bhagavad-gita they are unintelligent and devoid of all sense. They try to enjoy this material world to the utmost limit and therefore always engage in inventing something for sense gratification. Such materialistic inventions are considered to be advancement of human civilization, but the result is that people grow more and more violent and more and more cruel.

Natural Gifts

According to Vedic economics, one is considered to be a rich man by the strength of his store of grains and cows. With only these two things, cows and grain, humanity can solve its eating problem.... All other things but these two are artificial necessities created by man to kill his valuable life at the human level and waste his time in things which are not needed.



If we have sufficient grains, fruits, vegetables, and herbs, then what is the necessity of running a slaughterhouse and killing poor animals? A man need not kill an animal if he has sufficient grains and vegetables to eat. The flow of river waters fertilizes the field, and there is more than what we need. Minerals are produced in the hills, and jewels in the ocean. If human civilization has sufficient grains, minerals, jewels, water, milk, etc., then why should it hanker after terrible industrial enterprises at the cost of the labor of some unfortunate men?

Advancement of human civilization depends not on industrial enterprises but on possession of natural wealth and natural food, which is all supplied by the Supreme Personality of Godhead so that we may save time for self-realization and success in the human form of body.



The ancient city of Dvaraka was surrounded by flower gardens and fruit orchards along with reservoirs of water and growing lotuses. There is no mention of mills and factories supported by slaughterhouses, which are the necessary paraphernalia of the modern metropolis.... It is understood that the whole dhama, or residential quarter, was surrounded by gardens and parks with reservoirs of water where lotuses grew ... All the people depended on nature's gifts of fruits and flowers without industrial enterprises promoting filthy huts and slums for residential quarters.

Demonic Civilization

The natural gifts such as grains and vegetables, fruits, rivers, the hills of jewels and minerals, and the seas full of pearls are supplied by the order of

the Supreme, and as He desires, material nature produces them in abundance or restricts them at times. The natural law is that the human being may take advantage of these godly gifts by nature and flourish on them without being captivated by the exploitative motive of lording it over material Nature.



All these natural gifts are dependent on the mercy of the Lord. What we need, therefore, is to be obedient to the laws of the Lord and achieve the perfection of human life by devotional service. Everyone is acting under the influence of material nature, and only fools think they can improve upon what God has created. The prosperity of humanity does not depend on a demoniac civilization that has no culture and no knowledge but only gigantic skyscrapers and huge automobiles always rushing down the highways. The products of nature are sufficient. Ample food grains can be produced through agricultural enterprises, and profuse supplies of milk, yogurt, and ghee can be arranged through cow protection. Abundant honey can be obtained if the forests are protected.

Unfortunately, in modern civilization, men are busy killing the cows that are the source of yogurt, milk, and ghee, they are cutting down all the trees that supply honey, and they are opening factories to manufacture nuts, bolts, automobiles, and wine instead of engaging in agriculture. How can the people be happy? They must suffer from all the misery of materialism.



Their bodies become wrinkled and gradually deteriorate until they become almost like dwarves, and a bad odor emanates from their bodies because of unclean perspiration from eating all kinds of nasty things. This is not human civilization.

A Higher Goal of Life

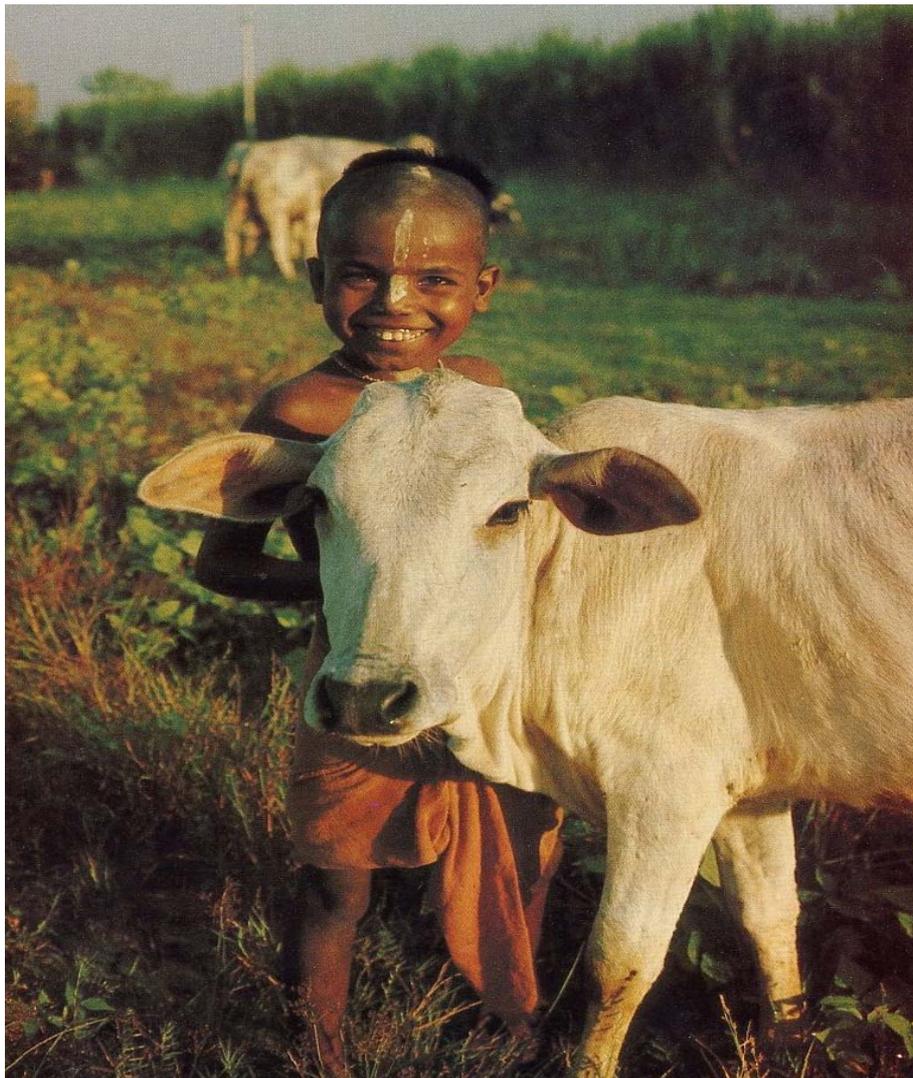
Advancement of civilization is estimated not on the growth of mills and factories to deteriorate the finer instincts of the human being, but on developing the potent spiritual instincts of human beings and giving them a chance to go back to Godhead.... Human energy should be properly utilized in developing the finer senses for spiritual understanding, in which lies the solution of life

Nature already has an arrangement to feed us. The Lord has provided food for both the elephant and the ant....Therefore one who is intelligent should not work very hard for material comforts. Rather, one should save his energy for advancing in Krsna consciousness.



Demons are very much interested in advancing a plan by which people will labor hard like cats, dogs, and hogs, but Krsna's devotees want to teach Krsna consciousness so that people will be satisfied with plain living and Krsna conscious advancement. The sufferings of human society are due to a polluted aim of life, namely lording it over the material resources. The more human society engages in the exploitation of undeveloped material resources for sense gratification, the more it will be entrapped by the illusory, material energy of the Lord, and thus the distress of the world will be intensified instead of diminished.

Advancement of human civilization must be towards the goal of establishing our lost relationship with God, which is not possible in any form of life other than the human. One must realize the nullity of the material phenomenon, considering it a passing phantasmagoria, and must endeavor to make a solution to the miseries of life. Self-complacence with a polished type of animal civilization geared to sense gratification is delusion, and such a 'civilization' is not worthy of the name.



The materialistic advancement of civilization ... ultimately ends in wars and scarcity. The transcendentalist is specifically warned to be fixed in mind, so that even if there is difficulty in plain living and high thinking he will not budge even an inch from his stark determination.

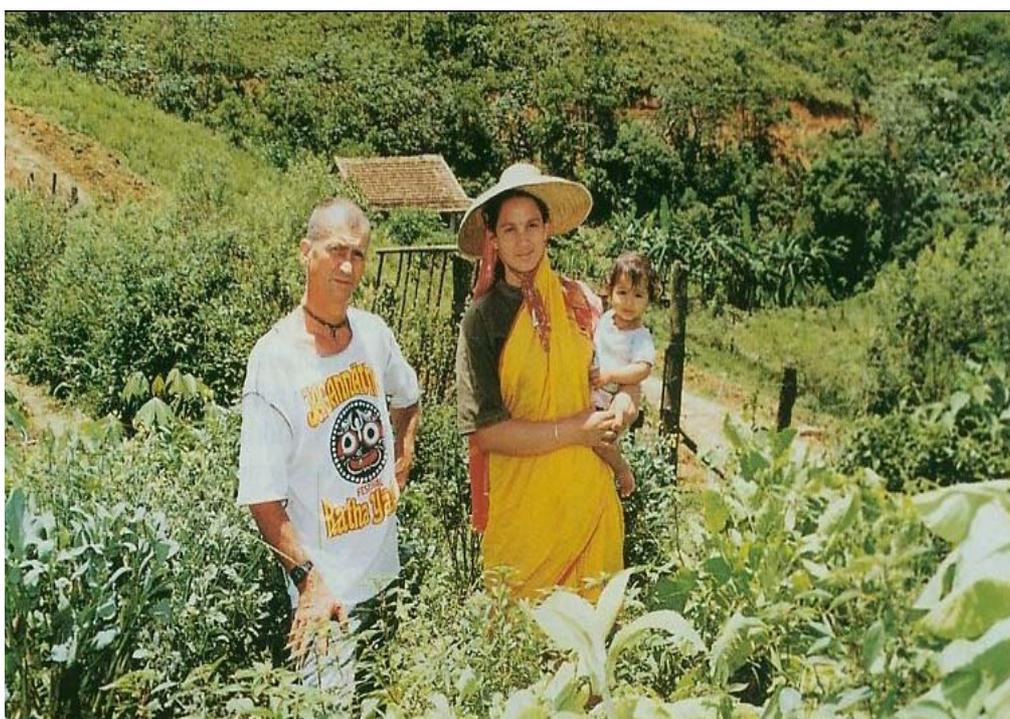
All human society is meant to worship Lord Visnu [God]. At the present moment, however, human society does not know that this is the ultimate goal or perfection of life. Therefore instead of worshiping Lord Visnu, people have been educated to worship matter. According to the direction of modern society, men think they can advance in civilization by manipulating matter to build skyscrapers, big roads, automobiles and so on. Such a civilization must certainly be called materialistic because its people do not know the goal of life.



The goal of life is to reach Visnu, but instead of reaching Visnu, people are bewildered by the external manifestation of the material energy. Therefore progress in material advancement is blind, and the leaders of such material advancement are also blind. They are leading their followers in the wrong way. Life is never made comfortable by artificial needs, but by plain living and high thinking.

The Blind Man And the Lame Man Together

At the present moment, India may be compared to the lame man and the Western countries to the blind man. For the past two thousand years India has been subjugated by the rule of foreigners, and the legs of progress have been broken. In the Western countries the eyes of the people have become blind due to the dazzling glitter of material opulence.



The blind man of the Western countries and the lame man of India should combine together, then the lame man of India can walk with the help of the Westerner, and the blind Westerner can see with the help of the lame man. In short, the material advancement of the Western countries and the spiritual assets of India should combine for the elevation of all human society. One who understands the purpose of Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, should seriously understand the importance of the Krsna consciousness movement and seriously take part in it. One should not endeavor for ugra-karma, or unnecessary work for sense gratification.