

10th Annual Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture: AI, humanity and God

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The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Africa (BBT) hosted the 10th Annual Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture, presented in honour of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977), the founder of the BBT. His literary contribution continues to be appreciated by global audiences for its Vedic commentary, on national priorities like education and leadership.



This year's Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture focuses on AI, humanity and God. AI has become urgent and developing at an exponential rate. Some experts believe that by 2050, people may worship a super AI God. While AI surpasses human intelligence and has excelled in various sectors, it remains bereft of heartfelt emotions, the softness of compassion and love.

The keynote speaker is **His Holiness Svayam Bhagavan Keshava Swami**. Keshava Swami, is a spiritual author and teacher who accepted vows of renunciation in 2022. He shares from a Vedic viewpoint the necessity of higher spiritual consciousness feeding machine super intelligence for the benefit of humanity. "While AI increases intelligence capacity, for humanity to remain at the epicentre it requires the awakening of the soul to utilise that higher spiritual intelligence for social upliftment through technology. Science makes things better, but spirituality makes people better."

Joining the conversation is guest speaker chief operating officer of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, **Itumeleng Monale**. Itumeleng, was recognised as an IBM Global Women in AI Honouree in 2020 and named one of the top one hundred Global Data Visionaries of 2020.

Itumeleng shares insights on having humanity's best intentions at heart that is required for AI to be a useful tool. She also delves into the risks because AI is a human generated construct and human beings are flawed, with intrinsic bias. There is a need for enriched experiences.

"We need to make sure the balance on how AI and technology is developed over time as a growing body of knowledge that is fed by interested people who have humanity's best interest at heart. Most of the time the type of people in industry feeding the knowledge base only have commercial outcomes as an objective. That which makes us well, is community, connection, and as basic as human touch that a robot cannot give."

The conversation is facilitated by **Nanda Padayachee**, associate director at Boston Consulting Group. Nanda has more than 15 years of experience in data, AI, digital, and innovation. One of the questions Nanda poses is, “Often we see the role of technology as it becomes more pervasive and expansive, we start to become more isolated. The essence of spirituality is that shared connection, how can technology be adapted to deepen connection and relationships as opposed to diverting our attention?”

About the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) was founded in 1972 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. He has authored and translated more than 70 volumes of books based on timeless Vedic wisdom, which were previously locked in the Sanskrit language into English. Today, his books are the preferred authoritative academic texts in universities across the globe. The BBT is the world’s largest publisher of ancient and classic Vaishnava (Eastern) texts, epics, and contemporary works on the philosophy, theology, and culture of Bhakti Yoga. The BBT has published books in more than 90 languages, which include titles in English, Swahili, isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Setswana and has titles in production in various other African languages in Africa. Included are the Preservation of African Languages initiatives and Promotion of cross-cultural and multi-national integration.

The lecture can be streamed now on the [@BBTAfrica](#) YouTube Page.

We look forward to your comments.

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#BSL2023 #BhaktivedantaSwamiLecture2023 #AIHumanityGod
#ArtificialIntelligence #SpiritualIntelligence

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