

The Spiritual Scientist

An ezine for those who think!

India's Untapped Resource



Question: When India is rapidly globalizing and gaining economic strength, what relevance does spirituality have for India today?

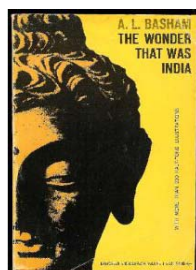
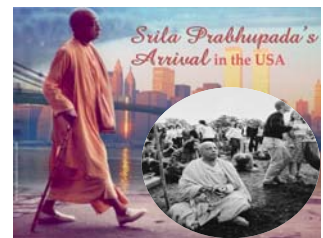


Answer: Even from the practical economic viewpoint, spirituality is India's greatest untapped national resource. Due to the profound depth of spiritual wisdom and mesmerizing variety of devotional culture that characterize India even today, huge number of international visitors come to India as spiritual tourists. These intrepid seekers are interested not in seeing relics like the *Taj Mahal* or visiting hill stations like Darjeeling, but in tuning in to the

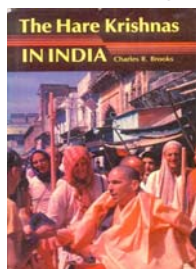


spiritual vibrations abuzz at holy places like *Vrindavana* (the birth place of Lord Krishna) and *Mayapur* (the birth place of Lord Chaitanya, the Kali Yuga incarnation of Lord Krishna). Sadly, the Indian government spends millions on sports events with hardly any returns, but doesn't spend even a pittance, comparatively speaking, on spiritual events, though these are already tangible returns available due to the pioneering efforts of visionary individuals.

Among such spiritual visionaries *Srila Prabhupada*, the founder of ISKCON, is prominent if not outstanding. With little less than forty rupees, he went alone to America and, within just eleven years, inspired thousands of young men and women toward a meaningful, joyful life of selfless service to God and his children. So dramatic was the spread of Indian spirituality under his stewardship that the renowned scholar on



Indian history and culture, A L Basham of *The Wonder that was India* fame, noted, "*The Hare Krishna movement arose out of next to nothing in less than twenty years and has become known all over the West. This is an important fact in the history of the Western world.*" Since Basham made this observation in the early 1980s, ISKCON has spread further – not only in the West, but also in the East, especially in Eastern Europe and, of course, in India. How the spiritual tourism that ISKCON activated in *Vrindavana* has revitalized the economy, culture and spirituality there is vividly documented by Charles R Brooks in



his Princeton-published *The Hare Krishnas in India*. Therein he uses the term "reverse missionary" to describe the unique phenomenon of foreigners inspiring Indians to start following their own culture. The same all-round development is seen in even more dramatically in *Mayapur*: what was just a barren wilderness has now become a vibrant headquarters of a global spiritual movement, offering practical employment and charitable support to thousands in the surrounding area. So, even from a practical economic viewpoint, India can gain much if it starts globalizing its spiritual heritage. No wonder *Srila Prabhupada* often stated that when we strive intelligently for spiritual welfare, material welfare automatically follows.

