

Interview with Shri Ananda Tirtha Dasa: Trustee and COO of Bhaktivedanta Book Trust



An exclusive interview with Shri Ananda Tirtha Dasa: Trustee and COO of Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, world's largest publisher of classic Vaishnava texts

We are delighted to welcome Shri Ananda Tirtha Dasa, the Trustee and Chief Operating Officer of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, to this exclusive interview. As a prominent figure in the realm of Vaishnavism and spiritual literature, Tirtha Dasa has played a pivotal role in steering the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust towards its esteemed status as the world's largest publisher of classic Vaishnava texts and contemporary works on the philosophy.

In this conversation, we have the privilege of gaining insights into his journey, the organization's mission, and the profound impact of these timeless texts on the spiritual landscape of our world. Join us as we delve into the heart of this remarkable endeavor and explore the wisdom it seeks to share with humanity.

Can you tell us more about the inspiration behind creating the "Transcend" ISKCON's E-Library Mobile App and how it aims to bridge the gap between spirituality and social media for today's youth?

Recent research shows that our attention span has reduced drastically with people using mobile phones on an average of 5 hours per day and checking it nearly 360 times a day scrolling over mindless channels and chats. So, the idea came from there to use this time to enhance a person's spiritual quotient.

We cannot be the best version of ourselves unless we connect to that divinity within. And by being the best version of ourselves we can serve others in whatever responsibility we have as a friend, mother, father, husband, wife, colleague, student, teacher etc.

If we are not in good mental and emotional framework to handle ourselves, how can we be of any service and fulfill our responsibility, we will only add up negativity and burden around us. Transcend is a medium for facilitating this transformation. It's a solution for spiritual seekers to access timeless wisdom on-the-go, anytime and anywhere at their fingertips.

With the help of Transcend app you can convert your commute, or cooking time into a transformational activity. They will get that inner strength needed to face lives challenges.

What specific features and resources does the app offer to help young individuals on their spiritual journey?

There are many features that readers can use to enhance their learning

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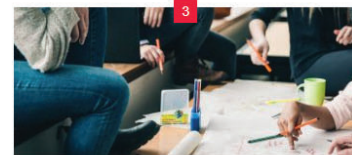
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experience. There is a note making feature wherein you can add your own notes and understanding to a vedic text or para that you find interesting.

Then there is the Flashcard Feature which helps knowledge retention by allowing them to create a quiz and see for themselves how they have scored in their memory. The most important aspect is ofcourse the very fact of the audio books in 11 languages available which covers all the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam.

How has technology, particularly social media, influenced the spiritual pursuits of today's youth, and what challenges do they face in maintaining a balance between their online and spiritual lives?

Every invention has a bright side and dark side of it. Ancient scriptures recommend us the principle of yukta vairagya which means utilising everything in enhancing our connection with God seated within. So using technology can aide our lives and at the same time becoming an addict of mindless scrolling over the gadgets can destroy our equilibrium. Once you take to spiritual life one will be able to make best use of one's time for advancing in spiritual life.

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What unique perspectives or teachings from ISKCON's spiritual literature do you believe are especially relevant and impactful for today's youth, and how does the app make them accessible?

His Divine Grace A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's mission was to teach the message of Gita to the world. Lord Krishna says in the Gita that our mind can be our greatest friend or our greatest enemy. The Lord equips one with the knowledge to control the mind which can do wonders.

More than anything this technique is so relevant with suicide rates going up and depression being major factor irrespective of age, gender, social status etc.

Finally, how can interested individuals get involved or support the "Transcend" initiative, and what do you hope to achieve in the coming years through this innovative platform?

The best gift is the gift of knowledge. They say if you give someone rice you feed him for a day but if you teach him to harvest you feed him for life. If you equip someone with tools to face lives up and down you have taken the best care of him.

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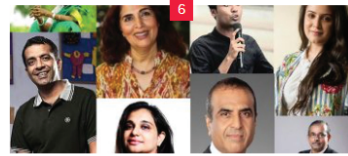
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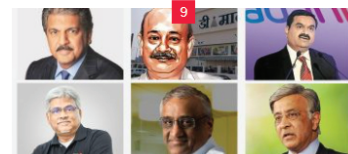
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