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Narcissist Devotees on Social Media by Shri Chandan Goswami Maharaj

For most of us, social media has become a part of our personal and professional lives, but it does not come without its pros and cons. Though social media can influence our spiritual practice positively, it has a major disadvantage: it feeds the slow poison of narcissism, selfish love.

The word narcissism has its roots in Greek mythology. In an era when there were no mirrors, a



handsome young man, Narcissus, bent over a pond to drink some water. As he saw the reflection of his face, he fell in love and became so intoxicated that he could not pull himself away. Eventually, he starved to death.

One day, I was sitting in the airport lounge with around 15 other passengers, waiting to board my flight to the US. Most of them were busy taking selfies again and again, then editing their pictures with various filters and uploading them to social media. After boarding, I noticed the same passengers constantly checking their phones to see how many likes they had received on their platforms.

Our phones and social media make us admire our reflection. We end up spending hours celebrating it. But it is just a photograph, your digital impression in real-time, which you will forget eventually. And yet, you try to click more selfies to impress others with your outer "beauty".

Sadly, once I reached my destination, I read on the news that a teenage girl took her own life because she didn't get enough likes on Instagram. Social media is alluring and seductive but if we aren't careful, aren't we killing our higher consciousness by going down the same road as Narcissus?

There are two types of narcissists on social media:

1. The ones who are extroverts, confident, and

feel superior to others in beauty, money, power, strength, etc. They have a tendency to exaggerate how great they are and feel like they're entitled to special treatment. These people want everything to appear perfect; they will not take photos with just anyone. They will only take them with someone they feel gives the right impression on their social media.

2. The ones who are more introverted and self-absorbed. They might be sensitive to even gentle criticism, may devalue others, and may constantly need reassurance and validation. They like posting many photos but after a few days, they will hide or delete photographs to get attention.

This phenomenon also affects the devotional community where, surprisingly, it has become fashionable to love yourself in the most materialistic way. The behaviour of narcissistic devotees can be summarised as follows:

1. Most of their pictures are selfies or images of themselves wearing the same clothes, devotional or non-devotional, but in different poses. They will post many photos and videos of themselves in various poses regularly, if not daily.

2. Their online persona is there to get them noticed. Their social media profiles are designed to grab attention. If they are doing any of the following:

- Singing *kirtan*

- Visiting a temple or a place
- Wearing devotional attire
- Doing spiritual practice
- Eating *prasad*

They will post it because they want everyone to know that they are very spiritual and their every act should be praised. The aim is to gain recognition.

3. They post constantly and consistently for personal gain, wanting likes, comments, admiration and appreciation from others. If people do not care about what they are doing, they will feel hurt. They want to be appreciated by their online audience and they want attention immediately so they tag posts or delete them then repost them and so forth.

4. Their desire for likes and comments on social media is so strong, they want people to appreciate the photo or engage with it as soon as it is posted, not hours or days later.

5. They pretend to be great devotees and write

content with complex words or philosophy to show off.

6. They use social media to get others to admire them instead of seeking reciprocal friendships and learning experiences.

7. They can't tolerate criticism. If someone draws attention to their mistakes, they will lecture them on how right they are, try to entice them into a debate or just block them.

8. They want to know that all their efforts on social media mean the world to those who view them.

Narcissism on social media is so captivating that even some gurus have fallen into the trap. But spirituality is when you reflect on your internal image, not the image you take of yourself, and get Krishna to hit the like button when he sees your true inner beauty.

Maharajji's series of articles on Vishnu Sahasranama will continue in the next edition of Sandarshan.



Braj Animal Care



Shoorvir's Story

We were first informed of this case on 13th December 2022. A dog had sustained a serious injury to his front right leg and at the time, the wound was bleeding. When we

reached the location, Mayavati colony, he was nowhere to be found. We were told that various people had tried to shut the dog in a communal room but because he would bark incessantly, others would set him free.

He would come to the locality around 5:30 pm to 6 pm for food daily, but the day we went to look for him, he didn't show up and none of the local people had seen the dog since he sustained the injury.

This case played on our minds because we knew time was running out. This dog could die from infection or become prey to other animals. We didn't give up hope and asked the residents to keep an eye out for him and to inform us immediately if they saw him again.

To our relief, we received a call on 19th January 2023 informing us that the dog had returned and that the caller was keeping him until we arrived. When we got there, we were told that a tractor carrying grass had caused his injury. This was heartbreaking to us but we were finally able to give him the treatment he needed. The dog's bone had been broken and his leg, which was producing pus, had become further swollen from being dragged on the ground. If the wound was not able to heal, it would have left the dog open to maggot infestation and infections. So we cleaned it up with disinfectant spray and administered antibiotics as well as anti-inflammatory medication. Then we bandaged him up to keep his leg protected.



Shoorvir during his visit from Braj Animal Care

We checked on him five days later and cleaned the wound again but in order to create a plan for his longer-term care, we will need to assess how we can further stabilise his leg with medical aids. The Braj Animal Care team have affectionately named the dog Shoorvir, Warrior, because he withstood so much and didn't give up on himself.

For more information about Braj Animal Care's programs and services, please follow us on social media at:

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Maharajji's Latest Updates

Maharajji has located a lost scripture written by Shri Gopal Bhatt Goswami and he is now working on translating it into Hindi, which will take some time. More details about this project will be revealed in due course.



Spiritual Questions and Answers with Maharajji

Q: How can one increase their Guru Bhakti, Bhaav Bhakti and Prem Bhakti?

A: Guru Bhakti can be achieved by following Guru's instructions mentally as well as physically. The other two *bhaktis* that you have asked about are a by-product of Guru Bhakti.

For more information about Maharajji's upcoming programs, please contact us via the following channels:

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Vaishnav Calendar

For upcoming festivals and Ekadashi dates, please click [here](#) to view our Vaishnav calendar.

