

Preface

Modern society no longer serves the people who make it function. Millions are now stretched to the limit. Prices of essentials continue to increase beyond affordability. Rent, food, utilities, gasoline, and insurance costs are increasing monthly, even weekly. Millions of Americans live in their vans or cars, and even storage units.

A growing sense of unreality is taking hold, and many people no longer know what to trust. Images and voices can be fabricated, information—the so-called narrative—is often manipulated, and basic foods are increasingly artificial and contaminated. The line between what is real and what is not is becoming increasingly fuzzy. What is real? People are asking this question—and are deeply unhappy with the answers they are finding.

On a personal level, millions are broke, sick, anxious, overworked, divided, lonely, unhappy, and flat out giving up. Life is too demanding. Young men and women have a difficult time forming stable relationships. Millions turn to drugs, and thousands who become addicted to fentanyl die. People have lost faith in all of their institutions—the government, their church, the police, and the schools. Young adults, seeing no future for themselves, stop trying before they even begin. Birth rates are far below replacement levels, and the aging population is a burden on society.

There are too many demands on time. People are too stressed trying to do everything that needs to get done—get out of work, pick up the kids, get home, make dinner, do the laundry, someone needs to get to the doctor, and on and on.

People sense something is very wrong but cannot quite put their finger on the problem. They think that perhaps it's their own personal problem, that if they just try to cope, everything will fall into place in time. And if you think I'm exaggerating about all of this check out these YouTube channels in this footnote. ^A

Is your life like this?

If so, I have good news: the problem is likely not what you are doing, or not doing—it's the modern way of life that needs to be fixed. This book explores redesigning living as if people mattered, inviting you to rethink your life and join the millions who are opting out of a sick world in which people must give all their time and energy to someone else, just to have the privilege of existing.

Some rationalize that life is just messy and that this is simply how life is meant to be. *We strongly disagree!*

But unless we accept that the system is broken we will never attempt to fix it. Where do we start? Who do we turn to when those persons who we traditionally would go to, are themselves using the broken system to exploit it?

a <https://www.youtube.com/@AcrossTheStates-c7j>

<https://www.youtube.com/@ahomesteadjourney>

<https://www.youtube.com/@raisingwildflowers/videos>

<https://www.youtube.com/@Talk2embro>

The social body is not only struggling, but is in critical condition, even terminal decline.

All is not lost, however. The method of finding the answer was given to us by that wise man of the early twentieth century, Mr. Einstein. He taught us that a problem cannot be solved at the same level of understanding at which it was created.

In this book, we offer the suggested higher understanding from which to analyze the problems, and examine the patient, the social body, through what may be called spiritual anthropology.

However, when solutions lie outside the box of current understanding, many people object. They won't recognize, or accept, that the things they like, or have become accustomed to, are making them ill.

Doctor: your obesity is due to eating cake and ice cream every day.

Patient: you must be wrong doc, it's got to be something else. I can't live without that. That's the favorite part of my day!

I hope that this is not the case with you, my dear reader. The social body is in critical condition and a clear diagnosis is needed and urgent. Very likely, some of the things that seem most natural to you, and that you hold most dear, will be identified as the very source of many of our current problems. Are you willing to at least consider letting go of them while you ponder what is presented here? And are you willing to consider letting go of them if doing so will restore social sanity and stability for yourself and others?

My request is that you put your current understanding on hold while reading this book, and give this diagnosis a fair hearing.

Or else save your time. Close the book, and pass it along to someone else.

Introduction

I'm sitting in my office, and one day a fellow opens the door and says: "Doc, you've got to help me. I'm in really bad shape."

"Oh my, yes, I see you have a severe case of inversion!" I replied. "Dear fellow, how have you come to this condition? We'll need to check your vital signs and do some tests. Please come in."

As I look him over, I see that his stomach is where his head should be, his legs are where his arms should be, his head is where his legs should be, and his arms are where his stomach should be.

Absurd? Yes. But this is the present condition of the social body. In this book we will diagnose the social body, determine the influences that have brought it to this condition, and present a prescription for total healing and rejuvenation.

The reason so many of us are exhausted, broke, and sick may not be a personal failure—perhaps it is because modern society extracts our energy rather than fostering our well-being. It matters little which part of the world we examine. Everywhere the condition is more or less the same because the cause is present in every part of the world to a greater or lesser extent. Because the cause

is universal, the cure presented here is universal as well, and can be applied in any part of the world. Although I will be directing my analysis to modern society in general, this diagnosis and the cure can be applied to any level of society, from megalopolises to small cities.

Those who have previously made efforts to remedy society's ills have only been dealing with the symptoms, which is easily understood because nothing is getting fixed. The simple reason for this is that the "fixers" deal only with areas where the system breaks down. They cannot, and do not, attempt to fix the entire system. But how can anyone heal a system they do not understand as a whole?

In engineering and biology, there is a very important design principle: *form follows function*. If we want to understand if a system is healthy, we must first know what its function is. What it is designed to *do*.

This forces a radical question that modern political economics completely avoids: *What is the essential and optimal function of a human being?*

If the purpose of human life is merely to accumulate calories and stuff before death, then our current social "Form"—though feverish and chaotic—might be considered "functional."

But if, as the world's great sages suggest, the highest purpose of human life is spiritual realization and emancipation, then we must look at our current civilization through a very different lens. If that is the function, then our current social form is not just "failing"—it is an anatomical catastrophe. It is a form that actively prevents its parts from performing their primary purpose.

And this is the greatest oversight—the fact that human beings are not simply biological machines, but have both material and spiritual aspects, of which the spiritual is the most important. Because they do not understand the spiritual nature of the person, they can do nothing but deal with the material aspects of an unhealthy society, perpetuating the same problems. This is like taking a fish out of water and giving it many tasty foods, drinks, and entertainments and expecting it to be happy. As long as the very nature of the fish is neglected, it cannot be happy. Only when placed in its proper environment will it be happy.



The problems of society stem from our failure to recognize, understand, and nourish the higher aspect of self. No amount of attempting to satisfy the appetites of the material body and mind, which manifest the symptoms of the problem, will satisfy the person who is the subject of all the efforts, that is, the soul.

What happens when a civilization tries to feed the body and mind while starving the soul? That is like spending all attention polishing the cage of a bird, but failing to feed the bird within. The consequences of this oversight are predictable and observable. The social body can be

restored to proper health only when each and every aspect of the social body is recognized, and its requirements satisfied.

The different perspective that will be employed here, and which provides the higher level of understanding needed to properly diagnose the condition of modern society, is the spiritual science of the Gaudiya Vaishnava spiritual tradition, and the world's oldest body of spiritual wisdom, the Vedas.



At this point, some readers may reasonably ask: “Why bring in the Vedas? Why not stay with what we can see, measure, and test?”

It’s a fair question. But let’s stop and consider: isn’t that what we have been doing all along? And how well has that approach served us? How long have the same persistent problems remained unresolved? Doing the same thing and expecting a different result is by now accepted as a common definition of insanity.

When we want to learn things beyond our ability we typically turn to authorities with experience in that particular subject, and accept their conclusions without personal verification—how many countries are in the world, the workings of the atom, chemical interactions, engineering principles, and so on. Similarly, for spiritual knowledge we must also turn to appropriate authorities. Although not widely known in the West, the body of

spiritual wisdom referred to as the Vedas, has been studied by many great people who praise them as containing uncommonly great wisdom.^A

The Vedas

It will be helpful for the reader to have a brief introduction to what is meant by Veda, or Vedas.

The Vedic worldview accepts that God has created this world, and placed countless living beings here to give them the opportunity to fulfill their desires. You are one of these multitudes, and you have many desires that you would like to fulfill. How will you do that? How does this universe work to allow you to fulfill your desires? There is a science behind that and that science is given to human beings in a vast body of knowledge called Veda.

Veda is a Sanskrit word which means “knowledge”—every kind of knowledge is presented in the Vedas: medicine from Ayurveda, the science of music and arts from Gandharvaveda, the science of astrology from *Jyotish*, the science of warfare from Dhanurveda, the science of statecraft and architecture from Arthashastra, and much more.

The Vedas are considered not to originate from a human source, but to have been received from the source of everything—Bhagavan (God).

A. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Arthur Schopenhauer, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Aldous Huxley, Albert Einstein, Carl Jung, Nikola Tesla, Mahatma Gandhi among many others have all studied and glorified Vedic wisdom. The American Transcendentalist movement flourished roughly from the 1830s to the 1860s.

The Vedas don't prescribe a single way of life. Rather, they provide the framework within which all legitimate human pursuits, organized into four categories, can flourish: *dharma*—religious codes, *artha*—prosperity and worldly success, *kama*—love, beauty, and pleasure, and *moksha*—liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Our effort here offers both a diagnosis and a prescription for healing the social problems of modern society using principles from the Vedas as a novel, and as yet untried, approach to the problem. These are not presented as dogmas that must be believed, but as conceptual tools to be used for analysis. This is offered as a social architecture, and remedial guide, for leaders seeking to restore the social body to a healthy state. You are invited to consider it as a working hypothesis for the purposes of this analysis, and then decide if you think the analysis and conclusions are worthy of application.

Vedic Wisdom Shared with the World

Until the last half of the twentieth century, the Vedas were all but unknown outside of India, except to the few religious scholars who studied Eastern religions. However, in the mid-1960s, an Indian sadhu (holy man) came to America to share the treasure of the spiritual wisdom of the Vedas.

The references to the Vedas made throughout this book are all from the works of that individual—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. With indefatigable effort throughout the senior years of his life, he translated more than 60 volumes of Vedic wisdom, and with the help of his disciples, his books



were translated into more than 80 languages. He also established more than 100 temples globally, from which this transcendental knowledge and culture were propagated. The interpretation of Vedic knowledge offered here is based on his teachings, and all references to Vedic lit-

erature are from his books, published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

Much is Left Unsaid

The word manifesto has, unfortunately, recently acquired a negative connotation through its association with nut jobs that go on killing sprees. But the word has utility, and this book is a manifesto in the original and proper sense of the word.

A manifesto typically identifies what is wrong with a society—or even with the world itself—describes what must be done to set things right, and proposes a path toward achieving it.

It is in this sense that this book is a manifesto and should be read as such. A manifesto, however, does not generally contain the complete thesis, nor does this book. It is intentionally brief. There is much more that can be said.

Intended Readers for this Book

This book is written for two groups of people: those who unwillingly find themselves disenfranchised as the present way of life breaks down and they are kicked to the curb, and those who, recognizing the devolution of modern society, are consciously seeking an alternative.

It will not appeal to those who continue to prosper within the present system and wish to preserve it.