

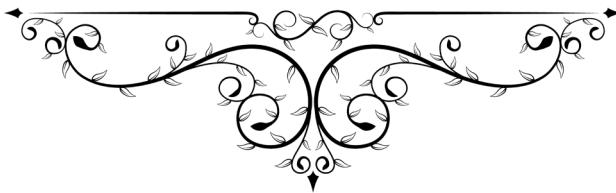
AWAKENING THE SOUL



*grantha-dvāra vaisnava-janer krpa pāi
vaisnava-kṛpāy kṛsna-lābha hoy bhāi*

“If all the devotees thus appreciate this book, then I will receive the causeless mercy that they will shower upon me. Oh brothers! And by the mercy of all these Vaisnavas, I will attain devotion to the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna.”

(From Sri Sri Kalyana Kalpa-taru by
Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)



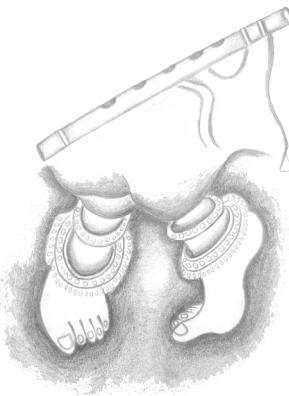
AWAKENING THE SOUL

SRILA GOPAL KRISHNA GOSWAMI



Back to Culture





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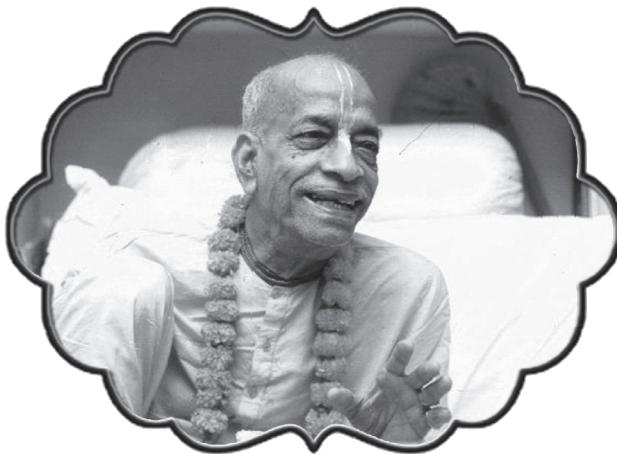
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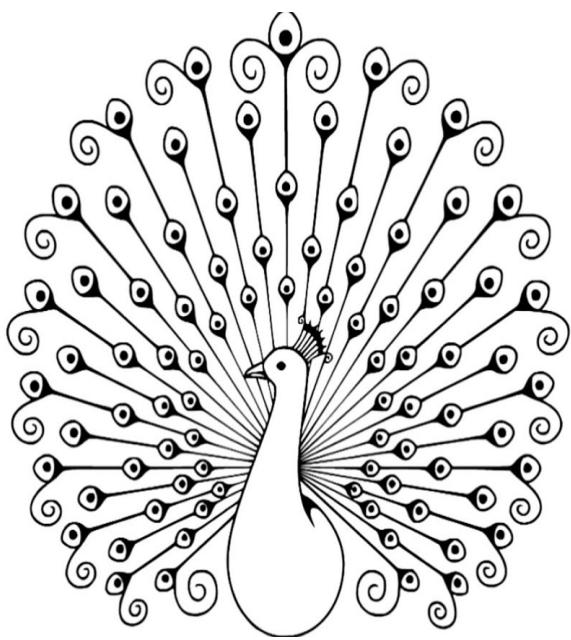


Dedication



HIS DIVINE GRACE A. C. BHAKTIVEDĀNTA SWĀMI PRABHUPĀDA
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness





CONTENTS

5

The Supreme Occupation of Soul

15

Awakening Divine Qualities

35

The Higher values of life

53

All Devouring Enemy—Lust

73

The Ripened Fruit

89

Purifying Our Existence

105

Kṛṣṇa—The Savior From All Miseries

125

Compassion for Others

141

Most Confidential Knowledge

155

Devotion With Attention

Introduction

Today's human society is going very fast toward the life of degradation by forgetting the Vedic culture which is based on timeless scriptures. People are acting blindly by becoming more and more atheists to achieve happiness by their concocted ideas. They are becoming very much attached to gratify their material senses by enjoying the objects given by material nature. Our modern education is also injecting the same idea which is based on bodily concept of life. Because of this false conception the living entity is becoming more and more entangled in the cycle of birth and death. The real nature of the soul is *ānandamayo'bhyāsāt*, but the way he is trying to achieve that is wrong. He needs endless happiness which remains eternal with him but he can't fulfill the hunger of real happiness by sense gratification.

It is said, "Ignorance is bliss." People are totally in ignorance of their real position and identity as the eternal servant and part and parcel of Lord Krishna. Actually the real home of living entities is the spiritual world where Lord is residing along with his innumerable devotees who always lead a life full of bliss and eternity. But the conditioned soul here in this world is like a fish out of the water. If someone provides all the material comforts to a fish out of water, it will never make him happy as fish belong to water. Similarly, we are all spirit souls; we belong to spiritual world and we can never be happy by the material comforts of this material world. Therefore, the soul must awake its real nature and should go back to home back to Godhead. Generally, everyone is sleeping on the lap of material nature and dreaming to become

happy in this world by serving so many personalities around him and following concocted religion.

Actual religion means to understand god and to develop the pure love for Him. By achieving this valuable human form of life if we fail to attain this loving attitude to serve the Lord then we will develop animal tendency. To reawaken this love for Lord we will have to take shelter of the devotees who have loving service attitude toward Him. Lord personally appears as Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach us the easy way to reawaken our soul who is in deep sleep, the sleep of ignorance. And He gives us the wonderful process of congregational chanting of holy names.

This same process is presented by Mahāprabhu's very dear and staunch devotee Śrīla Prabhupāda who distributed this valuable gift all over the world without concerning cast and creed. He says, "So this movement is practically awakening the human society dreaming in sleep. Just like if a man is sleeping very sound, forgetting his duty, and some friend of the man is trying to awake him, "Mr. such and such. Please wake up. It is now morning. You have to do this thing, that thing." So this movement is like that. When a man is fast asleep, all other senses cannot work, but one sense, which is called ear, it can work. Just like you are sleeping and somebody is coming with a knife to kill you. You cannot see. The man can come and kill you. But if somebody cries, "Mr. such and such, wake up! Somebody is coming to kill you," you can use your ear and be cautious. So this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is something like that, awakening from the slumbering state of material consciousness. So more you

chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—the more you become awakened from the slumbering state of material existence.”

Following the footsteps of this great personality his dearmost disciple Śrīla Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī is distributing the same message around the world. This book “Awakening the Soul” is the compilation of selected lectures which he gave in various places of the world. He presented the subject matter in a very simplified manner so that any inquisitive or spiritual seeker whoever reads it can grasp it easily.

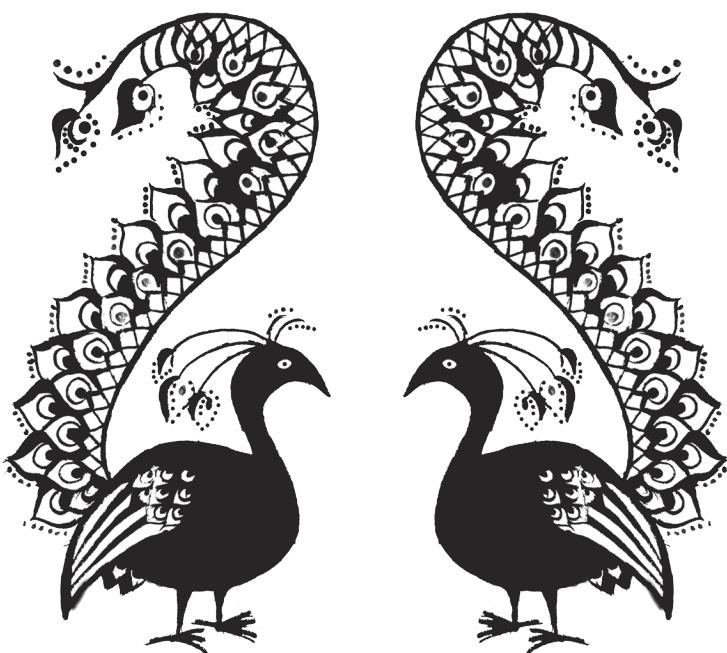
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We pray to Śrīla Prabhupāda, Sri Sri Nitai Gaur Sunder, and our worshipable deities Sri Sri Rādhā Pārthaśārathī to bless all of them with pure devotion.

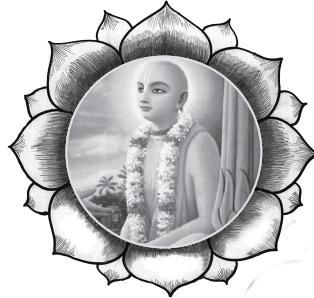
Desiring the mercy of all the vaisnava
In the service of Guru and Nitai-Gaurasundara

Sarvasākṣī Dāsa
Lord Balarama Appearance,
13 August 2011,
New Delhi, India.





CHAPTER ONE



THE SUPREME OCCUPATION OF SOUL

*śrīvatāṁ sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇah
puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanah
hrdy antah stho hy abhadraṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.17)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.

Messages of the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent from Him. Whenever, therefore, offenseless hearing and glorification of God are undertaken, it is to be understood that Lord Kṛṣṇa is present there in the form of transcendental sound, which is as powerful as the Lord personally. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in His Śikṣāṣṭaka, declares clearly that the holy name of the Lord has all the potencies of the Lord and that He has endowed His innumerable names with the same potency. There is

no rigid fixture of time, and anyone can chant the holy name with attention and reverence at his convenience. The Lord is so kind to us that He can be present before us personally in the form of transcendental sound, but unfortunately we have no taste for hearing and glorifying the Lord's name and activities. We have already discussed developing a taste for hearing and chanting the holy sound. It is done through the medium of service to the pure devotee of the Lord.

The Lord is reciprocally respondent to His devotees. When He sees that a devotee is completely sincere in getting admittance to the transcendental service of the Lord and has thus become eager to hear about Him, the Lord acts from within the devotee in such a way that the devotee may easily go back to Him. The Lord is more anxious to take us back into His kingdom than we can desire. Most of us do not desire at all to go back to Godhead. Only a very few men want to go back to Godhead. But anyone who desires to go back to Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa helps in all respects.

One cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless one is perfectly cleared of all sins. The material sins are products of our desires to lord it over material nature. It is very difficult to get rid of such desires. Women and wealth are very difficult problems for the devotee making progress on the path back to Godhead. Many stalwarts in the devotional line fell victim to these allurements and thus retreated from the path of liberation. But when one is helped by the Lord Himself, the whole process becomes as easy as anything by the divine grace of the Lord.

To become restless in the contact of women and wealth is not an astonishment, because every living being is

associated with such things from remote time, practically immemorial, and it takes time to recover from this foreign nature. But if one is engaged in hearing the glories of the Lord, gradually he realizes his real position. By the grace of God such a devotee gets sufficient strength to defend himself from the state of disturbances, and gradually all disturbing elements are eliminated from his mind.

ŚUKADEVA GOSWAMI

This is one of the famous verses of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. This first canto chapter two contains some of the most important verses of the entire Bhāgavatam. This chapter is being spoken by Sūta Goswami and Śukadeva Goswami. Sūta Goswami was in the audience when Śukadeva Goswami was reciting the Bhāgavatam to the emperor Parīkṣit. Parīkṣit Mahārāja, the emperor was cursed to die. He did not panic but instead called all the great sages and asked a simple question what should one do who is about to die? So different sages gave different advice but he accepted the advice offered by Śukadeva Goswami, the son of Vyāsadeva.

Śukadeva Goswami was liberated from the very beginning. He stayed in his mother's womb not for nine months but for sixteen years. He had that capacity to stay there for sixteen years. He did not want to come out. He did not want to get entangled in the material world. At Vyāsadeva's request, Lord personally assured him that he would not be contaminated by māyā and that is when he agreed to come out. And as soon as he came out of his mother's womb, he left home.

ŚRUTIDHARA

So Śukadeva Goswami was reciting the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to Parīkṣit Mahārāja and in that assembly there were thousands of sages. And one of them was Sūta Goswami. In Naimiṣāraṇya, which is in Northern India near Lucknow and for time immemorial it has been a place for spiritual discourse. So they selected Sūta Goswami to give them guidance and he recited the whole Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that he had heard from Śukadeva goswami.

Just by hearing once he memorized 18000 verses. Can anyone of us do that? Someone who can memorize just by hearing once is called śrutidhara. Caitanya Mahāprabhu's, one of the name is also śrutidhara. Because when Keśava Kashmiri was reciting verses in the glorification of the Ganges, Caitanya Mahāprabhu just by hearing once had the whole thing memorized.

Sūta Goswami repeated exactly the verses he had heard from Śukadeva Goswami. As I said this chapter contains some of the most important verses of the Bhāgavatam. If you analyze Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures you will see that a significant amount of lectures were given from this chapter. There are many verses of this chapter that Śrīla Prabhupāda extensively lectured on.

THE SUPREME OCCUPATION

Sūta Goswami is explaining the Supreme occupation for all beings. The Supreme occupation is to render devotional service to the Lord. Śrīla Vyāsadeva was feeling unhappy even after having compiled the vast Vedic literature. And Nārada Muni informed Vyāsadeva

the reason of his unhappiness. Oh, learned Vyāsadeva, you did not exclusively presented the science of pure devotional service. So one can engage in various types of occupations but the highest occupation one can engage is to render service to the Supreme Lord. There are two important characteristics of pure devotional service and Sūta Goswami mentions that they are unmotivated and uninterrupted.

*sa vai pumsam paro dharmo,
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.6)

“The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self.”

CHARACTERSTICS OF DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

The devotional service should be unmotivated and uninterrupted. Unmotivated means that the desire should be to serve the Lord without expecting anything in return. Someone may ask that doesn't Kṛṣṇa say in the seventh chapter of Bhagavad-gītā that you can come to me due to four factors.

*catur-vidhā bhajante mām
janāḥ sukṛtino ‘rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī
jñānī ca bharatarṣabha*

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.16)

“O best among the Bhāratas, four kinds of pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.”

So he says that all these four are pious, punya-atma because at least they are coming to me. But of the four, the one who comes to me as a result of knowledge is the best. And the power of devotional service is such that even if you come to the Lord because of motivation, you will eventually get purified.

And the classic example is that of Dhruva Mahārāja. So devotional service to the Lord is the highest occupation and it should be unmotivated and uninterrupted. Uninterrupted means rendering service twenty four hours a day. Śrīla Rupa Goswami also discusses this point in Nectar of Devotion-one characteristic of pure devotional service is that one desires to engage in service of the Lord twenty four hours a day.

So someone may say what about my sleeping, eating. When I will sleep? When I will eat? Take care of my body? So all these activities are considered devotional service if everything is regulated. Perfect yogi doesn't sleep too much, doesn't sleep too little, doesn't eat too much, doesn't eat too little. When you use sleep and prasād to serve the Lord rest of the time than that is also devotional service. So in the association of devotees and by studying the Bhāgavatam, we get inspired to render unmotivated devotional service. So doesn't matter if you are motivated just like many people in the early days came to the movement because they were very much attracted to the prasād. When Śrīla Prabhupāda started the first

temple he introduced very opulent Sunday feast. Many Americans would come just for the feast. Some of them ended up becoming devotees. Kṛṣṇa is so purifying that even if a devotee has some desire and comes to the Lord he will get purified. Now how do you get this unmotivated and uninterrupted mood? Sūta Goswami says,

*vāsudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayaty āśu vairāgyam
jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.7)

“By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world.”

NITYAM BHĀGAVATA-SEVAYĀ

He says, “By rendering practical devotional service to the Lord one develops causeless knowledge and detachment.” The power of devotional service is such that if you engage in service in association of devotees, you get knowledge. So the cultivation of spiritual knowledge is also necessary. That is why in this chapter Sūta Goswami also says,

*naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu
nityam bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavaty uttama-śloke
bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.18)

“By regularly hearing the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam all that is inauspicious in the heart gets destroyed and loving devotional service of the Lord gets established.”

Some of you may say that I don't live in the temple area, I live very far from the temple, how can I regularly hear the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam? If you are in the position that you cannot regularly hear the Bhāgavatam in the temple then you can read the Bhāgavatam regularly at home. The point is that we have the opportunity to read these books even at home. So regular studying of the Bhāgavatam is an essential activity of a devotee. Caitanya Mahāprabhu told the Kūrma brāhmaṇa -regularly study Bhāgavatam and Gītā along with the holy name and then you will never be separated from me and I will never be separated from you. I am sure that if you read Bhāgavatam regularly it will give you great strength to fight with māyā. So Sūta Goswami also says, "Shrama eva hi kevalam" that activity which doesn't help you to develop love of God is simply a waste of time.

So we may endeavour very hard, work hard to get some result but if we are not going to serve the Lord with that then it is simply a waste of time—"shrama eva hi kevalam." So engage in activities that will inspire you to develop Love for God. Now Sūta Goswami in this verse is pointing out that the Lord is residing in everyone's heart as the Paramātmā. Sūta Goswami in the preceding verses has pointed out the importance of pure devotional service and pointed out how an activity that doesn't result in love of God, it is a waste of time.

PARAMĀTMĀ: GUIDES AND FACILITATES

Now Sūta Goswami is pointing out that the Lord is residing in everyone's heart as the Paramātmā. And as a Paramātmā the Lord is fulfilling several activities as stated in the Bhagavad-gītā,

*iśvarah sarva-bhūtānāṁ
hṛd-deṣe ‘rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.61)

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.”

Also He says in *Bhagavad-gītā*,

*sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattah smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.15)

“I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.”

Lord as a Paramātmā is fulfilling several roles. One is that he guides us according to our desires. Should we desire to remember the Lord, he will guide us accordingly. Should we desire to forget the Lord, he will guide us accordingly. Since you want to forget the Lord there is so much facility to forget the Lord. Just like by access of internet you can gamble, do horse racing, go to the night clubs, see pornography. Everything can be done with greatest ease today. And on the other hand if you want to engage in the service to the Lord through the internet you can do that. There are so many temples today in ISKCON, whose deity darshan you can do through internet.



CHAPTER TWO



AWAKENING DIVINE QUALITIES

*viduras tad abhipretya
dhṛtarāṣṭram abhāṣata
rājan nirgamyatāṁ śīghram
paśyedāṁ bhayam āgatam*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.13.18)

Mahātmā Vidura knew all this, and therefore he addressed Dhṛtarāṣṭra, saying: My dear King, please get out of here immediately. Do not delay. Just see how fear has overtaken you

Cruel death cares for no one, be he Dhṛtarāṣṭra or even Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; therefore spiritual instruction, as was given to old Dhṛtarāṣṭra, was equally applicable to the younger Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. As a matter of fact, everyone in the royal palace, including the King and his brothers and mother, was raptly attending the lectures. But it was known to Vidura that his instructions were especially meant for Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was too materialistic. The word rājan is especially addressed to Dhṛtarāṣṭra significantly. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the eldest son of his father, and therefore according to law he was to be installed on

the throne of Hastināpura. But because he was blind from birth, he was disqualified from his rightful claim. But he could not forget the bereavement, and his disappointment was somewhat compensated after the death of Pāṇḍu, his younger brother. His younger brother left behind him some minor children, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra became the natural guardian of them, but at heart he wanted to become the factual king and hand the kingdom over to his own sons, headed by Duryodhana. With all these imperial ambitions, Dhṛtarāṣṭra wanted to become a king, and he contrived all sorts of intrigues in consultation with his brother-in-law Śakuni. But everything failed by the will of the Lord, and at the last stage, even after losing everything, men and money, he wanted to remain as king, being the eldest uncle of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra, as a matter of duty, maintained Dhṛtarāṣṭra in royal honor, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra was happily passing away his numbered days in the illusion of being a king or the royal uncle of King Yudhiṣṭhīra. Vidura, as a saint and as the duty-bound affectionate youngest brother of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, wanted to awaken Dhṛtarāṣṭra from his slumber of disease and old age. Vidura therefore sarcastically addressed Dhṛtarāṣṭra as the “King,” which he was actually not. Everyone is the servant of eternal time, and therefore no one can be king in this material world. King means the person who can order. The celebrated English king wanted to order time and tide, but the time and tide refused to obey his order. Therefore one is a false king in the material world, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra was particularly reminded of this false position and of the factual fearful happenings which had already approached him at that time. Vidura asked him to get out immediately, if he wanted to be saved from the

fearful situation which was approaching him fast. He did not ask Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra in that way because he knew that a king like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra is aware of all the fearful situations of this flimsy world and would take care of himself, in due course, even though Vidura might not be present at that time.

THE BATTLE OF KURUKṢETRA

This verse is being spoken by the sage Vidura. He did not take part in the battle of Kurukṣetra. He is described to be an incarnation of Yamarāja and Vidura had given his brother and nephew good counseling but they did not listen to Vidura. In the battle of Kurukṣetra, virtually, everyone was killed and Yudhiṣṭhīra Mahārāja was very concerned that just to install him on the throne so many millions of soldiers were killed. The battle of Kurukṣetra was the biggest battle ever fought in history. In that great battle millions of soldiers, around sixty four million soldiers were killed. So Yudhiṣṭhīra was installed on the throne. But within his mind he was always lamenting—Did this battle really have to take place? And even when Krishna consoled him and explained to him, that this battle was His desire to establish rightfulness, Yudhiṣṭhīra Mahārāja was still not convinced. And ultimately he was convinced by Bhīṣmadeva.

“FORGIVING”: AN IMPORTANT QUALITY OF A DEVOTEE

Bhīṣmadeva was able to convince Yudhiṣṭhīra, and Krishna wanted to show that My devotee can do what even I cannot do. Actually there is nothing that Krishna cannot do. So by Krishna's arrangement Yudhiṣṭhīra got

convinced by Bhīṣmadeva. Krishna is always anxious to glorify His devotee and the devotee is anxious to glorify the Lord. So Yudhiṣṭhīra Mahārāja was very forgiving. This is a very important quality of a devotee. A devotee should be forgiving. In the material world, what is our principle—*nehle pe dehla*—they say in Hindi, “tit for tat,” in Russian it is “zoo ba zoo,” teeth for teeth. So in the material world our principle is “tit for tat.” In other words if Yudhiṣṭhīra Mahārāja were to do “tit for tat,” then after the battle he could easily have arrested Dhṛtarāṣṭra, isn’t it? Dhṛtarāṣṭra had lost every one and Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī were helpless, completely at the mercy of the Pāṇḍavas whom they had constantly tried to annihilate. So, Yudhiṣṭhīra Mahārāja instead of telling Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Now I am going to hang you, I am going to arrest you; he could have easily done that. Instead, Yudhiṣṭhīra was so forgiving that he apologized to his uncle for the war which took place and he offered Dhṛtarāṣṭra a very opulent facility to live in. The facility was so opulent that Dhṛtarāṣṭra began to think, at last all my ambitions have been satisfied.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda explained in the purport, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the eldest son of his father, and technically he should have been given the throne from his father, Vicitravīrya. But because he was blind, the throne went to his younger brother Pāṇḍu and he became the king. When Pāṇḍu died at a young age then the charge was given to Pāṇḍu’s son and that was the plan to install Dhṛtarāṣṭra as a temporary care taker. Just like in between elections you have a temporary caretaker government and the plan was when Pāṇḍu’s sons will grow up, then the

administration and the responsibilities will be transferred to them. But Dhṛtarāṣṭra was so influenced by others especially Duryodhana and Śakuni. Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the purport that Dhṛtarāṣṭra gave up the idea that the kingdom should go back to Pāṇḍavas.

That time the Pāṇḍavas were not just ruling over a tiny country known as India they were ruling over the whole planet. The whole planet was their domain. There was only one principal king and the other junior kings owed allegiance to the chief king. So Dhṛtarāṣṭra had completely ignored the advice that Vidura was giving and Dhṛtarāṣṭra refused to budge at all. Actually it was Duryodhana who was refusing to budge. The Pāṇḍavas were so renounced that they said that ok, yours is everything just give us five villages. Because they are five brothers and they told, then we can each administer one village. But Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son replied, "I won't give you enough land even for a needle to penetrate." Then of course there was no choice. So Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja was so forgiving that instead of punishing his uncle, instead of arresting him, instead of hanging him, he gave him a royal reception. He gave him such nice royal reception that Dhṛtarāṣṭra began to think, "at last my ambitions have been realized." At last he began to feel like a king. Śrīla Prabhupāda says, Vidura is sarcastically speaking to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. In Hindi it is said, "Taana Marna." So he sarcastically says, "My dear King." Dhṛtarāṣṭra was not the king, Yudhiṣṭhira was the king but Dhṛtarāṣṭra had the mentality that, now I have become the King.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: AN EXAMPLE OF TOLERANCE

So from this episode we should follow in the footsteps of Yudhiṣṭhīra Mahārāja. A devotee is very forgiving. A devotee does not hold any grudges. A devotee does not hold any anger, a devotee even if inconvenienced by somebody, even if he is criticized by someone, he tolerates it rather than retaliate. He knows, he thinks this as will of the Lord that it has happened, so a devotee should be very forgiving and very tolerant. Once we went with Śrīla Prabhupāda to a High School in Montreal, Canada in June 1968 when he came and stayed for three months in Montreal. Śrīla Prabhupāda was working on his green card, he needed a green card for America and he had to stay out of the country for three months. So he went for his green card interview in Montreal. Śrīla Prabhupāda had gone to a Christian school for a preaching engagement. And it was an evening lecture and the students were there and the nuns were there. All the nuns were also there. I do not know who invited them but they were there. So Prabhupāda gave a lecture and after the lecture Śrīla Prabhupāda will always say, “any question”? So, there was one Indian gentleman who was regularly coming to the temple, he was doing his PhD at Mc Gill University and our temple at that time was at 37/21, Park Avenue. So Park Avenue is very near to the Mc Gill University. It is just a ten minutes walk. And Prabhupāda was also staying in between the University and the temple. So this gentleman got up and he started insulting Prabhupāda. He said, “ Oh why you want to come and preach this message in this Christian country?” They do not need

your philosophy, they have the Bible. So Prabhupāda was just quiet, he didn't say one word and devotees were angry but you knew Prabhupāda was in full control. So a few months later, Prabhupāda was leaving Montreal and he called me and told me to go and call that individual by his name. Prabhupāda knew him as he was a Bengali and he came from Delhi. So I said, "Prabhupāda why do you want to see him? He was so offensive to you," and then Prabhupāda said, "No, call him." Prabhupāda said in all humility, "I must have done something wrong to him in my last birth for which he took revenge." Prabhupāda called him and blessed him before he left. So it shows the greatness of a spiritual personality. An ordinary devotee, especially if someone is in a powerful position like Prabhupāda was, would have said, "Teach this guy a lesson so that he never says like that again." But he did not say that. He was very humble, he tolerated his insult, he did not say a word when he was speaking and before he went, he blessed him. What a spiritual master! A sādhu blesses for spiritual life.

So we can see from Mahārāja Yudhishtira how forgiving he was. Mahārāja Yudhisthira could have given any punishment. Dhṛtarāṣṭra had no one standing on his defense, isn't it? But instead he gave him such a nice facility that Dhṛtarāṣṭra got further bewildered and he started thinking, at last I have become a king. So as devotees we should be very forgiving and at the same time we should be very tolerant. In Prabhupāda's example we can see how tolerant he was.

GO OUT AND PREACH

We also see that in the example of Lord Nītyānanda, when Lord Caitanya started this *Saṅkīrtana* movement in Navadveep. As a child Lord Caitanya was very mischievous, He was a Sanskrit scholar but He had not revealed any of His divine and transcendental opulences. Of course when He was a young child He did display some of the super human activities. Lord Caitanya started this *sankīrtana* movement, His instruction to all His followers was “go out and preach.”

We have a temple in San Jose, which is like the Silicon Valley of America. So I go there once a year. And they have a very good congregation, they have a congregation of over 100 devotees and they are all in the IT field. Silicon Valley is dominated by Indians especially South Indians—80 %. A lot of devotees are there and all these devotees, they go on weekends. They are all householders, they go on weekends doing book distribution and they go house to house. They are all big executives. I know most of them, and they are all very senior executives. And they put up book tables on weekends, in front of malls, they get permission for distributing transcendental literatures. San Jose is the number three temple in North America in book distribution. And they don't have one full time devotee. They are all congregation devotees, they have deities and different householders take turns and come and do deity worship. I think it is the same in Houston, same programme, householders take turn and do deity worship. They all go preaching, and one should go and see; they all go out, put up book tables, go house to house. San Jose is the number three temple in book distribution in North America.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF TOLERANCE

So Lord Caitanya wanted his followers to preach in every town and village. He wanted us to preach and preaching has many opportunities and there are many avenues for preaching. So Lord Nityānanda and Haridas Ṭhākura were a team and they knew that Lord Caitanya is none other than the Supreme Lord. Haridas Ṭhākura was living in Śāntipura along with Advaita Ācārya who was worshiping a śālagrāma-śilā and they were praying. What was that prayer? Oh Lord! please appear in this world to deliver the fallen conditioned souls. Then the Lord appeared as Caitanya Mahāprabhu along with Nityānanda Prabhu.

Lord Nityānanda was 12 years older than Lord Caitanya. And Nityānanda is the incarnation of power. Nityānanda means—‘nitya’ and ‘ananda’. Ananda means happiness, nitya means eternal. So anyone who takes shelter of Lord Nityānanda, he experiences unlimited happiness. After seeing Jagai and Madhai Lord Nityānanda and Haridas Ṭhākura thought if we can redeem these two brothers then Lord Caitanya’s fame will expand through unlimited eyes and he will become known as *patita pavan*—deliverer of fallen. These two brothers were born in a Brahminical family but they became degraded. Then they proceeded to preach to these two brothers.

First they went to preach and they were driven away and they were warned, “If you ever come back here we will kill you.” When they gave this news to Lord Caitanya he said, “Go back,” and when they came back the next day Madhai was drunk. Madhai said, “How can you have the guts to come here, we threw you out, we chased you!” In

fact they started chasing them. Haridas and Nītyānanda were running and Jagai and Madhai were behind them. Jagai and Madhai used to drink a lot and they had big bellies and they could not catch up to Haridas Thākura and Nītyānanda. So Madhai in anger threw a rock that caused Nītyānanda to bleed. And when Lord Caitanya came using His Sudarśana chakra, Nītyānanda said this is just a sample of what you can see in Kaliyuga. And Nītyānanda tolerated it and this tolerance of Nītyānanda melted the hearts of Jagai-Madhai. They said, “We were so cruel, we attacked Him, we caused Him to bleed and instead of that when the Lord used the Sudarśana chakra against us, Nītyānanda begged the Lord, “Please, please don’t use your Sudarśana chakra.”” So that should be the nature of a devotee. A devotee should be extremely tolerant.

INSPIRATION FROM VIDURA

I am not saying that if someone attacks you, you turn the other cheek towards him like Mahatma Gandhi said. But the point is that a devotee should be tolerant and a devotee should be forgiving and you forgive even somebody who may be a critic because Krishna is testing our tolerance. We all are put through tests. We should not think, now we have come to spiritual life and everything will be easy. It is not going to happen. In material life we all have to face turbulences. Krishna tests our sincerity and when we have scriptural knowledge then you can afford to be tolerant. So Vidura over here is coming and enlightening his brother Dhṛtarāṣṭra and telling him that you are staying by the mercy of somebody whom you constantly tried to kill. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana, they virtually

tried every possible way to kill the Pāñdavas, isn't it? Why they were not successful? *Raakhe Krishna Maare Ke, Maare Krishna Raakhe Ke*—whom Krishna wants to protect, no one can annihilate and whom Krishna wants to annihilate no one can protect. Vidura pointed out that your well wishers, sons, relatives have all died and you can see your teeth are falling, your hair's turned white, you are getting bald: These days you see the symptoms of old age coming but you don't think you are old. We see the symptoms coming but we are still not prepared. There is a story, once there was a lawyer who was about to die. So the lawyer when he was about to die, he protested to Yamarāja. He said, "Yamarāja, you cannot take me so early, you did not send me legal notices." You know lawyers believe in legal notices like within fourteen days they have to do this otherwise I will proceed with some threat or the other. So this lawyer told Yamarāja, "You can't take me so fast, you did not give me any notices that death is going to come." So Yamarāja said that who says I did not give you notice. How many teeth do you have now? He said, "All are gone." How many teeth you had 20 years ago or 30 years ago? He said, "I had all 32." He said, "What's the color of your hair now?" He said, "I am bald and all my hair has fallen." What was it 30 years ago? He said, "I had normal hair." He said, "How good is your hearing now?" He said, "I can hardly hear." How good was your hearing 25 years ago? He said, "Completely normal." How good is your eyesight now? 20 by 20 like an eagle? The Eagle has great eyesight. Prabhupāda used to say that an eagle can identify a corpse from a great distance. He said, "Now I can hardly see." So Yamarāja said, "I gave you so many notices—your eyes started getting weak, your

hair started falling, your hair started turning white, your hearing started getting more defective, your legs started getting weak, your hands started getting weak and you are saying I did not give you any notice that you have to die.” So we have so many notices, we see so many calamities, we see so many accidents on the highway on the road but we think that nothing will happen, so that is the power of illusion. So Dhṛtarāṣṭra was woken up by Vidura and Vidura reminded him or informed him how he is living at the mercy of those whom he tried to kill. So we should seek inspiration from Vidura and preach.

BHAGVAD-GĪTĀ

Recently in the book Marathon in India, in Bombay there was one devotee who was going house to house selling books. So he rang someone’s house and nobody opened the door- he rang the bell. He rang the bell again, still nobody opened the door. So he figured probably no one was in the house. So he said that let me try once more. Five minutes later he rang one more time and a lady finally came out. She said, “Who is there, who is there, what do you want, what do you want” and he slipped a Bhagvad-gītā in her hands and she said, “Do you know what I was doing?” He said, “No.” “I was preparing to commit suicide, see that rope hanging from the ceiling and the chair below? I was sitting on that chair getting ready to hang myself when your bell rang.” And then the devotee preached to her how hanging will not help, gave her some books, Bhagvad-gītā and saved her life. So this is happening everywhere, people are drinking poison and the devotees must endeavor to enlighten them with this knowledge.

RATHA-YĀTRĀ: AN ANCIENT FESTIVAL

So whether we have festivals like the Ratha-yātrā or the Sunday programme, our goal should be to engage people in devotional service of Krishna. The Lord gives us the opportunity to preach. This Ratha-yātrā that you are holding tomorrow (This lecture was delivered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada on 23, 2010) is something that is very dear to Prabhupāda. When Prabhupāda was a small child of 6–7 years old, he organized the first Ratha-yātrā in Calcutta. These days of course if you want some information about the flights, you can just telephone and get it. But Prabhupāda in those days used to go to Calcutta railway station to find out when is the next train going to Jagannātha Puri and Vrindavan. And Prabhupāda would have this dream of going to Jagannātha Puri to see the Ratha-yātrā festival and Prabhupāda's father was a middle class man. He was a cloth dealer and Prabhupāda wanted him to organize a Ratha-yātrā. So Prabhupāda's father said, "Give me a budget, how much your Ratha-yātrā is going to cost." And he could not afford it. He said, "Oh! This is too expensive." So there was an old lady travelling in the tram. In those days in Calcutta they had trams and there were very few cars, not like today in India—full of cars. So they were travelling in a tram and the old lady said, "Why is your son crying?" So Prabhupāda's father said he wants to organize a Ratha-yātrā but a cart is going to be too expensive. So she said I have an old cart in my house, I can sell that to you. So then Prabhupāda went and saw that old cart and he thought that it was appropriate. So Prabhupāda organized a Ratha-yātrā for children and that Ratha-yātrā was exactly identical with the Rath that

they use in Jagannātha Purī. Sometime Prabhupāda's father's friends would say complaining that you organized a Ratha-yātrā and you didn't call us. Prabhupāda's father would say that the Ratha-yātrā was organized by my son and it was for children. So Prabhupāda had this strong desire to organize Ratha-yātrās and the first Ratha-yātrā organized by ISKCON was in San Francisco in 1967. So this Ratha-yātrā is a very ancient festival.

THE APPEARANCE OF LORD JAGANNĀTHA

Thousands of years ago there was a king called King Indradyumna and the king was a great devotee of the Lord and the king had this desire that the form of the Lord be made and he had commissioned Viśvakarmā, the sculptor to make a form of the Lord. Viśvakarmā told them, "I will carve but on the condition that I should not be interrupted at all." Then the king said ok. So for 14 days Viśvakarmā did not come out of the room and Guṇḍicā the wife of Indradyumna, she told her husband, "This sculptor Viśvakarmā has been inside the room for 15 days he has not asked us for a drop of water or food, he may have died. Let us go inside and see" and the king said "No, no Viśvakarmā told me no one should interrupt his work and if someone does he will disappear." But she persisted, so the king finally opened the door and as soon as he opened the door, Viśvakarmā disappeared. When Viśvakarmā disappeared and the king saw this form of Lord Jagannātha, he initially thought that this form is not finished and then in his heart he was lamenting that why did I interrupt Viśvakarmā? This form is incomplete and unfinished. But then, Nārada Muni appeared on the

scene and Nārada Muni told him, this form that you are seeing is not unfinished, it is being worshipped since time immemorial. And then Lord Brahma came and installed these deities of Jagannātha in the Jagannātha Purī temple.

THE SWEEPER OF LORD JAGANNĀTHA

So this Ratha-yātrā is a very ancient festival and the king of Orissa traditionally cleanses the road with broom and rose water. So there is a nice story that King Pratāparudra, about whom you read in Caitanya- caritāmṛita, his father was King Purushottama and his mother's name was queen Padmavatī. So king Purushottama, before he was married, he was a great devotee of Jagannātha and in his neighborhood there was another king, the king of Kanchi. So, king Purushottama was not married and the king of Kanchi was also a very strong warrior. The king of Kanchi had a daughter named Padmavatī and he wanted to marry her to king Purushottama and also the king Purushottama agreed. But king Purushottama sought leave so that he could go to Jagannātha Purī and personally organize the Ratha-yātrā.

The king of Kanchi was invited for the Ratha-yātrā. This story is about 600 years old. But the king of Kanchi could not come for the Ratha-yātrā, so he sent his prime minister on his behalf to attend the Ratha-yātrā. The prime minister came on behalf of the king to attend the Ratha-yātrā but there he saw that the king was sweeping the road with a broom! First he was rubbing the road, scraping the road, sweeping the road and then washing the road with water. He went back and told the king of Kanchi, "Do you want to marry your daughter to a sweeper? I saw him with my own eyes that the King was scrubbing

the road, then with the broom he was sweeping the road then he was washing the road. I cannot advise you that you marry your daughter to that ‘bhangi’—sweeper.”

Then the king of Kanchi called off the engagement and he said, “Sorry I can’t let you marry my daughter.” King Purushottama when he heard, why on what grounds the marriage was called off he took this as an offense to Lord Jagannātha. Then he just went to battle with the king of Kanchi and he was initially beaten. So king Purushottama after he was beaten, he came back Jagannātha Purī and he visited a sādhu. When he visited the sādhu, the sādhu said, “Did you take Jagannātha’s permission before you launched the attack on the king of Kanchi?” He said, “No, I did not do that.” The King went back, prayed to Lord Jagannātha and said, “I was fighting the battle to save your honor, because I swept the road before the Ratha-yātrā and they called me a sweeper.” Then the divine voice came and said, “Don’t worry, on this auspicious day go and fight again and we two brothers will come and join you in battle.” We two brothers mean Krishna and Balarāma. The king could not believe that Jagannātha and Balarāma are going to come and fight for me! How is that going to possibly happen? He could not believe that the Lord is going to come and fight for me.

As per Jagannātha’s direction the king re-organized the army and proceeded to attack the king of Kanchi. As they were going, ahead of them was a lady selling butter milk and she was approached by two soldiers on two horses, one was on a white horse, one was a fair looking soldier and the other one was a dark soldier. And they

said, give us that butter milk, we are thirsty, so she gave the butter milk. Then she said, "money (paisa)." They said, "we are soldiers of king Purushottama's army and the king is coming up with his army." Jagannātha took out his ring, (In the temple they put a ring on Jagannātha in Puri) and the Lord told that lady that when the king comes with his army tell him that these two soldiers of your army drank all the butter milk and show them this ring. We give you this ring to be given to the king." So when the king came and the lady approached the king and said, "Sir, I have news for you. Two soldiers of your army came ahead drank all my butter milk and gave this ring to be given to you." The king when he saw the ring he knew it was of Lord Jagannātha. This was the ring Jagannātha wears at the altar and he was overjoyed that Jagannātha and Balarāma have finally kept their word. And he was so happy, that he gave a whole village in donation to that lady who was selling butter milk. So they had a fight and in the fight King Purushottama was victorious.

The King Purushottama came back and the king of Kanchi sent his daughter Padmavatī to Jagannātha Puri. The king was so offended that Padmavatī's father had insulted Lord Jagannātha because he became a sweeper for Lord Jagannātha that he gave Padmavatī in the custody of the prime minister and he said, you can marry her to any person you see appropriate. A year later on the occasion of the Ratha-yātrā when the king was again sweeping the road for the pleasure of Lord Jagannātha, the prime minister announced, "My king gave me the responsibility to marry Padmavatī to a suitable sweeper

but I do not think there is any better sweeper than king Purushottama. He is the best sweeper." And then Padmavatī was married to King Purushottama. So the king of Orissa traditionally has been the sweeper of Lord Jagannātha.

Just like King Pratāparudra wanted to have an audience with Lord Caitanya but Lord Caitanya would not give him audience. But on the occasion of the Ratha-yātrā, the Lord saw that the king was doing such a menial job of sweeping the road and brushing, cleaning the road with his own broom; He was so pleased by the humility of King Pratāparudra. So the point is to serve the Lord you need to take on some very menial service, then the Lord is very pleased.

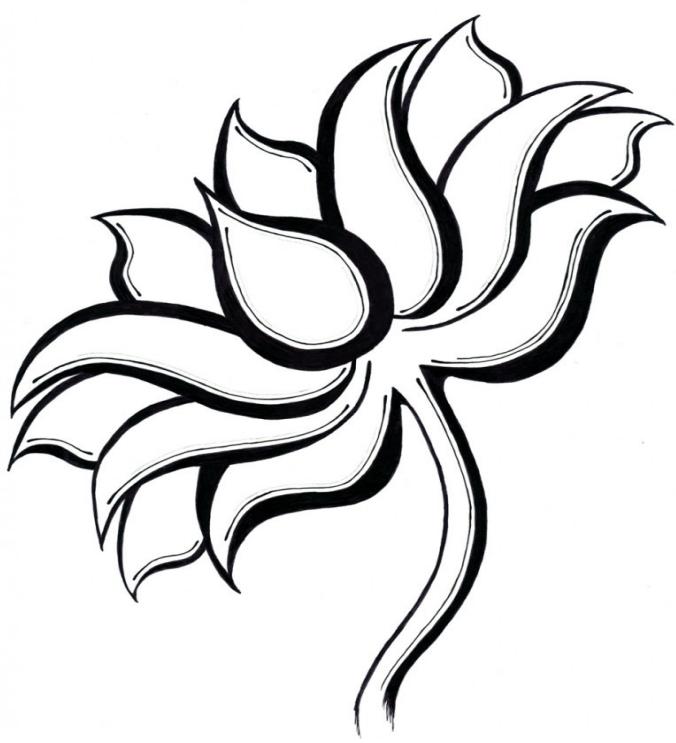
THE GLORIES OF RATHA-YĀTRĀ

So this Ratha-yātrā, we have seen all over the world, is actually a great instrument in attracting people. I have taken part in Ratha-yātrās in Russia. In Russia, they do not give us permission to have a Ratha-yātrā on the road, but in Russia they have very big carts so we have the inside area of a park and just go round and round for a few hours. So my experience is, wherever you take Lord Jagannātha, people get attracted. So there is a belief in ISKCON, that if you take part in the Ratha-yātrā then you go back to Godhead. Many people used to say that. So once some devotee asked Prabhupāda, "Is this a fact that if you take part in the Ratha-yātrā then you go back to Godhead?" So Prabhupāda explained that if you are diseased and you go to a hospital, it does not mean that the moment you go to the hospital you will get cured, it means that you have the opportunity to get cured.

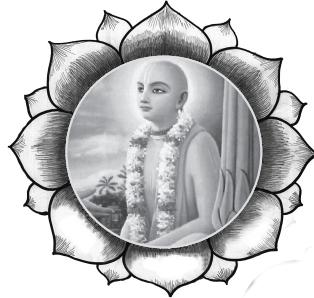
FOR OUR PURIFICATION

So this Ratha-yātrā attracts a lot of people, thousands come and see Jagannātha; thousands come and help pull the chariot and eat the remnants of the food offered to the Lord etc. So by taking part in this festival, Lord Jagannātha is so merciful that, today by Prabhupāda's mercy the Lord is available to streets all around the world. At least there are 25–30 cities in North America which have Ratha-yātrās every year and there are at least 150 cities of the world where ISKCON holds the Ratha-yātrā. Almost every temple holds a Ratha-yātrā. In India, in big cities like Bombay, we have eight, nine Ratha-yātrās a year. This is a very powerful tool to get people attracted to Lord Jagannātha. So Lord Jagannātha is very kind just like He is engaging so many devotees in the preparation. I see devotees preparing flower vases and so on. So the Lord actually does not need anything but He gives us the opportunity to engage in service, for our own purification. So we should take advantage of the opportunity when we have the opportunity to get purified and that is what this whole process of devotional service is.

So Vidura was able to wake up Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Dhṛtarāṣṭra finally left home with his wife Gāndhārī. So just like Vidura was bold in preaching we should also preach the philosophy and endeavor to wake the conditioned souls up on the path of purification.



CHAPTER THREE



THE HIGHER VALUES OF LIFE

Those of you who work as doctors, we need doctors everywhere and we have thousands of doctor devotees in India, Russia, and all over the world. In our informal talks with doctors we often point out that you doctors are the prime witness to people suffering. Am I right? So, who comes to you? One who is unwell? I once asked a doctor in India, how is business? He said, "very bad." I said, "why?" He said "people are healthy these days." I asked him, "when do people fall sick?" He said "they fall sick more in the rainy season. That is the reason our business is bad."

So, Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gītā:

*mām upetya punar janma
duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānah
saṁsiddhim paramāṁ gataḥ*

(Bhagavad-gītā 8.15)

"After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogīs in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection."

There are two characteristics of material existence: one is, everything is temporary and the other is that there is nothing but misery. Now, it is not easy to digest this because most of us would like to believe, there is no misery. And even if everything is temporary, it is going to be temporary on my terms. That means I decide how long I am going to live, I decide when I have to fall sick etc.

THE DEATH RATE IS 100%

The reality is, there is misery at every level and there are seven fold miseries which nobody can escape, doesn't matter whether you are born in a rich country or a poor country. Our spiritual master came to America in 1966 and for the first year he had to literally struggle to have a place to live in. He didn't want to compromise on the true teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā. So, he had to struggle but finally because of the determination and purity, in 1967 he opened the first ISKCON temple. So in 1970 or 1971, Śrila Prabhupāda was giving a press conference in America. At that time the Indian economy and India's image was very low. India was considered a poor, beggar country and it did not have much of the image that it has now. And America at that time had the image of a superpower, though it has an image of a superpower still but the reality is, it is becoming a second grade power. And at that time it had the image of a superpower.

So Śrila Prabhupāda was giving a press conference and one American journalist asked him, "Swamījī, you have come from a very poor country, India, and we are the richest nation in the world, what are you going to teach us?" Śrila Prabhupāda said, "I may have come from

a poor country and you may be a member of the richest country but one thing is common to both the countries.” So the journalist was very curious, what could be common between a poor country and a rich country like America. And Prabhupāda said, “The death rate in both the countries is 100%.” So he was stunned!

So the death rate whether you are in a rich country or a poor country is 100%. Whether you belong to a billionaire’s family or a pauper’s family death is there. You also have disease, and old age. So the diseases are welcomed by doctors. When people don’t get diseased, if they really become healthy that will be bad news for the doctors and all the pharmaceutical companies.

THE GREATNESS OF VEDIC SCRIPTURES

So, disease, old age, and birth again and again are very painful processes. Like you always see a child coming out of the mother’s womb crying. And, I had the opportunity to discuss with the gynecologists and other doctors about how the child moves in the womb of a mother and why the child comes out of the mother’s womb crying and there is almost no medical doctor I have met who has been able to give a proper explanation.

But Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains in great detail how a child evolves in the womb of a mother from the day of conception to the day of delivery. So as I had the opportunity to present this to doctors; they were just amazed to see how much information is there in the Vedic scriptures.

THREE KINDS OF MISERIES

So, with these miseries and then you have other miseries like, miseries caused by material nature. Material nature is creating havoc with the world at large. The world at one time was just worried about gasoline shortage and hence you probably may know by the current estimate, the gasoline that is available will last for another 30–40 years. But now the world is also headed for a water crisis.

The projection is that in the thirty years down the road water will become a product as scarce as gold because most parts of the world are running short of water. India is headed for a disastrous future in water management unless they do something quickly. But in many other parts of the world, even in the US, if you were in California, Arizona and so many parts, there is a severe water crisis. You can live without petrol, you can live without automobiles but you cannot live without water. Is that right? And various parts of Africa are also headed for a water crisis. So under the material nature, then there are other miseries caused by other entities and the mind.

The mind is the source of so much trouble, just like these days mental depression is a very fast expanding disease. I was reading an article which shows that the fastest growing medicine sales are related to mental depression. Due to this mental depression, the suicide rates are going up and so on. If you look around, you will see that in spite of our best efforts to find comfort in life, even if we do get comfort, it is short and temporary. Is that right? Or can it be long term comfort? It is short term.

So, the average life span of men in America is about 80 years, and 78 for women. In Russia it's 52 for men, that's

the average rate and for women it's about 60 because Russians like to drink wine. That is the biggest problem in that country, alcoholism.

CHOOSING A RELIGION, WITH NO RESTRICTIONS!

Seven hundred years ago Russia had a King. His name was Vladimir and he had a choice to accept Christianity or Islam. Because in the past religion flourished based upon the religion of the king. Just like Asoka; with his influence Buddhism spread very rapidly. So the king had a choice to make Russia Islamic or Christian. But he saw that in Islam there were too many restrictions for drinking. He rejected Islam and took Christianity. Christianity did not offer any restriction on drinking. And what that did is good because our movement is the biggest in Russia.

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

The point I was trying to make is that it does not matter where you go, there is nothing but the miseries of life. These days, all over the world things are deteriorating very rapidly. Not just because we had a recession two years ago; but even from the angle of morality, the character of people is rapidly diminishing. So what are we in ISKCON trying to do? ISKCON is not just a religious movement that just rings some bells and offers aratis. Just for example, the Bhagavad-gītā which is the oldest book of knowledge on this planet. This knowledge was first spoken, millions of years ago to the Sun God, Vivavān and it was retold 5000 years ago to Arjuna.

The Bhagavad-gītā is originally, in Sanskrit language. But A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami the founder ācārya of ISKCON, was also a scholar and a great devotee. He has translated it giving word by word meaning, translation, and explanation. This English edition of the Bhagavad-gītā is being used in many universities, around the world, as a reference book or text book. This Bhagavad-gītā has been translated in more than seventy languages. We just published the Bhagavad-gītā in Vietnamese and now it is being done in Swahili, it is being done in Ugandan, and so many languages.

There is a small tribe in Australia and they have a population of only few thousands of people but they have their own language. So we had to print Bhagavad-gītā in that language also. I forgot the language. It's only spoken by the aborigines in one part of Australia.

THE KRISHNA CONSCIOUS WAY OF LIFE

So this movement is trying to educate people into the higher values of life. In India we have a program called value added education, where in all the schools, not in every school that's beyond our manpower- but in many schools we have special educational programs for children. In other words we have presented the Vedic message in a very simple format and all over the world people are reading these books and practicing the Krishna Conscious way of life.

Because it is offering people a practical solution and an easy way to find peace of mind and contentment. In today's society nobody is content, everybody is greedy.

Everybody just wants more, more, more, but unless we have spirituality in our character, we will not be able to find real happiness. Just like a fish cannot be happy outside the water even if you placed the fish in a golden plate. So, similarly unless we take to spirituality, man cannot be happy.

OUR REAL HOME

When we talk about spirituality, people sometimes get scared, or people sometimes dismiss it. They say “spirituality is not for me, this is not the time, I have a career to pursue, I have an education goal to realize and I have so many other commitments to do.” Spirituality doesn’t mean you abandon your material goals, or you abandon your studies or you abandon your family. No, that is a misinterpretation of spirituality. What spirituality in day to day life means, we see things in the right perspective and we mould our lives properly. For example, seeing things in the right perspective would mean we understand that there is one God Who is the Cause of all causes, Who is the Supreme Proprietor, Who is the Supreme Creator and our Well Wisher.

So, why did Krishna speak the Bhagavad-gītā? Because the Supreme Lord as our eternal father knew that we cannot be happy in the material world. No matter how hard we try even if we become Bill Gates or whatever. The happiness is going to be short term. So, as the Supreme Father He knows that if you want to be really happy then we have to return to the spiritual world. Just like, you are more comfortable in your own house. And when you are travelling even if you are staying in a five Star hotel or a

relative or friend's house you don't feel as comfortable as you feel in your own house. You look forward to returning home.

WHO IS KRISHNA?

So, who is Krishna? Krishna is not just one of the Gods. The Vedas establish Him as the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord means, there are many Gods but there is one Supreme Lord and that is Krishna. It is just like, in the United States we have the president and the chief of the country and we have the secretaries of the state, vice president and so on. So there are demigods who are in-
part administrators and you have the Supreme Lord—the cause of all causes.

We may address the Supreme Lord by different names in different parts of the world. In some parts you may address Him as Jesus Christ; he said he was the son of God. In some parts we may address Him as Allah, Jehovah or what not. We have absolutely no problem with that. We recognize that God is unlimited and He is known and called by different names in different parts of the world, but there is a Supreme Lord and that Supreme Lord is the Cause of all causes. Krishna knows what is best for us. And therefore, the Lord wants us to act in a civilized manner. Being civilized doesn't mean just having a big house, or fancy clothes, or an expensive car to drive. A civilized human being means one who wants to mould his life based on the teachings of the Lord which are there in the scriptures. So, Krishna is inviting us through the pages of Bhagavad-gītā to lead a pious life or disciplined life. Spirituality means leading a disciplined life rather

than a life where you become a slave of your mind and senses. You are constantly endeavoring to please your mind and senses. But in the end you don't really end up pleasing anyone.

DISEASES: BYPRODUCTS OF BAD HABITS

If you want to analyze the so-called traditional sources of misery like diseases, you will find that most diseases are the by-products of bad habits. For example, people are spending so much money on fighting AIDS. The Bill Gates foundation prides itself in being one of biggest donors of the world to fight AIDS in India and Africa. But to fight AIDS is very simple. You don't need a one dollar donation from Bill Gates foundation. You just have to teach people what are the laws of God. And if people live by the laws of God, there will be no AIDS. AIDS is nothing but the by-product of free sex and wrong sexual habits that have become commonly accepted in the society today. But nobody has the guts to stand up and say what is causing AIDS. Everyone will just pay more money for research on how to fight AIDS.

Similarly, cancer and so many other diseases are the results of bad habits. So discipline in spiritual life means that you correct your habits and you lead a life for the pleasure of the Lord which is not difficult to execute.

OUR LOVE AND AFFECTION

We need to live for someone's pleasure or the other. If you don't dovetail your loving tendency towards the Lord then we tend to dovetail our loving tendency towards cats and dogs. We are not against cats and dogs. As devotees of

the Lord we don't even harm an ant. We recognize even an ant has a right to live. And so, we don't even want to kill an ant. The point is that our love and affection should be focused on the Lord and His teachings. And cats and dogs should be respected as the children of God. Not that we give our affection and life to cats and dogs.

Especially in America, at one time the dogs were number one pets. Around five years ago the dogs were overtaken by the cats. Now there are more cats in American homes than dogs because the cats look sweeter than the dogs. The dogs bark. So we have this loving tendency but we don't know where to focus it. So the scriptures say that we all have a loving tendency, we are all looking for companions, we are all looking for a master to serve, so why not serve the Supreme master?

OUR REAL IDENTITY

In the Bhagavad-gītā Krishna tells Arjuna that do your duty as a warrior but do it for my pleasure with your mind and intelligence dedicated to me. The Bhagavad-gītā which consists of 18 chapters and 700 verses is a book of knowledge that educates us in different areas. One area it educates us in the second chapter is, who you are? This is the biggest misconception. What is the real concept? What is the real identity? In countries like Russia, where I spend a lot of time, you have to carry your passport with you all the time. At any time the police can stop you and ask your passport, and if you do not have, then you have to go to jail. In another words they want to know you carry your passport to know your true identity. So, we enter any country we have to first present your passport.

So, what is the real identity? This body we identify with, isn't it? We all like to decorate the body, we all like to go in front of the mirror as many times as we can, to see if our beauty is increasing, decreasing, or constant. If someone tells you, you look handsome, beautiful, you feel flattered. If someone tells you, you look ugly you are offended. So this body goes through different stages of transformation. In principle, the body goes through six stages of development or transformation. One is called birth, then there is growth, then there is maintenance. A child is born, we were all born, we grew, than at a certain age you stop growing. Otherwise you all be 100 feet tall. At a certain stage you stop growing. Then there is production of by-products. Like a man and woman get together they have children. That is the fourth stage. Then in the fifth stage, which is called dwindling, getting old. And the sixth stage is vanishing or death. Now it doesn't matter whether you are black, white, brown, Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Jew, doesn't matter, everyone's body goes through these six stages.

UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE

Śrīla Prabhupāda is commenting on the second chapter of the Gītā. And he says that this is the universal knowledge. This is not the sectarian knowledge for Hindus or people from India. Everyone's body goes through these six stages of transformation. And then within the body there is something. In 1968, I was studying in McGill in Montreal and there was a front page article in the Montreal newspaper called the Montreal Gazette. In that article, they feature, the article was written by a Doctor from the Toronto General Hospital. Toronto general hospital is a

very famous hospital in Toronto and he said, “I have seen people dying for 28 years and the sudden change in the luster of the person when he dies convinces me that there is something in the body and when that something leaves the body, the body is pronounced dead.” So, it was a very nice, front page article, through Krishna’s grace it fell in my hand. We sent it to Śrīla Prabhupāda who was on the planet at that time. So Prabhupāda wrote a letter to this doctor at the Toronto General Hospital, saying, “I am very happy that you acknowledge that there is something in the body and when that something leaves, the body is pronounced dead.”

And then this team in Canada had decided to do research to find out what is that something. So Prabhupāda through a series of verses pointed out that something you are referring to is the Soul. And then he went on to confirm as the Bhagavad-gītā says that the soul can never be seen, nor burnt, not dried, not wetted, nor blown. So in the end this doctor wrote back and said, what knowledge you have in the Vedas to offer can never be equalled by modern science and he acknowledged that there must be something in the body about which the scientists are unaware.

So sometimes modern-day atheists say, “You people believe in the soul, but what evidence is there that there is a soul in the body? Can you show me the soul?” So the answer is consciousness. As long as there is a soul in the body there is consciousness and when there is no soul in the body there is no consciousness. As doctors, you all must have attended numerous occasions of death, people who die. So what is the difference between a dead person

and a living person? The difference is consciousness. As long as a person is alive there is consciousness and when a person dies there is no consciousness. Doesn't matter how hard you shout, the person will not respond.

WHERE IS THE SOUL?

In the Bible it is said, what shouldn't I do to gain the whole world but suffer the loss of the eternal soul? So the Bhagavad-gītā second chapter discusses this point in great detail and makes us understand. Just like we discard our old clothes and wear new clothes; when the clothes get torn, old, we throw them away and we have to wear new clothes; similarly, the soul leaves one body and takes on another body. In other words, the soul is transmigrating from one body to another and the soul is spiritual in nature. Now sometimes, people ask, I believe in the soul, but what is the measurement of the soul? If I tell you the measurement, you won't believe it. The scriptures say that the soul is the 1/10 thousandth of the tip of your hair. And due to the presence of this tiny soul we have consciousness, we have energy, we are able to walk, talk, think, act and when the soul leaves the body we are incapable of doing either of the functions.

So, then the question arises, where is the soul? Is the soul only in human beings? Our answer is no. All living beings created by God have a soul. All of you in the medical profession know that all the medicines more or less, come into the market after being first experimented on animals for nine months. After their successful testing on animals they are experimented on human beings. Why? Animals also have a soul, animals also have a right to live, and to think that animals don't have a soul is illusion.

I was visiting a scientific lab with some of our scientist devotees and they were showing me pictures of a female animal, a pregnant animal with a child in the womb and on the other side a picture of a human female with a child in the womb. If you just see the two pictures of the womb you can't easily see the difference. So the animals also have a right to live, and the next set of questions that comes up is, if animals have a soul, even the trees and plants have souls. Studies have shown that trees also have consciousness and have a way of communicating with other trees etc. So the question that comes up is how does one know, what type of body am I going to get in my next life? We say there is a soul, the soul is eternal. Now I am a human being and now what type of body will I get in the next birth? In the Vedas it is said that we transmigrate from one body to another. Which type of body we are going to get, depends upon the action that we are performing.

As You Sow, So SHALL You REAP

Just like the Bible says, "As you sow, so shall you reap." So based on how we act we get the result. Therefore, in the third and fifth chapters of the Bhagavad-gītā where the theme is action, karma yoga, Krishna encourages us to act in such a manner that we don't get further entangled, rather we can prepare for liberation. Just like we all want to act in such a way that we don't get more disease. Isn't it? So, similarly if we perform negative actions, which is called in Sanskrit "vikarma," then we get further bound. And Bhagavad-gītā gives a very good example of a lotus leaf that is in water but not touched by the water. In some parts of the world like Russia, you don't see lotus leaves, so they don't understand this example. But in parts of America and India you do see lotus leaves and lotus leaves do grow in water but they don't touch the water.

THE PROCESS OF PURIFICATION

So the Bhagavad-gītā encourages us to live in the material world but live in the spirit of detachment. If you read the Bhagavad-gītā, which is a book of knowledge, philosophy, guidance, you will be able to know how to act. And leading a spiritual life means, as we said earlier, leading a disciplined life and how do we observe this discipline? By following certain guidelines, one guideline we follow is to chant the names of the Lord. And we chant the names of the Lord, why? This process of purification is given to us by the Lord himself. Just like for different diseases there are different medicines, for different ages there are different cures or different processes of self realization.

According to the Vedic history, there are four principle ages. Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapar Yuga, and Kali Yuga. Satya Yuga is described as the golden age, Treta Yuga is described as the silver age, Dwapar Yuga is described as the copper age and then Kali Yuga is described as the iron age. In every age there is a different process of self realization. In Satya Yuga the process was meditation, in Treta Yuga the process was elaborate sacrifices in which you needed many pure Brahmanas etc. and ingredients. In Dwapara Yuga, the process of worshiping the deities is prominent for attaining the Supreme. Now, in Kali Yuga, by and large people are not too interested in self realization. People are short lived, they are misguided. So, the Lord has presented a very simple process that is the process of chanting the Holy Names of the Lord.

THE HOLY NAME IS IDENTICAL WITH THE LORD

Sometimes people wonder how can you chant the same name again and again and not get tired. Our experience is that we hear a song on radio, TV, and nobody hears it for more than a few hours. If any radio station has to play the same record again and again, no one will ever tune in into that. Mundane sound, we can hear once, twice, thrice and then we get tired. In regard to the spiritual names of the Lord we can chant these names of the Lord day and night and not get tired.

In scriptures there is a nice example given by Nārada Muni. He says that every morning we breathe fresh air, and we feel the freshness of the air. We never feel that I have been experiencing this air for so many days and it is stagnant. We look forward to breathing the fresh air, isn't it? So when we chant the holy names of the Lord, because the Lord has invested all His transcendental energies in the holy name, this chanting appears ever fresh and because these names are identical with the Lord we can chant these names and not get tired.

So, what does this chanting do? It cleanses the heart. The heart is full of unlimited material desires. It is just like a diseased man, even if he is offered a deliciously prepared meal he won't be able to appreciate it, because of his diseased condition. So, we are also diseased by the power of lust, anger, greed, envy, hatred. These are called in Sanskrit as *anarthas*. And these are blinding us spiritually. So this chanting of the holy name cleanses the heart, brings us to the level of contentment and as

we chant we experience great satisfaction. We may think that material success is going to give me happiness. Well friends, I can say, material success unaccompanied by spirituality will not give you happiness whereas material success accompanied by spirituality will give you real happiness. So to think that I can be happy independent of the Lord is actually an illusion.

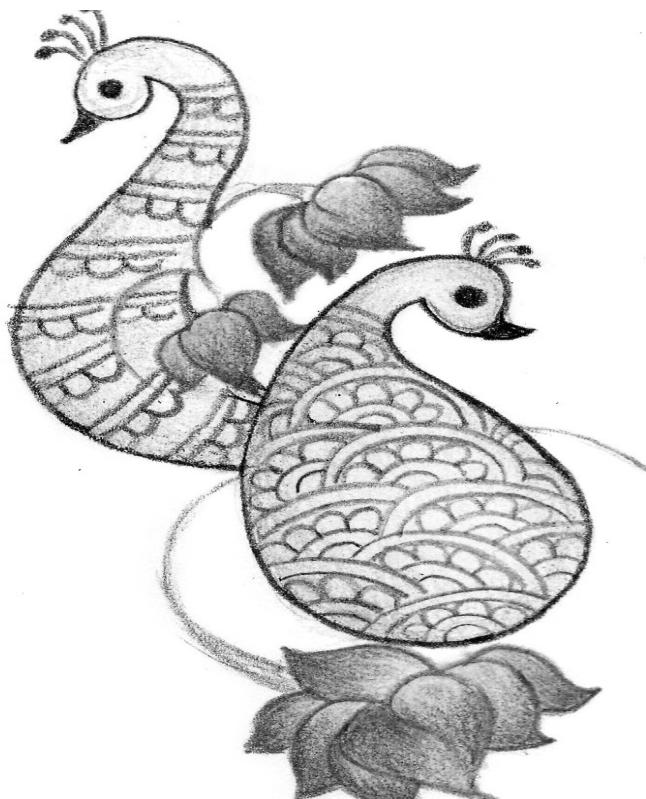
THE BIBLE

So we recommend chanting of the holy names of the Lord. Even the Bible says that you should always chant the names of the Lord. In all the scriptures this chanting the names of the Lord is highly recommended and we have in your community many people chanting in the Washington area, and all over the world. And then we encourage people to read the Bhagavad-gītā, Bhāgavatam. We also encourage a vegetarian diet. A vegetarian diet is healthier than a non-vegetarian diet. Cancer and many other diseases are the result of bad habits including bad eating habits. And further, vegetarian diet is also healthier. Especially in America, I must say America has a higher percentage of vegetarians than most of the Western countries.

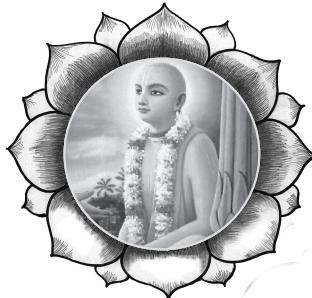
So in America you meet lots of vegetarians and there is full facility of being a vegetarian. Therefore, we encourage people to be vegetarian and offer their food to the Lord and remnants are taken on as *prasad*.

There is a famous British philosopher who says that a man is known by the food he eats, just like a man is known by the company he keeps. So the food influences our mentality and when we eat pure food that's offered

to the Lord with Love, it sharpens our intelligence. So, we are encouraging people to lead a disciplined civilized life and if you lead a disciplined civilized life you will be happy and peaceful. Plus you will be able to achieve the goal of life which is to develop love for God and it can be done while being a man of the material world while continuing with your profession, while continuing with your goals. My request is to please take the opportunity to read the Bhagavad-gītā, try the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mantra as it is the channel to get peace of life. If you don't like it you can always give it up but try, as you have nothing to lose.



CHAPTER FOUR



ALL DEVOURING ENEMY—LUST

We are reading the story of Ajāmila and we are reading a section where the Yamadūtas are addressing the Viṣṇudūtas. The Yamadūtas are the representatives of Lord Yamarāja and the Viṣṇudūtas are the representatives of Lord Viṣṇu.

So Ajāmila was born in the brahminical family and before he fell down he had manifested all brahminical qualities. He had studied all the Vedic literatures. This is no ordinary achievement. He was the reservoir of good character and good conduct, and he had many good qualities. He was mild and gentle. He was firmly established in the conclusion of the Vedic scriptures—to engage in devotional service of the supreme Lord. These are some of the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava.

Lord Caitanya describes twenty six qualities of a devotee and a devotee is mild and gentle. Mild means he is soft spoken, not harsh, speaks the truth and speaks in a palatable manner. The truth should not be compromised but there are ways in how the truth can be presented.

The truth can be presented crudely, rudely or it can be presented in a mild and gentle manner. He was mild and gentle and had control over mind and all the senses. This is not an ordinary achievement, mind and senses should be controlled if you want to progress in the spiritual path.

TRUTHFUL

He was truthful and truthfulness is one of the essential ingredients of religion and quality of a brāhmaṇa. A brāhmaṇa is always truthful, so Ajāmila was also truthful and he knew how to chant the Vedic mantras. There is certain art and rhythm in chanting the Vedic mantras and Ajāmila was trained in how to chant the Vedic mantras. Even in our own Gurukul we train the children in how to chant Vedic mantras. If you go to the Māyāpur Gurukul, you will be so pleased to see how nicely young children from different parts of the world are chanting Vedic mantras. So Ajāmila was even trained in how to chant Vedic mantras and besides all these qualities mentioned he was also pure in the sense that he was engaged in devotional service.

A VAISNAVA IS RESPECTFUL

Further he had a spiritual master to whom he was respectful. Like Lord Caitanya says that one should have faith and reverence, follow the instructions of the spiritual master and one should have faith that these instructions are for my betterment. In other words one should be humble in dealing with the spiritual master. You see in the case of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he was respectful to sannyāsīs. They would tell him why don't you sit among us and study the Vedanta? Then Mahāprabhu in a humble mood said

my spiritual master considered me a fool. And he said I am only capable of Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahamantra. So Ajāmila was very respectful to his spiritual master and also to the elderly members of the household.

A Vaiṣṇava is respectful to everyone and more so to the elderly members of the household and he is also free from false prestige. False prestige or *ahaṅkār* is one of the stumbling blocks in the path of self realization. Due to false ego we don't accept good advice; due to false ego we don't accept the instructions of the spiritual master and the scriptures. So false ego is a stumbling block but Ajāmila managed to conquer this and therefore he was free of false prestige, he was well behaved, and he was nonenvious. Envy is one of the deep-rooted *anarthas* and as Caitanya Mahāprabhu says as long as envy is there, the Lord will not reside.

ENVY—DEEP ROOTED ANARTHA

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛita, we read a story of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and his son-in-law Amogha. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was a staunch impersonalist and Caitanya Mahāprabhu after He took sannyāsa, He came to have *darshan* of Lord Jagannāth and as He was having *darshan* of Lord Jagannāth, He actually fainted. So He was carried to the house of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya; the Lord was very merciful to him and He was able to convert him to the path of personalism.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya had a son-in-law called Amogha who was very envious of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Caitanya Mahāprabhu was none else but the Supreme Lord appearing as a devotee and this Amogha could not

accept the supreme position of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya's wife cooked many dishes for the pleasure of the Lord and started feeding Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was standing at the gate with a stick to ensure that Amogha did not have the privilege to come and see what all was being eaten by the Lord. His wife was so expert that she could cook 60–70 items in one hour! Amogha was standing with his ears next to the wall. He was spying on Caitanya Mahāprabhu to see if Caitanya Mahāprabhu would be doing something incorrect so that he could use that to blaspheme the Lord.

Sometime later Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya had to leave the entrance unguarded to help his wife in serving the Lord so Amogha came in and saw all this variety of foodstuff on Lord Caitanya's plate and he said, "Look at this sannyāsī, he claims to be a sannyāsī and he is eating so opulently," and then Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya had to throw him out. So Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was very upset that his son-in-law had blasphemed Caitanya Mahāprabhu and later on this Amogha got inflicted with a severe disease and he was virtually on his deathbed.

So Caitanya Mahāprabhu went there, placed his hand on his chest and said, "As long as you have envy in the heart, Kṛṣṇa will not reside over there." So envy is something that we should avoid. Generally people become envious when they see that someone has something that they don't have. So we should avoid envy and Ajāmila had control over this envious nature.

KING BHARATA

Now as explained that Ajāmila had an ideal character, he was a well behaved brāhmaṇa and had knowledge of

the scriptures. So how did he get entrapped? How did such an elevated personality get bewildered? We also see in the Bhāgavatam the story of King Bharata. King Bharata was also the elder son of Lord R̄ṣabhadeva. Who was Lord R̄ṣabhadeva? An incarnation of the Lord. The King Bharata ruled over the earthly planet for thousands of years and after ruling over the earthly planets he went to the forest to practice meditation. Once he saw a pregnant she-deer being chased by a lion and the deer was so scared that when she heard the roaring of the lion she jumped for safety and in the process she died leaving behind an offspring. Then king Bharata took care of the offspring but he got excessively attached to the offspring. If the offspring was outside the room even for a second, he would be in anxiety. And one day while searching for the deer, which was out of sight, he died and then took birth as a deer.

SAUBHARI MUNI

So here we see that a great personality also got attracted to the wrong object and then he had to pay the price. So we can see that even if one is very elevated if one does not strictly follow all the guidelines then one can easily be misdirected. In the ninth canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam there is a story of a yogi called Saubhari Muni. Saubhari Muni was a very powerful yogi. He was meditating under the water of river Yamuna. So Saubhari Muni had the power of a submarine and he was meditating on the Lord under water. You must have heard meditation over the water but meditation under water is a great achievement.

So he was meditating in the water and there he saw two fishes mating. Then as soon as he saw the incident of two

fishes mating that activity was meditated upon by him and he began to think about the joys of sex life and then he came out of water, approached the king and asked if he could get married to one of his daughters. The king had 50 daughters so Saubhari Muni said, "Can I marry one of your daughters?" But at that time Saubhari Muni had long hair and long beard so the king was not impressed by his appearance. The king very diplomatically said, "I can't force my daughters to marry you, if they want they can but I can't force them." So Saubhari Muni understood that they do not want to marry me because of my big long beard, big long hair, and long nails. Then Saubhari Muni used his mystic powers and he became a very handsome young man. He became so handsome that even the damsels of celestial planets would get attracted.

There are eight types of mystic perfections that one can realize. And by these mystic perfections yogis can become very powerful. The great sage Kardama Muni made the whole city, real city on an aeroplane. These days on aeroplanes we fly, we can watch movies and mountains, lakes and rivers. Kardama Muni actually in an airplane created forests, parks, gardens, and lakes, etc. There is a *prāpti-siddhi*, if you achieve that *prāpti-siddhi* then sitting at one place you can extend your hand anywhere and lift anything from anywhere. Sitting here in Toronto at your residence you could stretch your hand to the safes of all the banks of Toronto or even Switzerland and lift all the gold and the reserves. But in today's environment these mystic perfections are not possible.

So Saubhari Muni by mystic powers became a very handsome young man and when the King's daughters saw

this young man they all said, “This man is for me, I want to marry him.” The 50 sisters were very close to each other, they began fighting with each other, “No, I saw him first so he should be mine.” Others said, “No, I saw him first, he should be mine,” and the 50 sisters were fighting. Saubhari Muni married all the 50 sisters and he had 5,000 sons, 100 sons from each of the wife. After staying with them and enjoying sex unlimitedly he realized what he has done! He thought, “I was engaged in meditation and then I foolishly began to meditate on the joys of sex life and as a result my spiritual life got distracted and I ended up where I am.”

There is another explanation also that once Saubhari Muni had given protection to a fish whom Garuda had wanted to eat. So he fell down because he committed *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* which affects our spiritual life. Also he was absorbed in meditating joys of sex life. So the mind is a key instrument in our endeavor for spiritual life. Now why did we give these examples of King Bharata and Saubhari Muni because there is a certain similarity between what transpired with them and what transpired afterwards.

ALL DEVOURING ENEMY

Ajāmila had all of these wonderful qualities but how did Ajāmila get distracted? He had gone to the forest at the request of his father to bring flowers for his worship. When he was returning from the forest with flowers for his worship he saw a prostitute who was deeply drunk, intoxicated, embracing a men and he got so absorbed by this incident. Then he started meditating on this incident and because of this he abandoned the brahminical culture, he forgot the virtues of spirituality and he got entrapped into sinful life.

So, the important thing is that the mind is needed to be controlled. In the third chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā, Arjuna had asked Kṛṣṇa, “How does one indulge in the sinful act unwillingly” and Kṛṣṇa replied that it is lust only which is the all devouring enemy of the living entity and which is always burning like fire and is never satisfied. That is the power of lust.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, there is another story of King Yayāti. This King Yayāti had the opportunity to indulge in unrestricted sense enjoyment for 10,000 years but still he was not satisfied and then he said, “I am like a lusty goat.” Śrīla Prabhupāda used to give example of a lusty goat. The goats are waiting to be slaughtered and when they have an opportunity to indulge in sense gratification, they would do it not realizing that in few minutes they are going to be slaughtered. But this King Yayāti had the opportunity for 10,000 years but in the end he was still not satisfied. So the great sages have told us that lust is our greatest enemy and Kṛṣṇa also confirms this in the Bhagavad-gītā.

Someone may say, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is topmost scripture but why this undesirable talk explained in great details. Because it knows that this is the greatest enemy and through these real life stories it is reminding us that even some of the powerful persons like Ajāmila, Saubhari Muni and King Bharata got distracted from the spiritual path. Because they got obsessed with something undesirable. So where are we? If we are not alert and careful then we can also be easily trapped by the illusory energy. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda in his commentary on these verses points out that lust is very difficult to overcome but one who is practicing Kṛṣṇa Consciousness can easily overcome it.

THE ETERNAL ENEMY

Kṛṣṇa says that lust is the eternal enemy of living entity and where is it situated? In the mind, intelligence, and senses. The mind, intelligence, and senses are the sitting places of this enemy known as lust. In other words, in mind, intelligent, and senses, lust is exerting its influence. Kṛṣṇa says curb this enemy, how do you curb this enemy? You curb this enemy with what? With the weapon of knowledge and how do you get knowledge? By reading the Bhāgavatam.

There is an example of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He was angry with His mother because she had anger against Advaita Ācārya. So she was the Lord's mother, still she was not exempted. Lord Caitanya wanted to show by this example that even if my mother commits *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, she will not be pardoned. So through these examples we are getting a lesson. And we should take advantage. Kṛṣṇa says that the mind, intelligence, and senses are the sitting places of this enemy known as lust and with the weapon of knowledge we can destroy or control the influence of this enemy and it is very important that the mind does not contemplate the joys of material life rather it contemplates and meditates on the spiritual subject matters.

If the mind contemplates and meditates on sense enjoyment then there is a good chance that it will also be instigated to act in that mentality and if we act in that mentality the spiritual life gets ruined. Therefore, it is very much important that we control the mind from the beginning. That is why in the sixth chapter of the

Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa discusses this topic and again in the eighth chapter he discusses in great length. In the sixth chapter Kṛṣṇa says make friends with the mind and don't let mind be your enemy. So when is the mind considered to be a friend? For a materialist, friendship of the mind means sense enjoyment; for a spiritualist, friendship means when the mind is acting, thinking, feeling the importance of instructions of the śāstras and guru. Then the mind is your friend and when the mind is thinking of the opposite *vikarmic* activities that are detrimental to the spiritual advancement in that case the mind is your enemy. Kṛṣṇa says for one who has controlled the mind the Supersoul is really pleased and for such a person happiness and distress, victory and defeat, honor and dishonor are all the same.

The Goswāmīs of Vṛndāvana were at one time holding one of the most important positions in the society. They were running the kingdoms of the richest monarch of that time. As you know that Rūpa Goswāmī decided to retire from government service he had so many gold coins that the whole boat was full. But when he lived in Vṛndāvana he lived a life of mendicant, he would do *mādhukarī*, sleep under different tree every night and he had no complaints because his mind was totally absorbed with devotional activities.

Similarly Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, his father was millionaire. In one lecture Prabhupāda says that he had over one million gold coins. He was a very rich person and his parents had given all the opulence to their son but his desire was to engage in the service of Caitanya

Mahāprabhu and he gave up all this opulence. Actually Raghunātha dāsa had a strong desire to be with Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his parents were in very much anxiety even though they were devotees. They didn't want him to leave home. So in order to trap him in home they got him married to the most beautiful girl of that time but that also could not hold him back. Every day Raghunātha would try to leave home and his father had posted guards all around who would pull him back. Then one day his family guru came and along with him he left the home and joined Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Initially he was taking some alms, some aid from his father which he was using to serve the Vaiṣṇavas but later on he stopped taking anything. The same Raghunātha came to Vṛndāvana and lead austere life and he was fully satisfied.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to give an example that during Mahatma Gandhi's time there was a big lawyer in India who was financially helping Mahatma Gandhi with his freedom struggle. Then once Gandhi told him I want you and not your money. He was very attached with his material comforts. Anyway reluctantly he went and in one month he had a heart attack, he died. So if you can control the mind and senses, you will become comfortable in any condition and if you do not have control on your mind and senses then spiritual success is very difficult.

CONTROLLING THE MIND

So in the case of Ajāmila, first he saw a desirable activity and he started meditating on that activity, and as he started meditating on that activity he got attached to

that activity and as he got attached to that activity he started executing that activity and then when he started executing that activity, his brahminical culture, upbringing was all thrown out. He abandoned his family and he became grossly sinful man using all his inherited wealth just trying to keep his prostitute wife happy.

So for a spiritualist we need to engage our mind and there are various ways how we can control the mind. We were discussing the other day about meditating on the glories of the holy name; we were discussing the other day Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, meditating on the Kṛṣṇa's instructions in the Bhagavad-gītā, meditating on Kṛṣṇa's desire just like Prahlāda Mahārāja. Prahlāda Mahārāja was always thinking of Kṛṣṇa's desire; Kṛṣṇa's desire is to claim the conditioned souls back to Godhead. So this *viṣṇu smaraṇam* is very important for a spiritualist. In the Bhagavad-gītā sixth chapter, Kṛṣṇa points out the importance of controlling the mind but there Arjuna also declares certain characteristics of the mind "cañcalam hi manah kṛṣṇa". Arjuna explains that the mind is restless. Is that right? Is that true for us also? Our mind is restless. The mind is turbulent. More difficult to control than the hurricane, it is more difficult to control than the wind. It is very obstinate. You have heard that this is wrong, this is right but you still keep doing what is wrong. It is very obstinate. So what do you do? It is very restless, it is turbulent, it is obstinate, more difficult to control than the wind, and this statement is given by none else but Arjuna 5,000 years ago. Today we expect our mind to be in a much worse condition but Kṛṣṇa does say that by practicing the regulative principles of bhakti-yoga, you

can control the mind. So just like Kṛṣṇa says, “*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā*.” To overcome this illusory energy of mine is very difficult. So someone may say Kṛṣṇa says it is difficult then what hope do we have? Why should we even attempt to control the mind and senses? Kṛṣṇa says that illusory energy is very powerful. He says like that, so should we just give up? But what does he say in the next line? In the next line he says, “*mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*.” If you surrender to me then even though it is difficult you will overcome. Why Kṛṣṇa says, “*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru*.” Because Kṛṣṇa knows that even though the mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate but if you adopt proper means then you will be able to think of the Lord, worship the Lord, and pay homage to Him. So this mind will be great.

So it is not that these undesirable thoughts would not come but we should not flirt with them. When the thoughts come, reject them right away; not that you flirt with them. Flirt means beginning to contemplate. Whatever you contemplate seriously, like in the case of Ajāmilā, then there is a good chance that you will get attracted to it. So if you cannot control the mind it is compared to sitting on an unbridled horse because sitting on the horse if you do not have control then at anytime you can be thrown off the horse. So the spiritualists advice that you must control the mind and the question is how to control the mind and it is very clearly explained.

Śrīla Prabhupāda makes these points in the purport that the mind can be controlled by the practice of bhakti-yoga. By practicing the process of bhakti-yoga,

you can control the mind. Just like Rūpa Goswāmī says that initially there is a desire that I wish to succeed on the spiritual path and if the desire is there then the Lord sends you the appropriate association; that is *sādhusāṅga* and when you have the appropriate association you get the right knowledge. Then you take advantage of the process of *bhajana-kriyā*. *Bhajana-kriyā* includes the process of *sādhana-bhakti*, chanting of rounds, etc. When you follow this system of *bhajana-kriyā* then what happens? What is the next stage? *Anartha-nivṛitti*. When your mind is not engaged positively, it is engaged negatively and negatively means being impressed by the *anarthas*. So this lust, greed, anger, and envy these are all *anarthas* and they have a powerful influence. Rūpa Goswāmī explains that by the process of *bhajana-kriyā*, these *anarthas* can be eliminated. And it is called *anartha-nivṛitti*. *Nivṛitti* means destroy and *anartha* means that which is unnecessary, undesirable. So *anarthas* are not very necessary. Just like sometimes you go to your doctor and your doctor says you don't eat meat! How can you live without meat? How can you live without that? But we can see practically that we lead a very happy life without meats and eggs. So some people say, "How can you live without lust, anger, and greed? How is this possible?" It is possible only by the power of devotional service. So *bhajana-kriyā* is the key for spiritual advancement. *Bhajana-kriyā* means good *sādhana*, chanting of your rounds, studying the scriptures, associating with devotees, engaging in devotional activities. If we are engaged in these activities then these *anarthas* can be eliminated and mind can be controlled.

NAVADHA BHAKTI

Prahlāda Mahārāja reveals the nine-fold process of devotional service that he first heard from the sage Nārada. When Hiranyaśaśipu was performing austerities in the mountains, Prahlāda was in his mother's womb and the demigods were already experiencing great distress because Hiranyaśaśipu was a very powerful demon, not an ordinary one. He had the power to perform extreme austerities. For example, he wanted to get benediction that he could become immortal he was standing on his toes with his hands raised to the sky and for hundred celestial years he did not take even a drop of water. Hiranyaśaśipu did it for hundred celestial years. Six months of our earthly years equal to 12 hours of celestial time. For hundred celestial years, he did not take a drop of water. His whole body was full of ants, his body virtually became an ant-hill still he was not disturbed. So the demigods were thinking that Śrīmatī Hiranyaśaśipu (Kayādhu) was going to deliver another demon baby and Nārada Muni assured them that the child in the womb of the lady is not going to be a demoniac personality but a saintly one. Then demigods believed so and Prahlāda's mother was given shelter in Nārada Muni's Ashram. So Nārada Muni instructed her on the principles of Bhakti. This is Nārada Muni's contribution. And Prahlāda when he was in his mother's womb he heard it. Prahlāda's father could never understand from where Prahlāda got this knowledge. He would accuse his teachers—"Saṅda" and "Amarka." They would say we have not taught may be Vaiṣṇavas are coming in a disguise and brainwashing your son.

So when Prahlāda's father asked him very politely, manifesting parental affection, what is the best thing you learnt in school? What did Prahlāda reveal? He revealed the nine-fold process of devotional service which is *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *viṣṇu smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, and then *arcanaṁ*, *vandanam*, *dāsyam*, *sakhyam*, *ātmā-nivedanam*. So *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam* first and then *smaraṇam*. In other words hearing and chanting. So Prabhupāda in many of his purports says, "Attentive hearing of Kṛṣṇa-kathā and the holy name will enable us to do *viṣṇu smaraṇam* and it controls the mind. And controlling the mind does not mean your mind becomes inactive. Some people think that you are bringing the mind to a stage of inactiveness. No, mind has to be active, if not engaged positively it will be engaged negatively, if not engaged negatively then it will be engaged positively. Your mind has to be engaged, it cannot remain unengaged. The Yogis will claim and advertise, close your eyes and mind will be controlled. But the mind is very active and therefore we should engage mind positively.

A power tool that will help us to control the mind is *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*. So you should hear and whatever you hear, you will act. And what you act and hear, you will think. Let's say you meet old friend, he talks about familiar acquaintances, you also think about it. Isn't it? They say out of sight, out of mind. So if you discuss something, it will come into your mind. You are chanting the holy name, discussing Kṛṣṇa-kathā, hearing Kṛṣṇa-kathā then your mind will also meditate in that direction. So *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam* are paramount if you wish to control the mind and if the mind wants to do something undesirable,

pull it back! Just like when a child is attempting to cross the road, somebody would run and pull the child back. So if the mind wanders, don't flow with the mind but pull it back. Therefore, with determination mind can be brought under control.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to say, every morning when you get up, what should you do? Take your shoes and beat your mind. And every night when you go to sleep, take a broom, and beat your mind. Every morning we have to remind ourselves, I am not going to listen to you, I am going to listen to a purified mind, purified mind of Vyāsa deva and his representative. So once you made the decision that I am not going to listen to your contaminated thoughts and I am only going to listen to a purified mind then that will help you in accepting what is conducive and avoiding what is detrimental.

In case you are wondering why Bhāgavatam is discussing Ajāmila story, why is it discussing the fall down of Saubhari Muni, why is it discussing story of Yayāti, why is it discussing story of King Bharata? Bhāgavatam is there to enlighten us and guide us on the path back to Godhead. Vyāsadeva was aware of all the obstacles we would meet. So by pointing out through these stories that how great sages departed or got misdirected, we should get benefited. So we see that even these great sages get distracted, misdirected, or cheated. Anyone can be cheated by the mind, therefore, we always have to be very careful. We should always think that I am not going to be cheated and the only way we are not going to be cheated means engaging the mind positively, think about the instructions given by Vyāsa deva and his representatives regarding how to control the mind.

THE SWEETNESS OF THE HOLY NAME

In spiritual life the problem is identified and the solution is presented, that is the unique feature of spiritual life. Just like Rūpa Goswāmī says that the holy names of the Lord are sweet like sugar candy but because the tongue is inflicted with the disease of *avidyā* we can't taste the sweetness of the holy name. So that is the problem. The holy name is sweet, but we have no attraction to it. He says that one can develop attraction just by constantly and attentively chanting the holy name and then *avidyā* disease would get cured.

Then once again we will be able to appreciate the sweetness of the holy name. So similarly the Bhāgavatam and the Bhagavad-gītā, they are identifying the problem that is the uncontrollable, turbulent, and restless mind but then they are also giving you the solution which is practicing the process of bhakti-yoga which will enable you to control the mind. So if you don't take advantage then that is your foolishness your misfortune but one who is intelligent, takes advantage. And even in today's modern day environment, the society has become so sinful; their sinful activities are openly visible on the streets. You have thousands of devotees executing Kṛṣṇa Consciousness without much difficulty because they are following the advice given by the great sages. So this advice can be taken advantage by all of us and our endeavor should be to engage our mind positively and as it is said, "God helps those, who help themselves." If we seriously endeavor and specially take to hearing and *kirtanam* then we will be able to control the turbulent mind.

CHAPTER FIVE



THE RIPENED FRUIT

*namah pramāṇa-mūlāya
kavaye śāstra-yonaye
pravṛttāya nivṛttāya
nigamāya namo namah*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.16.44)

We offer our obeisances again and again to You, who are the basis of all authoritative evidence, who are the author and ultimate source of the revealed scriptures, and who have manifested Yourself in those Vedic literatures encouraging sense gratification as well as in those encouraging renunciation of the material world.

If we did not have the powers of perception and cognition, evidence could not be transmitted, and if we had no tendency to believe in particular modes of evidence, persuasion could not take place. All of these processes—perception, cognition, persuasion and transmission—take place through the various potencies of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is Himself the greatest scholar and intellectual being. He manifests the transcendental scriptures within the hearts of great devotees like Brahmā and Nārada, and in addition He incarnates as Vedavyāsa,

the compiler of all Vedic knowledge. In multifarious ways the Lord generates a variety of religious scriptures, which gradually bring the conditioned souls through the various phases of re-entry into the kingdom of God.

PURIFYING THE POLLUTION OF SOUND

So the Nāgapatnīs are continuing to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this chapter you are reading about Kṛṣṇa subduing and chastising the serpent Kāliya. So in the Tenth Canto, we get exposed to Kṛṣṇa childhood pastimes and the nature of these pastimes is the more you hear the more you feel like hearing. Just like Parīkṣit Mahārāja was hearing the pastimes. He heard how Kṛṣṇa killed Dhenuka and other demons and he became even more curious to hear about Kṛṣṇa pastimes of subduing Kāliya. The nature of the spiritual subject matter is that you feel the freshness every time you hear. One accusation that the materialist people often make is— you people are brain washed. You chant the same mantra again and again, you do not get tired. You read the same books again and again you do not get tired; rather we feel the freshness when we chant the holy name and when we hear this pastimes.

Now Nārada Muni gives an example in the Fourth Canto; he says that just like every morning, we breathe fresh air and we never say, “Oh! this is stale air!” We feel the freshness of the air every day, isn’t it? It never occurs to you that I have been experiencing this air for so many years since my birth, now it’s stale, I do not want this. We have been eating *prasādam* every day, but we still feel the taste of *prasādam*. Now, suppose you are making

nice feast for the Rath Yatra, people are not going to say that we have had this several times and we don't want to eat anymore. You feel the appetite and the taste when you experience it. So similarly the nature of the spiritual sound is that when you hear you feel like hearing more and more and the power of spiritual sound is that it purifies the heart. These days people are very much worried about the contamination of the air or the pollution of the air. Why? The main reason is the polluted air or polluted environment results in bad health and bad health results in inability for sense enjoyment. So everybody wants to avoid pollution but there is such deep pollution of the sound and that no one is talking about. All the radio stations, TV stations, etc., they all are engaged in nothing but mundane broadcast. So what we need to do is purify the pollution of the sound which can be purified by transcendental vibration of the spiritual sound.

KĀLIYA-DAMAN

So Kāliya was a very powerful serpent. It was in one of the lakes that Yamuna river and the poison emanating from the Kāliya serpent was so powerful even the birds when they would fly above, just by smelling, will collapse and die. Kṛṣṇa when He appears, He does not perform any ordinary activities. These days you have people who claim to be Bhagavān but they are engaged in mundane ordinary work. When Kṛṣṇa appears He performs superhuman activities—*janma karma ca me divyam*. So here Kṛṣṇa is displaying another of His super human ability. He was just a young boy; He jumped off the kadamba tree and fell right on the hood of the Kāliya serpent. It is said that due to Kāliya's poison, all the trees on the bank had collapsed;

the only tree that had not collapsed was this *kadamba* tree and this *kadamba* tree is still there if you go on Vṛndāvana *parikramā*.

The sages have reported that because Kṛṣṇa was going to reveal His transcendental pastimes with this *kadamba* tree, therefore nothing happened to this tree. So Kṛṣṇa, before He jumped on the Kāliya serpent, what did He do? He tightened His belt like wrestlers. I do not know if they do it here in the west but they do that in India. The wrestlers when they enter the arena, they take their hands and slap their arms. So Kṛṣṇa also did that, tightened His belt, slapped His arms to show—“Now I am getting ready for a fight.” Kṛṣṇa was initially wrapped in Kāliya’s coil but then Kṛṣṇa saw that all these Vrajavāsīs, His dear devotees, they were almost fainting. Kṛṣṇa Himself would be put into dangers on many occasions and that will greatly increase the anxiety of the devotees and then when Kṛṣṇa would see that His devotee’s anxiety has increased, He would then crush the opponent.

Just like in the battle, in the fight between one of His incarnation as Nṛsiṁha Deva and Hiraṇyakaśipu, at times it appeared that Hiraṇyakaśipu was going to be victorious and the demigods who were watching this *līlā* of the Lord would go an intense depression when they would see that Hiraṇyakaśipu had the upper hand but then Kṛṣṇa would finally defeat the opponent with perfect ease. So over here also we see that Kṛṣṇa was wrapped in Kāliya’s coil, the Vrajavāsīs like Nanda Mahārāja, Yaśodā Mātā, when they saw their beloved Kṛṣṇa’s life in danger, they almost fainted. There was only one personality who was not concerned and that was Balarāma. Balarāma knew

that my brother is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and no one can harm Him, no one can defeat Him, no one is equal to Him. But the others because of *yogamāyā*'s potency were unable to recognize it and when Kṛṣṇa saw that His devotees are in great anxiety then He expanded Himself.

Once He started expanding Himself then Kāliya, the serpent, had to release Him. It was almost impossible for him to hold on to the Lord in his coil. For Kṛṣṇa to expand Himself is not difficult. When the Lord incarnated as Vāmana deva, Trivikrama, or Urukrama and He went to the sacrifice of Bali Mahārāja and Bali Mahārāja gave Him assurance that he will give Him enough land where He can keep three footsteps. Initially when Bali Mahārāja heard this request, he was surprised. He said that one do not go to a big man and ask him for such a small gift; one should ask him for something more. But Vāmana deva was disguised as brāhmaṇa beggar. He said, "If one does not control his mind and senses, even if you give him the wealth of the whole world, he will not be satisfied and the one who can control his mind and senses, he will be satisfied in any situation." That is true. You see unlimited rich people and they are endeavoring for more and more. So Vāmana deva expanded His body and with the first step He covered everything on the earth and with the second step He covered everything right from the ground to Satyaloka and above. So for Lord to expand, it is not inconceivable or difficult. Over here, Kṛṣṇa was wrapped in Kāliya's coil, but Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself so heavily that he had no choice but to release Him and then Kṛṣṇa drove the Kāliya serpent away.

A PRAYER BOOK

So the Nāgapatnīs are the wives of the Kāliya serpent and the Nāgapatnīs were Vaiṣṇavas. They were devotees of Kṛṣṇa. They were previously telling their husband, “Surrender to Kṛṣṇa, He is the Supreme Lord.” And Kāliya would say, “No!” Kāliya was offensive but the wives knew that Kṛṣṇa is Supreme. Just like in today’s environment some of the husbands come to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, the wives do not and the wives come the husbands do not. These Nāgapatnīs were fully convinced Vaiṣṇavas. They were very unhappy that their husband would not surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When they saw that Kāliya was almost dead—after all Kṛṣṇa was dancing on his hood, so he had fainted—their desire was that their husband may not die, that they may not become widows. They began to offer very wonderful prayers that you are reading in this section of the Bhāgavatam and I said the other day that the Bhāgavatam is nothing but a prayer book in which different devotees in choicest language are offering different prayers.

So what Nāgapatnīs are saying in these verses? In text 42 and 43, they acknowledge that the Supreme Lord is the source of all, and the living entity when he comes in contact with the material modes he becomes conditioned by the modes and he loses his vision for self realization. The living entity, when he comes in contact with modes he gets entangled in various materialistic activities. Just like a drop of rain water, the rain water is pure till it hits the earth, isn’t it? If you catch the rain water on your roof top you will get it in pure form but when you lift it from the earth, it is already contaminated because it

has touched the earth. So similarly the scriptures explain that the living entity when he comes in contact with material nature, he comes in contact with material modes and he gets entangled and he can free himself from this entanglement only as a result of a spiritual association.

THE MOST POWERFUL PRAYER

So in this verse, with the purport, the Nāgapatnīs are saying, “We offer our respectful obeisances again and again unto You.” So a devotee offers respect to the Lord again and again—*namah pramāṇa-mūlāya*—here, *mūlāya* means “to the basis.” So I am offering my obeisances to you again and again. So we should also be in the mood of offering obeisances to the Lord again and again. One way to offer obeisances is the way we offer obeisances; we bow down and so on. Another way to offer obeisances is what you see in the scriptures, that is, glorifying the Supreme Lord. Therefore, you see so many prayers—prayers by Queen Kuntī, prayers over here by Nāgapatnīs, prayers by Lord Brahma, prayers by Lord Indra, etc. So these devotees, these exalted devotees are glorifying the Supreme Lord’s unlimited transcendental qualities and rather than compose our own prayers we can repeat these prayers or if you think that I am not a Sanskrit pandit, I can’t memorize these prayers, then you can read the translation. If you can’t even do that, no problem, just keep chanting the “Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahamantra.” This “Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahamantra” is without doubt the most powerful prayer and a prayer that almost everyone can memorize in one second.

SOURCE AND COMPILER

So the devotees, they are anxious to offer obeisances to the Lord and further it says here, "...You, who are the basis of all authoritative evidence..." So who is the author and unlimited source of the revealed scriptures? The Supreme Lord is the source of all the revealed scriptures—*vāsudeva-parā vedā, vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ*.” So ‘Vāsudeva’ is the source of all the Vedic knowledge and why this Vedic knowledge is considered so perfect? Because it is emanating from the perfect source, the Vedic knowledge is emanating from the Supreme Lord. You read the Bhagavad-gītā even today and if you ask an ordinary man he will probably tell you that Bhagavad-gītā was 5,000 years old. But the Bhagavad-gītā dates back to the time when Kṛṣṇa spoke this knowledge to the Sun God ‘Vivasvān.’

In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, there are stories that date back to 30,000–40,000 years. Just like in the Sixth Canto of the Bhāgavatam, Parīkṣit Mahārāja had enquired that how I can give up this sinful tendency. Parīkṣit Mahārāja said that I am not interested in a process by which I sin and atone and he gave the example of an elephant who takes a bath in the lake becomes clean then he steps out of the lake sits down for a minute and becomes dirty again. So Parīkṣit Mahārāja says, “What is the value of a process or religion which does not cleanse the heart rather we are just sinning and atoning.” Then Śukadeva Goswāmī said that I have heard in the ‘Purāṇas’ that thousands of years ago, there was a brāhmaṇa called ‘Ajāmila’ and he reveals the story of Ajāmila. So the story of Ajāmila is not 5,000 years old; 5,000 years ago Śukadeva Goswāmī explained it

to Parīkṣit Mahārāja and explaining that this process took place thousands of years before 5,000 years ago. So this is there to show you that what you read in Bhāgavatam is not fiction or imaginary or mythology, it is real life stories that took place, thousands and thousands of years ago.

Supreme Lord is presenting it for our knowledge, for our enlightenment. So it is being stated here that the Supreme Lord is the source of all the revealed scriptures and then Prabhupāda explains in the purport that the Supreme Lord incarnated as whom? Vyāsa deva, to present these scriptures.

TWO TYPES OF WAYS

Here it says that You have manifested Yourself in Vedic literatures encouraging sense gratification as well as encouraging renunciation of the material world. So we have *pravritti marg* and *nivritti marg*. *Pravritti marg* encourages sense gratification in the sense that it does not encourage sinful sense gratification but it does permit sense gratification provided you also follow certain religious principles. But this sense gratification is exempted and the purpose is that at least by following *pravritti marg*, eventually you get purified and at least you are linking yourself to the Supreme. When you are on the *pravritti marg* at least you realize that if I want this sense gratification I must at least please the Lord, I must at least do this *yajña*, I must at least do that. Just like you have people going to holy places of pilgrimages in India doing charity. They are doing this activity of charity or austerity in relationship to the Lord but the goal is that I must get some sense enjoyment also, some name, fame, recognition also.

Now Vyāsa deva presents the Vedas in which he had this knowledge about *pravritti marg* and Vyāsa deva was sitting on the bank of the river ‘Sarasvatī’ meditating, “I have compiled all this vast literature summarizing the Vedanta Sutra but still I feel that there is something lacking in my contribution.” Just like sometimes you do something and you still not feel full satisfaction. So he said there is something lacking and then Nārada Muni appeared on the scene. ‘Nārada’ means one who is always delivering ‘Nārāyaṇa’ and Nārada Muni always has the reputation of showing up at the right time and the right place. So Nārada Muni explained to Vyāsa deva that the reason for his dissatisfaction is that he has not exclusively presented the path of *nivritti* or renunciation. He has presented the path of *pravritti marg*, he has presented the path by which one can engage in sense enjoyment and religious activity at the same time but he has not encouraged the path of compete renunciation or pure devotional service. And hence, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was compiled by Śrīla Vyāsa deva *nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalm* the ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge. Prabhupāda explains that this is ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge which means this is a mature fruit of Vedic knowledge and this mature fruit is being passed down through the chain of disciplic succession. Prabhupāda gives this example, if the fruit from the top of a tree is passed down through individuals on different branches then by the time when fruit reaches the ground, it will be intact. If on the other hand, a fruit is thrown from the top of the tree then it will hit the ground and break. So, similarly if we are fortunate enough to hear this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from a bonafide devotee of the Lord, who is coming in disciplic succession then you will receive the message as it is.

So the Vedas do permit you limited sense gratification also but as long as you are engaged in limited sense gratification also you will not be able to enter into the kingdom of God and then you may say, "Why do the Vedas encourage that?" The Vedas, I would say permitted because at that time Vyāsa deva knew that people are not ready for complete renunciation so let me connect them in some way to the Lord, at least some way they will be connected to the Lord and Vyāsa deva then complied the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

THE RIPENED FRUIT

What is the difference between Bhāgavatam and other Vedic literature? One difference is that Bhāgavatam only talks about pure devotional service. Bhāgavatam does not in any way encourage sense gratification as a goal or a side goal of life. Bhāgavatam is encouraging complete surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Bhāgavatam presents the philosophy and then presents the stories. About the Bhāgavatam, I often tell devotees that it is nothing but a story book. People who like to read a story book should read the Bhāgavatam. There are stories with a spiritual message. So Vyāsa deva presented the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge and in the opening verses of the Bhāgavatam it is said, *nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam*" This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam completely rejects the principle of utilizing dharma for the purpose of what? For sense gratification. It completely rejects taking the religion *dharma, artha, kāma*, and *mokṣa*. I want religion but through religion I want to make money and through money I want sense enjoyment and if sense enjoyment cannot satisfy me then I want *mokṣa*, liberation.

So this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam instead profoundly says, “*savai_puṁsāṁ paro dharmo, yato bhaktir adhoksaje, ahaituky apratihata, yayātmā suprasidati.*” The self can only be satisfied if you render unmotivated devotional service to the Lord—‘Paro Dharmo.’ If you are approaching the Lord with motivation then you cannot be satisfied. This is also confirmed in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta—*kṛṣṇa-bhakta-niṣkāma, ataeva ‘śānta’, bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī-sakali ‘aśānta’*. The devotees of the Lord who approach with *niṣkāma bhava* are satisfied in any situation and in contrast the other so called transcendentalists who want to merge with the Lord, who want yogic perfections, etc., are never satisfied.

So it is being said by the Nāgapatnīs, the Nāgapatnīs are appealing to the Lord with choicest ślokas; they are trying to pacify the Lord so that the Lord may bring back their husband Kāliya into consciousness. So Nāgapatnīs are very nicely glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead and further it is said here that the Lord incarnates and he inspires great personalities like Brahma, Nārada, etc., with spiritual knowledge. Sometimes people think that Brahma is the creator and they give Brahma the credit but Brahma himself says, “I am only the secondary creator.” That means based on the inspiration, direction, and plan given by the Lord, he creates. So Brahma and Nārada are all subordinate to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord inspired Brahma with transcendental knowledge and as a result Brahma then composed the great ‘Brahma-saṁhitā’ which describes the various transcendental qualities of the Lord.

SUMMARY

So to summarize, Kṛṣṇa is a source of Vedic knowledge and Kṛṣṇa has given us the path of sense enjoyment or *pravritti marg* and the path of *nivritti* and we can make a choice. But in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from the very inception, the concept of religion for sense enjoyment is being rejected and from the 1st verse to the 18,000th verse, the Bhāgavatam is just talking about pure devotional service as a means to satisfy the Lord.

Bhāgavatam gives the story of Dhruva Mahārāja to show how Dhruva Mahārāja even though he initially sent out for the forest to practice meditation with what goal? A goal to obtain a kingdom greater than his father, grandfather and great grandfather but by performing austerities and chanting “*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*” mantra he got so purified that when the Lord manifested Himself in front of Him and Lord said, “Dhruva, now ask Me what benediction you want.” What did Dhruva say? “My Lord, I was looking for broken cut glass and now I have found diamond.” So he rejected that. So a devotee is fully satisfied by pure devotional service. ‘Caitanya Bhāgavata’ describes a devotee called ‘Kolaveca Śrīdhara.’ This Kolaveca Śrīdhara had a very small business of selling bananas and he was so dedicated that he would spend half of his income in worshipping the Ganges and he would be engaged full-time in chanting the holy name. In fact his neighbors would say, “This man can’t sleep in the night and he does not let us sleep. The whole night he would say “*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.*” He was so loud that his neighbors were all being disturbed and they would say that this man looks like a

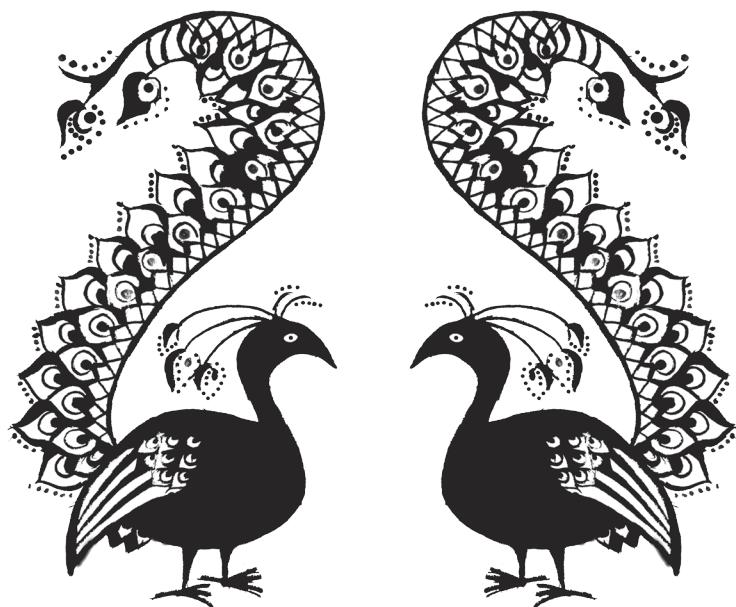
ghostly and haunted person; he does not have food to eat so he is making our sleep unbearable. Lord Caitanya would every day come to his shop and bargain with him. He had a residence of one room with no roof in it and he only had one pot in his whole house and that pot was also in such a poor condition that Caitanya Bhāgavata states that even a thief would not want to steal it. Normally, a thief do not spare anything. It means it was so beaten up that even a thief would have realized that he can't get much value out of that. So this Kolaveca Śrīdhara was once offered a benediction by Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya was revealing His transcendental form and He called five of his confidential devotees and He told Kolaveca Śrīdhara, "Please ask me for any benediction that you want." Kolaveca Śrīdhara said, "My dear Lord, I do not want any benediction, if you want to give me benediction then give me the benediction that in every birth you will come to my shop and bargain with me." So Dhruva Mahārāja also, when he was able to have an audience with the Lord as a result of his austerity, what did Dhruva say, he said, "I was looking for broken cut glass but now I have founded diamond, so now I am fully satisfied." So pure devotional service is that diamond that if you embark on the path of pure devotional service, then you will be satisfied in all conditions but if on the other hand you are approaching religion with motivation, if on the other hand you want *pravritti marg* then you will never be satisfied. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja has said, "kṛṣṇa-bhakta-niṣkāma, ataeva 'śānta', bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī-sakali 'aśānta'." There are some who want *mukti*, some want yogic perfection but through these paths you will never be satisfied.

So to summarize today's verse, the Nāgapatnīs are continuing to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this verse the Nāgapatnīs have acknowledged that the Supreme Lord is the source of all authoritative evidence, he is the author of the revealed scriptures.

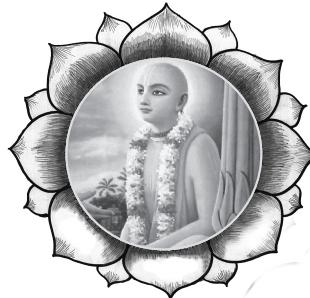
So when we talk about śāstra, 'śāstra' means the words of God. Śāstra is not something that any person can reveal and claim these are words of God. Śāstra strictly means the words of God, and as you have heard many times, śāstra means free of the four material defects. Śāstra means the words of God, and knowledge in the śāstra is not bound by time; therefore, it is also called *sanātana-dharma*. We cannot take scriptures and say this is bound by time; this was true 5,000 years ago but is not true today. We can't say this was practical in some parts of the world, it is not practical here. Prabhupāda has established the Vedic culture in almost every corner of the globe and shown how even in today's modern day environment this culture, this literature can be put into practice.

So the Nāgapatnīs are pleading to the Lord, "Please be kind on our husband," and after hearing the wonderful offering from the Nāgapatnīs, the Lord was very pleased and the Lord said, "Ok!" Kāliya also came back to consciousness. Kṛṣṇa said he can stay but he has to go away from this area because the Lord did not want to pollute the atmosphere of Vṛndāvana. He wanted his cows and calves to be free, to go anywhere and drink water. The Lord was very pleased by the prayers of these Nāgapatnīs and it is said that anybody who hears from this pastime of Kṛṣṇa subduing Kāliya, what will happen? He will be blessed with love of God and will become free

of sinful reactions. So we should hear these stories, hear them attentively and that will help us to make spiritual progress.



CHAPTER SIX



PURIFYING OUR EXISTENCE

*brahmovāca
vācāṁ vahner mukhaṁ kṣetram
chandasāṁ sapta dhātavāḥ
havya-kavyāmṛtānnānāṁ
jihvā sarva-rasasya ca*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.1)

Lord Brahmā said: The mouth of the virāṭ-puruṣa [the universal form of the Lord] is the generating center of the voice, and the controlling deity is fire. His skin and six other layers are the generating centers of the Vedic hymns, and His tongue is the productive center of different foodstuffs and delicacies for offering to the demigods, the forefathers, and the general mass of people.

The opulences of the universal form of the Lord are described herein. It is said that His mouth is the generating center of all kinds of voices, and its controlling deity is the fire demigod. And His skin and other six layers of bodily construction are the representative generating centers of the seven kinds of Vedic hymns, like the Gāyatrī. Gāyatrī is the beginning of all Vedic mantras, and it is explained in the first volume of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Since the generating centers are the different parts of

the universal form of the Lord, and since the form of the Lord is transcendental to the material creation, it is to be understood that the voice, the tongue, the skin, etc., suggest that the Lord in His transcendental form is not without them. The material voice, or the energy of taking in foodstuff, is generated originally from the Lord; such actions are but perverted reflections of the original reservoirs—the transcendental situation is not without spiritual variegatedness. In the spiritual world, all the perverted forms of material variegatedness are fully represented in their original spiritual identity. The only difference is that material activities are contaminated by the three modes of material nature, whereas the potencies in the spiritual world are all pure because they are engaged in the unalloyed transcendental loving service of the Lord. In the spiritual world, the Lord is the sublime enjoyer of everything, and the living entities there are all engaged in His transcendental loving service without any contamination of the modes of material nature. The activities in the spiritual world are without any of the ineptitudes of the material world, but there is no question of impersonal voidness on the spiritual platform, as suggested by the impersonalists. Devotional service is defined in the Nārada Pañcarātra as follows:

*sarvopādhī-vinirmuktam
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣikeṇa hṛṣikeśa-
sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate*

[Cc. Madhya 19.170]

Originally, since all the senses are produced of the Lord's reservoir of senses, the sensual activities of the material

world are to be purified by the process of devotional service, and thus the perfection of life can be attained simply by purifying the present position of our material activities. And the purifying process begins from the stage of being liberated from the conception of different designations. Every living entity is engaged in some sort of service, either for the self, or for the family, or for the society, country, etc., but, unfortunately, all such services are rendered due to material attachment. The attachments of the material affinity may be simply changed to the service of the Lord, and thus the treatment of being freed from material attachment begins automatically. The process of liberation is therefore easier through devotional service than by any other methods for, in the Bhagavad-gītā (12.5) it is said that one is subjected to various kinds of tribulations if one is impersonally attached: *kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām avyaktāsakta-cetasām*.

THE BASIC THEME

Here Lord Brahmā is speaking to the great sage Nārada. In the previous chapter, it has been established by Lord Brahmā that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes and prior to that chapter the process of creation was also explained. And from the seventh chapter, various incantations of the Lord would be described by Lord Brahmā.

This chapter, *Puruṣa-sūkta* is highly technical and therefore to make it simple, easy to understand we read from the Śrila Prabhupāda's purport. He has greatly simplified the translation and presented the essence in very simple language. So the basic theme of this chapter is that the Lord in the ultimate sense is a person and the

universal form of the Lord defeats the impersonal concept and the form of the Lord is always transcendental.

THE FAKE TEST

In the Bhagavad-gītā, we read about the universal form of the Lord. Actually, Arjuna knew that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord; he was never in doubt about the Supreme position of Kṛṣṇa. But Arjuna also knew that in the future there will be many imposters, who may claim to be incarnations of God and they may be tested by asking if they can display the universal form, and obviously they will not be able to do it. Arjuna wanted to establish that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Lord, not just because He is saying this, not because the great sages have established that; but also because when Kṛṣṇa appears He performs super-human activities.

“Just like, three years ago I was taking part in a dialogue and one of the Swamis came up and said, Why do people say that there is only one Kṛṣṇa, we can all become Kṛṣṇa. Why do you say there is only one Kṛṣṇa and no more.” So I replied that when Kṛṣṇa came, he performed super-human activities, and I listed some of them and said, “Can you do it?” The Swami replied that just because we haven’t done it so far, doesn’t mean we cannot do it tomorrow. I asked him how many years he wanted before he could guarantee that he would perform such acts. And I didn’t get any further answer.

SUPREME PERSON

So Nārada Muni is being informed by Lord Brahmā that the universal form of the Lord has all the different organs that we have. We have a voice, because the Lord has a

voice. Then, the Lord is the source of the Vedic hymns. The Vedic hymns are prayers in the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord has a tongue so we also have a tongue. And it says that His tongue is capable of tasting all the foodstuffs and delicacies that are offered to the demigods and the forefathers. So the main point of this verse is that just because the Lord has a universal form doesn't mean that He does not also have a personal form. And all the different organs that we have in our bodies are there because they all exist in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As the Bible says, man is made in the image of God. So because the God has these organs, man also has these organs. The God has feelings, so we also have feelings. But the misfortune is that our senses and our feelings are misplaced.

THE SOURCE OF ALL VEDIC HYMNS

Śrīla Prabhupāda talks about the generating centre of the seven kinds of Vedic hymns in the purport, mainly the *Gāyatrī*. The *Brahma-samhitā* explains that the *Gāyatrī* mantra emanated from the flute of Kṛṣṇa and it went into the ears of Lord Brahmā. And when Lord Brahmā heard the *kama-gāyatrī*, which represents the last line of the *Gāyatrī* mantra, it gave him intense happiness and ecstasy, because it emanated from the flute that Kṛṣṇa was playing and it glorified Kṛṣṇa in His transcendental *rāsa-lilā*. And thus Brahmā started meditating on Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes and it gave him immense pleasure.

So the *kama-gāyatrī* or *Gāyatrī* mantra one should receive properly. When Lord Brahmā heard the *kama-*

gāyatrī that emanated from the flute of Kṛṣṇa, he felt as if he was twice born. He was already born from the lotus stem of the Lord, but when he heard the *kama-gāyatrī*, it gave him such intense pleasure that he felt as if he was twice born. So when one gets initiated into the chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra, it is said to be taking a second birth.

THE PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION

In the Fourth Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam you read about Nārada Muni instructing the Pracetas. The Pracetas were the sons of a king called Prācīnabarhi, and they had performed extreme charities for ten thousand years. They chanted a mantra that was given to them by Lord Shiva, and that mantra glorified the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord was also so pleased by the Pracetās that he told them that all the brothers had only one occupation, and that was devotional service.

Similarly, in ISKCON, we may be members of different *varṇas* and *āśramas*, i.e., *ghastas*, *brahmacārīs*, *vānaprasthas*, or *sannyāsis*, but our principle occupation should be devotional service to the Lord.

THE THREE TYPES OF BIRTHS

So while instructing the Pracetās on various aspects of devotional service, Nārada Muni says, “A civilized human being has three births.”

The first birth is from the womb of the mother, and this birth is called *śukra-janma*. Śaukra in Sanskrit means semen. So *śukra-janma* means birth as a result of seminal discharge. And this birth is common to both humans and

animals. So it is no big deal if you get *śukra-janma* and die. You have achieved nothing at all. It's like a waste of your life.

The second birth is realized when one gets initiated into the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahamantra, and this birth is called *sāvitra-janma*.

The third birth is realized when you get initiated into the chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra, and this birth enables you to cook for the deities.

So Nārada Muni's point is that one should take these initiations and surrender to the Lord otherwise human life is simply considered a waste.

RECEIVE MANTRA PROPERLY

In the purport, Prabhupāda is saying that the Gāyatrī mantra is the beginning of all the Vedic mantras and their purpose is to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For example, if you read the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, you will find that the different devotees and the demigods are constantly glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Similarly, you can analyze any Vedic hymn and you will find that it is a glorification of the Lord. If you read the Gāyatrī mantra that is being referred to in the purport, you will realize that it is nothing but a systematic glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Some people only chant the Gāyatrī mantra but by the Vedic processes, the Gāyatrī mantra should be received from a bona fide spiritual master at the appropriate time and then only the mantra has potency. If we just chant the Gāyatrī mantra without receiving it from an authorized

source, without due process of initiation then the mantra is not potent. It becomes potent only when it is received from an authorized source after due processes.

And in our ISKCON, the Gāyatrī mantra is given after one has chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahamantra for a certain period of time, displayed a certain level of spiritual maturity, and spiritual enlightenment in terms of knowledge of the scriptures, and then only one gets qualified to receive the Gāyatrī mantra.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Another point that is made in the purport is that in the spiritual world nothing is perverted. Everything in the spiritual world exists in the pure form, and the material world that you see is the perverted reflection of the spiritual world.

In the Third Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, there is a description of the kingdom of God and it is explained that the men and women in the spiritual world are a million times more handsome than the men and women in this material world. Someone might say that then they would all be attracted to each other, but the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains that even if the men are a million times more handsome and the ladies are also a million times more beautiful, they are not attracted to each other. Their attraction is to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And in the spiritual world, everyone is engaged in glorifying the Supreme Lord.

It is also explained in the Third Canto that there everyone has an aeroplane. Over here you have these rich people who have their private jets. So in the spiritual

world you have these aeroplanes that are decorated with diamonds, and emeralds and stones! And fortunately they never crash. So in the Third Canto, you get a good explanation of the kingdom of God.

THE MODES OF MATERIAL NATURE

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that in the material world, everything is contaminated by the three modes of material nature; goodness, passion, and ignorance. In the Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa says that when the living entity comes in contact with the material nature, he gets contaminated by the material modes. It is just like rainwater. When rainwater is falling, and you save it on your rooftop, you will probably get it in its pure form. But after it hits the earth, and you have left it, it's contaminated and muddy.

So similarly when a living entity comes in contact with material nature, he gets contaminated by the different modes. And these modes are: goodness, passion, and ignorance. The mode of goodness is superior to the mode of passion and the mode of passion is superior to the mode of ignorance.

Kṛṣṇa explains in the Bhagavad-gītā that one who is influenced by the mode of goodness, all the nine gates of his body are illuminated by transcendental knowledge. In the mode of passion, you work very hard and you want to be the enjoyer of the fruits of your labor. When a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee approaches you for a donation, you say why should I give it to you? I have worked very hard for this money, I want to enjoy it. Why should I share it with you? So in this mode you have unlimited

longings and desires and you want to be the enjoyer of it. And in the mode of ignorance, one is influenced by laziness, inaction, etc.

Kṛṣṇa further explains that as long as you are under the influence of the modes, there is always a competition going on for supremacy. And sometimes, the mode of goodness will win, the other two will lose; sometimes the mode of passion will win, the other two will lose and so on.

BEYOND GOODNESS

So Kṛṣṇa's ultimate advice is that one should promote himself beyond goodness. Beyond goodness there is a desire to serve the Lord without any deviation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that the only difference between the material activities and the activities in the spiritual world is that in the material world our actions are influenced by the different modes of nature. And one of the symptoms of these modes is that you have unlimited desire. Even in goodness, one has false concepts: "I know what's right!" "You cannot tell me anything!" But at the same time they commit all sorts of nonsense. At a certain time of the day, they will be very pious, especially in India you will see; they will do their pūjās but in the evening they will be watching T.V., movies etc.

So in the spiritual world there is only one enjoyer, the Supreme Lord. He is the sublime enjoyer of everything. And all the living entities are engaged in His transcendental loving service, free from the material modes of nature.

So, one has to serve the Lord as mentioned in the Vedic scriptures. Nārada Pañcarātra describes the essence of devotional service.

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

[Cc. Madhya 19.170]

'Bhakti, or devotional service, means engaging all our senses in the service of the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all the senses. When the spirit soul renders service unto the Supreme, there are two side effects. One is freed from all material designations, and one's senses are purified simply by being employed in the service of the Lord.'

The Lord is also known as *Hṛṣīkeśa*. *Hṛṣīkeśa* means, the proprietor of the senses. In order to free ourselves of all designations, we should engage in the service to the Lord, with our body, mind and senses. And that is the perfection of devotional service.

So, the emphasis here is that we should engage in unalloyed service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Someone might say, it is not easy to perform unalloyed devotional service. And in the seventh chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa does explain that people come to me for four reasons one is the inquisitive, one is the genuine seeker of knowledge, the third is the distressed and the fourth one who wants money. Kṛṣṇa says, these reasons don't matter to me; at least you are coming to me. He also says the best of these four is the one who comes to me desirous of knowledge. So Lord Kṛṣṇa emphasize that all four are good because they are coming to me, but the best is one who comes to me without motivation.

We may have motivations, we may have reasons, we may have different factors for coming into devotional service, but this process is so powerful and potent that

we will get purified and we will realize that the only thing that satisfies us is pure devotional service.

PURIFYING ACTION

In the last two paragraphs of this purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes the point that perfection of devotional service can be achieved simply by changing the nature of your material activities. So when you come to the spiritual process, you don't stop your other activities. It is not that if you are to base your life on the Bhagavad-gītā, or follow religious principles you will become inactive, disinterested. By coming in to spiritual life cultivating spiritual knowledge, you will see things in their right perspective, not that you renounce your genuine duties. By the instruction of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna proceeded to the battle and fought dutifully.

So, Kṛṣṇa Consciousness means-executing purifying activities. It doesn't mean you renounce everything and do *bhajan* all day. Of course, there is Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but that is not possible for everyone. So Śrīla Prabhupāda has adjusted everything in a practical way. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to make him chant 64 rounds a day. And he said, if you cannot do that, you shall be considered as fallen. When Śrīla Prabhupāda started this Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement he knew 64 rounds a day would not be practical. He also wanted to fulfill Lord Caitanya's prediction. So, knowing the realties he adjusted the instructions of the previous acāryas to make it practical for us. He says that we should purify our mind and senses and then devotional service will be easy.

ATTACHMENT TO THE POSITIVE

Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the purport that we get attached. Attachment will always be there, but we should be attached to the positive. It means serving the Lord in whatever situation we may be. And one who sees things in their right perspective will never be defeated.

In the Bhagavad-gītā second chapter, Kṛṣṇa says that for the wise man there is no lamentation, either for the living or for the dead. When we get excessively attached to the people around us and something happens to them we are grief stricken. But if we see things in the right perspective from the very beginning, and we do our duty of rendering devotional service to Kṛṣṇa then we will become free from the bondage of material attachment.

THE ĀDI-PURUṢA

Further, in the concluding lines of the purport, Prabhupāda talks about the impersonalists' concept being subordinate to the personalists' concept. In Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa is asked by Arjuna that which is superior, meditating on your personal form or meditating on your impersonal aspect. And Kṛṣṇa replies that of the two, meditating on My personal form is more superior. Meditating on the impersonal aspect is very difficult and troublesome. So the Lord is present in His *arcā-vigraha* form, just like the deities, we have on the altar.

Someone less tolerant may say that these are just statues. But the devotee knows that the Lord incarnates in His *arcā-vigraha* form. It is non-different from the Lord. The deity may be made of iron, brass, copper, but it is

not material because the deity has been carved according to the description in the scriptures and installed by a bona-fide spiritual master, with the recitation of proper mantras and *yajñas*.

So Śrīla Prabhupāda is making the point that the impersonalists' concept is subordinate to the personalists' concept. And this whole chapter's theme is to establish that the Lord in the ultimate sense is a *purusha*. He is the *adi-Puruṣa*.

The Lord has a form, but it should not be misunderstood by a tiny brain. The form of the Lord is always transcendental. For example, those who misinterpret Kṛṣṇa's rāsa-lilā, they think Kṛṣṇa was an ordinary personality. If he can do this, why I cannot do? But before Vyāsa dev presents the information of the rāsa-lilā, he has clearly established Kṛṣṇa's Supreme position by first presenting His childhood pastimes. How he lifts a mountain? How he kills such powerful demons? Even the Brajavāsīs were amazed when they would hear Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes. When mother Yaśodā heard that her son had pulled down two huge trees, she was amazed. She would ask how these trees fell. And the other boys said, your son pulled these trees down. And she used to say can my young son do this? She said they must have fallen down due to the wind. Even His closest relatives could not recognize His supreme position. Except Balarām, no one knew who Kṛṣṇa was. The Brajavāsīs thought maybe He is a demigod, maybe He has special blessings. When Kṛṣṇa was wrapped up in Kāliya's coils, the people saw this and they almost fainted. And when Kṛṣṇa saw that the Brajavāsīs were depressed, heart-broken because

they thought His life was in danger, to release them of their anxiety, Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself to the extent that Kāliya had to release Him. So the Supreme Lord comes in this world and He always performs superhuman activities and He always remains a person.

Now, the impersonalists, they are not demons, at least they are transcendentalists in some sense. At least, they have some code of conduct, some ethics. But unfortunately they limit God's abilities. They try to understand God with a tiny brain. And hence they are doing a great offence. That is why Lord Caitanya advises us to stay away from impersonalists, because of their insulting mentality towards the Lord.

MOST COMPLETE

Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the example of seeing a mountain from a distance. If you go closer, you will see some variety, and if you go to the top you will see complete variety. He gives another example of a train entering a village for the first time. There is a new platform, new track laid down. So the villagers decided instead of the whole village going there three people will see and report. So the first person just saw the light in front of the engine and ran back and said "that's what a 'train' looks like." So the second person saw the light and engine and ran back and reported it. The third person saw the light and engine and the compartments, then he saw it leave, then he went back and gave the information. So this is compared to the Brahman, Paramātmā, and the Bhagavān realization. The Bhagavān feature of the Lord is the most complete and the impersonalist feature is very difficult. This process of

Kṛṣṇa Consciousness establishes the forms of the Lord. It teaches us how to engage the body, mind, and soul in the service of the Lord and simply by doing this one can achieve perfection.

SUMMARY

So to summarize, Lord Brahmā is explaining the universal form of the Lord and establishing that the Lord's voice is the generating center of our voice, as Kṛṣṇa says, "I am the source of everything material and spiritual." The Lord can do any other function with any part of His body. The Lord can eat with His eyes and ears. The Lord is also the source of all our senses. The Gāyatrī mantra emanated from the transcendental flute of the Lord. And Brahmā when he heard it, he felt such intense pleasure as if he was twice born.

Therefore, we take our first birth when we get initiated into the chanting of the Mahamantra, and the second birth when we get initiated into the chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra. And we can have the third spiritual birth when we enter the *sannyāsa āśram*.

So, Prabhupāda emphasizes the pure devotional service and the importance of positive attachments instead of negative attachments.

CHAPTER SEVEN



KRISHNA—THE SAVIOR FROM ALL MISERIES

*tasmād bhārata sarvātmā
bhagavān iśvaro hariḥ
śrotavyah kīrtitavyaś ca
smartavyaś cecchatābhayam*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1-5)

O descendant of King Bharata, one who desires to be free from all miseries must hear about, glorify and also remember the Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul, the controller and the savior from all miseries.

In the previous verse, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has described how the foolish materially attached men are wasting their valuable time in the improvement of the material conditions of life by sleeping, indulging in sex life, developing economic conditions and maintaining a band of relatives who are to be vanquished in the air of oblivion. Being engaged in all these materialistic activities, the living soul entangles himself in the cycle of the law of fruitive actions. This entails the chain of birth and death in the 8,400,000 species of life: the aquatics, the vegetables, the reptiles, the birds, the beasts,

the uncivilized man, and then again the human form, which is the chance for getting out of the cycle of fruitive action. Therefore, if one desires freedom from this vicious circle, then one must cease to act as a *karmī* or enjoyer of the results of one's own work, good or bad. One should not do anything, either good or bad, on his own account, but must execute everything on behalf of the Supreme Lord, the ultimate proprietor of everything that be. This process of doing work is recommended in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.27) also, where instruction is given for working on the Lord's account. Therefore, one should first of all hear about the Lord. When one has perfectly and scrutinizingly heard, one must glorify His acts and deeds, and thus it will become possible to remember constantly the transcendental nature of the Lord. Hearing about and glorifying the Lord are identical with the transcendental nature of the Lord, and by so doing, one will be always in the association of the Lord. This brings freedom from all sorts of fear. The Lord is the Supersoul (Paramātmā) present in the hearts of all living beings, and thus by the above hearing and glorifying process, the Lord invites the association of all in His creation. This process of hearing about and glorifying the Lord is applicable for everyone, whoever he may be, and it will lead one to the ultimate success in everything in which one may be engaged by providence. There are many classes of human beings: the fruitive workers, the empiric philosophers, the mystic yogīs, and ultimately, the unalloyed devotees. For all of them, one and the same process is applicable for achieving the desired success. Everyone wants to be free from all kinds of fear, and everyone wants the fullest extent of happiness in life. The perfect process

for achieving this, here and now, is recommended in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is uttered by such a great authority as Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. By hearing about and glorifying the Lord, all a person's activities become molded into spiritual activities, and thus all conceptions of material miseries become completely vanquished.

THE HIGHEST PHILOSOPHY

This famous verse is being spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī. In the concluding verses of the previous canto, Parīkṣit Mahārāja has enquired that what should one do when one is about to die. And Śukadeva Gosvāmī, in the opening verses, has pointed out the importance of hearing the glories of the Lord, and how this information can be beneficial to everyone. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī here is telling us how we can achieve perfection in life.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam presents the highest philosophy available on this planet. Śrīla Vyāsa deva had labored hard and presented the entire Vedic literature and summarized it into the Vedanta-Sutra. But in spite of having done this vast compilation and presentation, Vyāsa deva was still feeling unhappy and despondent. Then his spiritual master Nārada Muni appeared and told him that you have not presented exclusively, the path of pure devotional service, which alone is capable of fully satisfying the living entity. Then Vyāsa deva gave us the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam which is the ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge.

VEDIC KNOWLEDGE IS SWEETER

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that this ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge has come from the spiritual world and it

is coming down through different ācāryas. They are like different individuals on different branches of a tree and when something is being passed down through different branches and different individuals, then the fruit comes down intact. But if on the other hand it is thrown down, then the fruit will be shattered by the time it comes down to earth. So we are in the position that we are receiving this knowledge from authoritative sources.

And it is said that the knowledge has become even sweeter because it was recited again by Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Śuka means “parrot.” So it is said that when a parrot bites a fruit, the fruit becomes even sweeter. But in our case it is even more sweeter because we have had Śrīla Prabhupāda who gave us the purports to these verses. Purport means AN explanation by which we can understand the verses better. And when you read the Bhāgavatam and Prabhupāda’s purports the verses become distinctly clearer and easy to comprehend.

READ DAILY

So the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam should be carefully studied by everyone. When Prabhupāda established ISKCON, he wrote the importance of sharing the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Bhagavad-Gītā. And he established this system; every morning we read the Bhāgavatam, and in the evening we study the Bhagavad-gītā. These days devotees live in their homes and the huge distances in large traffic make it impossible for them to come to the temple everyday. But we can do these readings at home. And there are many temples in North America where the Bhāgavatam classes are broadcast on the internet. So you can even take advantage of these facilities.

But the important thing is to read the Bhāgavatam or hear it, because this Bhāgavatam gives us the knowledge with which we can achieve the goal of life.

Unfortunately, we see, there are lots of professional reciters who take advantage of the Bhāgavatam. They do not focus on systematically studying it. Systematically studying means starting from the First Canto and proceeding one by one to the Twelfth Canto. But they tend to proceed directly to the rāsa-līlā section, to try to imitate or cheapen Kṛṣṇa's activities, without focusing that Vyāsa deva, the author has clearly presented a series of Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes before presenting his rāsa-līlā pastimes. Because, if one hears and reads about Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes he will not have any doubt in his mind regarding Kṛṣṇa's true identity.

Therefore, this is the proper process to proceed with the Bhāgavatam, i.e., to start from the beginning and move up towards the end to the Twelfth Canto. Now, Śukadeva Gosvāmī is basically emphasizing three main things in this verse. These three things need no introduction; they are the basis of our Kṛṣṇa Consciousness philosophy. He is talking about hearing, glorifying, and remembering or śravaṇam, kīrtanam, and smaraṇam.

PRAHLĀDA MAHĀRĀJA

Prahlāda Mahārāja, the great sage, is one of the twelve mahājans—*svayambhūr nāradah śambhuḥ kumārah kapilo manuḥ prahlādo janako bhīṣmo balir vaiyāsakir vayam*. So there are twelve authorities through whom we can obtain transcendental knowledge and one of them is this boy Prahlāda. He had the great fortune of receiving

transcendental knowledge when he was in the womb of his mother, from another great sage, Nārada Muni who is also one of the *mahājans* and is described as a *śaktyāveśa avatār*.

There are six categories of *avatārs*. *Avatār* means, one who incarnates. The Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is about *avatārs*. *Yuga avatār*, *śaktyāveśa avatār*, *puruṣa avatār*, *guṇa avatār*, and there are a total of six *avatārs* and Nārada Muni is described there as a *śaktyāveśa avatār*. The *śaktyāveśa avatār* is further divided into two categories. One is direct and the other is indirect. It is direct when the Lord appears himself.

So Nārada Muni's job is to deliver the message of Lord Narayana. Whether it is to the hunter or to the sage Dhruva, or Prahlāda; Nārada Muni is single pointed in his mission. So he gave instructions to Prahlāda when he was in the womb of his mother.

Prahlāda's father is described as a demon, but in the core of his hearts he is a great devotee of the Lord, and he was one of the two gate keepers of the Lord. The two door keepers were cursed by the Kumāras because they prevented the Kumāras from entering the arena of the Lord because they were all naked.

These four Kumāras had mystic powers. They went through all the six gates but they were stopped at the seventh gate. They said, "How dare you stop us, we have come all the way to have *darshan* of the Lord! You two are totally unfair to be the doormen of the Lord! We will curse you to not stay here any longer." The door keepers said "we don't mind being cursed." This is the nature of the

Lord's devotees. They do not mind problems, difficulties, or being cursed. Just like Parīkṣit Mahārāja, he was cursed to die at the end of seven days, but it did not disturb him.

Yudhiṣṭhīra was asked by Yamarāja, what is the most amazing thing you can think of? He said that every minute millions of people are dying all over the world but we do not think how we will die. That is the power of illusion.

So when Parīkṣit Mahārāja heard that he had seven days to live he prepared for his death in a glorious way, by getting totally absorbed in hearing the Bhāgavatam around the clock. Similarly, Jaya–Vijaya were not upset that they were going to get cursed, they felt even if they were going to leave the spiritual world, they would be in a position that they would always remember the Lord. This is the nature of a devotee whether he is in comfort or pain he will always remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So Jaya–Vijaya were cursed and they became demons. But they were such extraordinarily powerful demons that no other demon could match there strength. Just like Hiranyakaśipu, when he was performing austerities, he raised his hands towards the sky; he was standing on his toes for a hundred celestial years. Six months of earth hours is equal to twelve hours of the celestial planets. So he stood on his toes for hundred years and he did not take a drop of water. He did a nirjala vrat for a hundred celestial years.

When he was doing these austerities, Prahlāda was in his mother's womb. And the demigods were worried that Hiranyakaśipu would give birth to another demon. So they were planning to kill the baby. But then Nārada Muni appeared and assured them that the child was not going

to be a demon but a great devotee. So then his mother was taken and given shelter in Nārada Muni's *āśram*.

Later Hiraṇyakaśipu asked his son what is the best thing you have learned in school. And Prahlāda revealed that it was the process of devotional service. So this verse emphasizes on *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *viṣṇu smaraṇam*. But before we get to these three key activities, that a transcendentalist must execute, we will focus on the other points of this verse.

FREEDOM FROM ALL MISERIES

Śukadeva Gosvāmī says, “free from all miseries.” So you have to realize that this material world is a place of miseries. It does not matter how handsome or successful you might be, but it is short lived. And no one escapes these miseries of life.

The power of illusion is such that when you have things going your way you don’t think that miseries will ever come to you. And any gentleman who speaks the truth cannot deny that you cannot escape the miseries of life for long.

You take birth crying, you grow up with pains. Then, in spite of your best efforts diseases strike you. You may have the best insurance plan but insurance doesn’t cover your pain. Then in spite of your best efforts, old age comes, which is not at all pleasant. The other day I had gone to an eye doctor and all over the clinic I could see people so miserable, and virtually crying. So, there is old age, and then there is death.

BASED ON OUR DESIRE

So Śukadeva Gosvāmī says that the Lord expands Himself as the Paramātmā. The word *para* means transcendental, and *atma* means the soul. So he is the Supersoul and as such, he is fulfilling many functions. Īśvaraḥ *sarva-bhūtānām*. The Bhagavad-gītā says that the Lord is seated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul. He also says in the Fifteenth Chapter that from Me comes remembrance, forgetfulness, etc. So the Lord is the cause of all causes, and should we decide to remember Him, a favorable situation is created. And similarly, should we choose to forget Him, an unfavorable situation is created.

It is all dependent on our exercise of free will. So besides being a witness, besides residing in our hearts, the Lord is also the ultimate sanctioning authority. He decides based on our karma, what is due to us.

It is also described here that He is a controller. Lord Brahmā says: īśvaraḥ *paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*. So there are many types of controllers. In any country, the United States for example, there are many types of controllers, the local municipal elections, the state elections, then ultimately the federal elections. So there are many controllers but Kṛṣṇa is identified as the supreme controller, *Parama-isvara*, and the savior from all miseries.

Kṛṣṇa tells us: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇām vraja aham tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucāḥ*. He says surrender unto Me and I will protect you from all sinful reactions. Kṛṣṇa is guaranteeing us that

if you surrender unto me I will protect you. So if there is anyone who can protect us from all these miseries, it is Kṛṣṇa only and He does it based on our desire, our wish, and our executing his instructions.

SURRENDER

Kṛṣṇa is ready to save us, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī says that He is the Supreme Controller. So can anything be difficult for the supreme controller? No. And He is also the Supersoul.

But He will save you, only if you do three things. Kṛṣṇa does not give us false hopes. There are some religious movements, who say, who promote, “If you just join our *sampradāya*, if you just do what we say, then heaven is guaranteed.” But for heaven to be really guaranteed, you have to act correctly. You cannot act against the wishes of the Lord and just hope that heaven will be there for you. So at least Kṛṣṇa makes it very clear, “I will protect you only if you surrender to me.”

Kṛṣṇa never said that you can do whatever you want and I will still protect you. He says it very clearly that only if you surrender unto me then I will protect you.

CHANTING

Now what does surrendering to Kṛṣṇa means? It is being explained here that you must hear, glorify, and remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We have many subject matters for hearing, especially in today's environment of rapid communication, where virtually everyone has a cell phone. Where cell phones can do almost anything. It is not a phone anymore, it is a radio, it

is a camera, it is a recorder, and you can even download movies now. So there are many subject matters for hearing. But what is being emphasized here is hearing about the holy names of God. You can read any scripture and you will find one common thread; emphasis on chanting the holy name of the Lord.

Take the Bible for example. There are many similar aspects of the Bible to the message of the Vedas.

Prabhupāda used to quote an ancient book called the Aquarian gospel I found it at an airport and bought it several months ago. In that book the author states that Jesus Christ had come to India where he got training in brahminical culture. But it caused some disagreements and by the will of the Lord he went and started Christianity.

Prabhupāda was giving a lecture in Australia and he said that Jesus Christ is one of our Gurus because if we see some of his original teachings, they were very close to the Vedic message. We all know Jesus's famous statement, "thou shall not kill." He also said, "thou shall chant the names of the Lord." There was a tradition where all the priests used to chant rosaries. Now they all only carry rosaries. Even in the Muslims there is this tradition and there are all these verses in the Quran.

Chanting the holy name has also been very strongly emphasized by Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is described as the most merciful of all incarnations. Of all the other incarnations Caitanya Mahāprabhu is described as the most *Patita-Pāvana avatār*. He appeared to save the fallen people of Kali-yuga. And what did Caitanya Mahāprabhu propagate? Chanting the holy names of the Lord.

LORD CAITANYA

Lord Caitanya became a Sanskrit scholar at a very young age; therefore, one of His names was *Nimāi Paṇḍit*. And He had defeated virtually all the *Paṇḍits* of His time, including the famous *Keśava Kāśmīrī*.

Once Lord Caitanya was passing through Varanasi, also known as Benares, and there was an assembly of *Māyāvādī Sanyāsīs* there. And they were discussing, “Look at this *Nimāi Paṇḍit*. He has taken *sannyāsa* from a Sanskrit scholar and is singing and dancing like a mad man.” When we do chanting, some people like it. Some people say look at these crazy “*Hare-Kṛṣṇas*.” So these *Māyāvādī sanyāsīs* were saying, “why does not this *sanyāsī* sit down with us, and academically study the *Vedanta sutra*, which is the prime duty of a *Sanyāsī*? This criticism was heard by Tapan Miśra and Chandrasekhar, two of Mahāprabhu’s devotees. So they went to Mahāprabhu and said, “We just cannot tolerate this criticism of Yours. We want You to make these *sanyāsīs* understand the importance of chanting.” Caitanya Mahāprabhu then came to this assembly where these *sanyāsīs* were sitting on a very high level. And Mahāprabhu out of humility came and sat down where people washed their feet, which is a lower level in the temples of India.

And there He displayed a super-human activity. He displayed such effulgence from His head, which could be compared to the light coming from thousands of suns put together. When the *Māyāvādis* saw this effulgence emanating from the head of the Lord, they could know that this man is not ordinary. There was a debate between

them and Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “My spiritual master considered me to be a fool and said that all I was capable of doing was chant the holy name of the Lord.”

SIMPLE, YET IMPORTANT

So the chanting of the names of the Lord is a relatively simple activity. In the Satya-yuga, the process was meditation of the Lord, in Tretā-yuga, the process was elaborate yajñas, which by today's living standards would cost a fortune, if you had to buy all the ingredients. In Dvāpara -yuga the process was elaborate temple worship. Though in the Kali-yuga, things have deteriorated by and large; this chanting of the holy name can be done by anyone.

Having traveled to different parts of the world, even in the remotest areas of Africa, when they see us they say “Hare Krishna”. You can go to any part of Kenya or Uganda, when they see us, they say Hare Kṛṣṇa. So this chanting of the holy name is the most important thing if you wish to pursue a spiritual life.

THREE STAGES OF CHANTING

In the scriptures it is explained that this chanting of the holy name can be done in three different situations. One is known as *nama-aparadha*, the other is known as *nāma-ābhāsa*, and the third is known as *śuddha-nāma*. The initial stage refers to chanting the name and committing offenses at the same time. We are introduced to chanting, we chant, we may or may not be following the regulative principles, but the only saving grace is that we chant. But as we associate with devotees and get educated about the ten offences, and try to avoid them, it is known as *nāma-ābhāsa*.

CHANT ATTENTIVELY

One of the essential endeavors on this path is attentive chanting. Chanting is beneficial in any case whether you chant attentively or inattentively. But chanting is more beneficial when we chant attentively. What does attentive chanting mean? It simply means that when you chant, you do only one thing, that is, hear the chanting. Because the holy name is not different from the Lord.

*nāma cintāmaṇīḥ kṛṣṇaś
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ*

[Cc. Madhya 17.133]

“The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendently blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa’s name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa’s name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with māyā. Kṛṣṇa’s name is always liberated and spiritual; it is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.”

How on earth can you chant the same name over and over again without getting tired? We of course repeat them for a limited period of two hours, three hours. But Haridāsa Ṭhākura was chanting for twenty-two hours a day, and he never got tired. Why? Because the Lord has invested all his transcendental energy into the holy name.

SING ALL THE TIME

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛita we read about the dialogue between Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Rāya. Rāmānanda Rāya was the Governor of a South Indian kingdom and was stationed in Madras. The king of that place was called Pratāparudra. He was also the king of Orissa overlooking Madras. So Rāmānanda Rāya was functioning as a representative of the king. He was also a great devotee of the Lord and is considered to be an incarnation of Viśākhā Sakhi and Arjuna.

So Caitanya Mahāprabhu had just converted a staunch impersonalist called Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, to the path of personalism. And after that Caitanya Mahāprabhu started his memorial tour of South India in which He converted virtually everyone to the path of Vaiṣṇavism. He met Rāmānanda Rāya on the banks of the river Saraswati after having converted Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. Caitanya Mahāprabhu was foretold by Bhattacharya that when you go for your tour of South India, you are going to meet this great devotee, Rāmānanda Rāya.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked many questions to Rāmānanda Rāya. Some may say that why is the Lord asking questions to the devotee. The answer is that the Lord is anxious to glorify the devotee just as the devotee is anxious to glorify the Lord. And even today if you go to the principal temples in South India, you will find markings there, of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's footsteps showing that Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited this temple.

One of the questions He asked Rāmānanda Rāya is, "What is that one song which one should sing all the

time?" And Rāmānanda replied, "The song that glorifies Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, namely the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahamantra should always be sung."

OCCUPATION BEYOND VARNA-ĀŚRAMA

We have so many statements from the scriptures emphasizing the chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

[Cc. Ādi 17.21]

In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari.

This chanting is our most important activity whether we are a householder or a brahmacārī or a sannyāsī. If we are serious about going back to godhead then this is one occupation we all share.

Just like in the fourth chapter we read, the Pracetās were performing those charities and the Lord was very pleased with them. The Lord said I am very pleased with you brothers because you have only one occupation, devotional service.

Similarly in ISKCON it doesn't matter which *Varna-āśrama* we belong to, our main occupation is devotional service and it begins with chanting the holy names of the Lord.

ONLY REMEDY

Caitanya Mahāprabhu has highlighted the effects of chanting. One of the first effect is *ceto-darpanamārjanam*. It cleanses the heart. But you may ask cleansing my heart of what? What is wrong with my heart? I am a healthy man. The man may be externally healthy, but as Prabhupāda used to say, our heart is as dark as coal, even darker than coal. And it is influenced by the *anarthas*. *Anartha* means that which is unnecessary. Some *anarthas* are lust, anger, envy, greed, etc., and they are all very common today. Doesn't matter which part of the world you go, these *anarthas* have their influence everywhere. And to reduce this influence, the chanting of the holy name is the process.

Chanting of the holy name is the most important investment. And anyone who is chanting is utilizing his life correctly. In the Bhāgavatam it says that with the rising and setting of the sun, the lives of everyone but those who are chanting is being reduced. You may ask that even a devotee's life is getting reduced. We are also getting old. It does not mean that those who are initiated are not going to meet old age. Then why does it say like that in Bhāgavatam?

A devotee is also part of the ageing process. But a devotee is investing his time in service of the Lord. So that investment is proper. Just like you may have a million dollars in cash. But you decide tomorrow to invest that money in a fixed deposit. Then you may not have the cash, but you have it in the form of investment. Similarly a devotee is investing his time, money and everything in

the service of the Lord. So he has nothing to fear. A man who is not engaged in the service of the Lord has to fear.

It is this chanting, hearing, and glorifying that Rūpa Gosvāmī talks about. He says that the holy names of the Lord are sweet like sugar candy. But because our tongue is diseased with avidyā, ignorance, we are not able to appreciate the sweetness of the holy names of the Lord, of His pastimes, etc. So what is the cure? We know that it is sweet. We know that it is beneficial. But we also know that we are not attracted to it. So what's the remedy?

The remedy is, Rūpa Goswāmī says, that "we attentively chant the holy name". Then the disease of avidyā will get cured. And once again we will be able to appreciate the sweetness of the holy names of the Lord. So the Vedas give us the problem as well as the solution. Hear and glorify. Further it says, remember the Personality of Godhead.

When Caitanya Mahāprabhu met Rāmānanda Rāya, He asked him many questions, and one of them was, "What should the living entity constantly remember?" We definitely need to remember something or the other. That's the nature of the mind, it is very active. Then Rāmānanda Rāya said, "We should remember the pastimes, *līlā*, the form, the nature, the name of the Lord." *Nāma, rūpa, līlā, gunā*.

In the Bhāgavatam First Canto we read that Lord Kṛṣṇa had departed from his abode and His constant companion Arjuna was feeling great sadness. He began to remember all those feats which were only achievable by Kṛṣṇa and he was feeling very sad. But then he began to meditate on Kṛṣṇa's instructions from the Bhagavad-gītā. And while

doing so he felt as if Kṛṣṇa was right there next to him, and his moroseness was gone.

Prabhupāda says in his purport that just like Arjuna, who was meditating on Kṛṣṇa's instructions from the Bhagavad-gītā, we should also meditate. And we can only mediate when we read.

Another thing is to remember the names of the Lord, His pastimes, and His form. The form of the Lord is always transcendental—*sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*. Remember the qualities of the Lord; they are unlimited.

*aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-manti
paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciram jaganti
ānanda-cinmaya-sad-ujjvala-vigrahasya
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

[*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.32]

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose transcendental form is full of bliss, truth, substantiality and is thus full of the most dazzling splendor. Each of the limbs of that transcendental figure possesses in Himself, the full-fledged functions of all the organs, and eternally sees, maintains and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane.

He can use one part of His body for another. He can see with His ears. We can only eat from our mouth, but the Lord eats from His eyes.

In the Bhagavad-gītā Chapter Six, Dhyana Yoga, Kṛṣṇa says that one should make friends with his mind. The mind which is controlled is the best of friends, while the uncontrolled mind is the worst of the enemies. And one who controls his mind is peaceful in every situation. And one who never controls his mind is never in peace.

*bandhur ātmātmanas tasya
yenātmaivātmanā jitah
anātmanas tu śatruve
vartetātmaiva śatru-vat*

[*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.6]

For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his mind will remain the greatest enemy.

Our greed for unlimited things can never be satisfied. But if we are engaged in devotional service, and are trying to control our mind and senses then we are satisfied in all situations.

The holy name enables us to control the mind and senses. And thereby by staying engaged in a positive manner we remain free from negative influences.

Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is so wonderful, and we can experience this in the association of devotees. As devotees we should take this process very seriously and go back to godhead.

SUMMARY

So to summarize, Parīkṣit Mahārāja is giving us very valuable information. You may have heard it many times but the unfortunate reality is that in spite of hearing it many times, it has not sunk into our hearts. Therefore, we need to hear it again and again. And by practicing this principle we will make our life perfect. So we need to remind ourselves of the holy name. Śrīla Vyāsa deva knew that our memories are so short that we need to remind ourselves regularly by reading and hearing. He gave us the divine treasure—Vedic scriptures.

CHAPTER EIGHT



COMPASSION FOR OTHERS

adhuneha mahā-bhāga
yathaiva narakān naraḥ
nānogra-yātanān neyāt
tan me vyākhyātum arhasi

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.6)

O greatly fortunate and opulent Śukadeva Gosvāmī,
now kindly tell me how human beings may be saved from
having to enter hellish conditions in which they suffer
terrible pains.

In the Twenty-sixth Chapter of the Fifth Canto, Śukadeva Gosvāmī has explained that people who commit sinful acts are forced to enter hellish planets and suffer. Now Mahārāja Parīkṣit, being a devotee, is concerned with how this can be stopped. A Vaiṣṇava is *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*; in other words, he has no personal troubles, but he is very unhappy to see others in trouble. Prahlāda Mahārāja said, “My Lord, I have no personal problems, for I have learned how to glorify Your transcendental qualities and thus enter a trance of ecstasy. I do have a problem, however, for I am simply thinking of these rascals and fools who are busy with *māyā-sukha*, temporary happiness, without knowledge of

devotional service unto You.” This is the problem faced by a Vaiṣṇava. Because a Vaiṣṇava fully takes shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he personally has no problems, but because he is compassionate toward the fallen, conditioned souls, he is always thinking of plans to save them from their hellish life in this body and the next. Parīkṣit Mahārāja, therefore, anxiously wanted to know from Śukadeva Gosvāmī how humanity can be saved from gliding down to hell. Śukadeva Gosvāmī had already explained how people enter hellish life, and he could also explain how they could be saved from it. Intelligent men must take advantage of these instructions. Unfortunately, however, the entire world is lacking Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, and therefore people are suffering from the grossest ignorance and do not even believe in a life after this one. To convince them of their next life is very difficult because they have become almost mad in their pursuit of material enjoyment. Nevertheless, our duty, the duty of all sane men, is to save them. Mahārāja Parīkṣit is the representative of one who can save them.

Here, Parīkṣit Mahārāja is addressing his spiritual master Śukadeva Gosvāmī and being an elevated Vaiṣṇava he is concerned about the welfare of humanity. That is the nature of Vaiṣṇavas, they consider about the welfare of humanity. Just like thousands of years ago there was an assembly of sages in *Naimiṣāraṇya* and these sages were not concerned about their own liberation, they were not concerned about “what’s good for me,” they were concerned about how the people of Kali-yuga can be saved. They had spiritual visions. Prabhupāda said that they were like spiritual astrologers. They could see what

the predictions, what the symptoms would be in Kali-yuga. They could see how degraded people would be and the theme of their discussion was, “how people could be saved.”

Parīkṣit Mahārāja was greatly concerned after he heard the description of the hellish planets that we read in the Fifth Canto. Most people believe that at death, everything is terminated. Even if they believe there is a soul, they would like to believe that everything ends with this body. Very few really believe in the eternal nature of the soul. One reason is that acknowledging that the soul is the real identity and is eternal in nature brings all our past and present actions into jurisdiction and then there is reward and punishment and they do not even want to dream that there can be anything negative for everything that they are doing. So the best way is that everything finishes at death, probably because of the old philosophy that you cannot see the sun.

If we read the description of the hellish planets, we will see how severe punishment can there be, for the different kinds of sinful activities one engages in. Just like, people are very fond of free sex and they live in societies, especially in America, where they want to be super liberal in legalizing everything. In some European countries, if you have same sex marriage you can claim income-tax reductions for your spouse and so on. But in the Bhāgvatam it is explained that if you want to have free sex, free mixing, then after death, you will go the hellish planets where you will be made to embrace a naked, burning, red-hot form of the opposite sex. It's burning, it's so hot, you can't even touch it and you are forced to embrace it.

Similarly, people get elected to positions of power by manipulating the electing system, corruption and so on. And when they do assume such a position of power, they do not use it to give people spiritual advice. Head of state should be considered as a representative of the Lord, and to give spiritual guidance to people is also his duty. And if he does not do that then he goes to the hellish planets, and is squeezed through a machine, just like sugarcane is squeezed by a machine, and you just faint with the pain.

So, the punishment for the different types of sinful activities is very severe, and the Bhāgvatam gives a very vivid explanation of the different types of punishments for the different types of crimes. Just like in the material world, not everybody gets the same sentence. Based on the gravity of our crime, we get different types of punishments. Similarly we go to the different hellish planets for different types of punishments.

FORTUNATE AND OPULENT

Here Śukadeva Gosvāmī is described as *adhuneha mahā-bhāga*. *Mahā-bhāga* is translated as “greatly opulent and fortunate Śukadeva Gosvāmī.” So someone may ask, ‘How he was so opulent?’ Normally when we talk of opulence, we mean a good bank balance, a fancy house, a fancy car and so on. And here a mendicant is being described as opulent and very fortunate. Fortunate because he was the son of a great personality Śrīla Vyāsa deva. And he was fortunate and opulent because he had firm knowledge about devotional service and the position of the Supreme Lord. This is real opulence, knowledge about God and

executing devotional service. These are the ornaments by which a devotee decorates himself.

USELESS ATONEMENT

Parīkṣit Mahārāja is enquiring how people can be saved from this path of going to hell, and he is really interested in receiving guidance about how this sinful tendency of the heart can be removed or eradicated.

And Parīkṣit Mahārāja gave a nice example. He said that an elephant takes a bath in a lake, becomes clean, but the moment it comes out of the lake, it sits down and becomes dirty again. So his concern, which he voiced to Śukadeva Gosvāmī was that what is the value of that religious process where we just sit and atone, we again commit sinful activities, and then we again atone? Then again we sin.

Just like in India, the Kumbha-melā attracts millions of people. Millions of people come to these religious festivals and go to tīrthas, with the intention that, they are going to take a bath, take a dip, and wipe away the sinful reactions, and then, on a clean slate, they sin again. And then wait for the next Kumbha-melā. Again we will go there. Just like a businessman takes a loan from a bank, clears the loan off, and then thinks he can take fresh credits. That is the mentality of most people. They will go to Vṛndāvana, and they will go to Dhāmas. Once you go to a *dhāma*; you should associate with saintly people, and listen to saintly people; not just leave the sinful burden behind.

So Parīkṣit Mahārāja was concerned that this process of sinning and atoning is not the ultimate solution and therefore he enquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī that how

this sinful tendency, which is deep-rooted in the heart, can be removed.

And in response to his query, Śukadeva Gosvāmī revealed that, it is only by executing pure devotional service, that this sinful tendency in the heart can be removed. Śukadeva Gosvāmī then proceeded to relate the story of Ajāmila, which is described in this chapter.

When he started to explain the story of Ajāmila, that we are going to read for the next few chapters, Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, “I have heard in the ancient Purāṇas, there was a story of Ajāmila. So in other words, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is presenting very ancient stories. Five thousand years ago, Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, in the ancient Purāṇas I have heard this story. This means that this incident, this pastime of Ajāmila, took place at least six to eight thousand years ago. And we are so fortunate that we have real access to stories that took place, eight thousand years ago, seven thousand years ago.

Similarly when Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes in the Ninth Canto, the story of Lord Rāmachandra, he says that there have been many history books, on the life of Lord Rāmachandra, so I am only describing in brief. He acknowledges over there that there have been many scriptures describing Lord Rāmachandra’s pastimes.

THE STORY OF AJĀMILA

In the story of Ajāmila, we see how Ajāmila was born in a Brahminical family, and how he got degraded, by just not controlling his mind. Ajāmila had a very convenient position at home, his wife was a devotee, his children were devotees, and his parents were devotees since he was

born into a brahminical family. He went into the forest to bring flowers for his deities. He was not returning from the movies or a night club, he had gone on a spiritual mission. But on the way back he saw a low-class woman embracing her lover and just because he started meditating on this incident, he got so attached to this incident that he eventually hired that lady, posed as a maid servant, married her and had ten children. Even the old age of eighty-eight he had a kid. He was very attached to his younger son. And by providence even when he was addressing his younger son's name "Narayana" his death came.

In the olden days it was a tradition to give the children names of Gods. Children in India at least would be given spiritual names and this tradition is true in almost all religious faiths, even the Muslims also give their children names of Gods and the Christians also do that. But these days societies have changed. Many times people come to me and say, can you give a name for my son or my daughter. And when we give them a spiritual name, they say that can you give us something more modern? Then I have to tell them that you have come to the wrong address, if you want a very modern name like Sweety, Pinky, Lovely, then you have to go to a different place and person. So the Vedic tradition is that you give the children names of Gods and thus when you address your children, you are indirectly reciting the spiritual name. And we know how Ajāmila was saved because he was uttering the name of Narayana.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja is being described here as *para-dukha-dukhi*. We read this phrase *para-dukha-dukhi* in

several of Prabhupāda's purports, even in the first verse of this chapter. This is the nature of a Vaiṣṇava, *para-dukha-dukhi*, seeing the stress of others, he also becomes distressed.

HAPPY, YET UNHAPPY

Prabhupāda quotes in his purport, the famous devotee Prahlāda a Mahārāja. He is a Mahajan and here we see that he was simultaneously happy and unhappy. That is the strange contradiction. How can you be simultaneously happy and unhappy? He was happy because he was Kṛṣṇa Conscious, thanks to Nārada Muni, he received spiritual knowledge when he was in the womb of his mother. He was totally absorbed in his spiritual mission and even though he had to go through so many inconveniences he did not deviate from his spiritual mission in any way. So he was happy that he was fully absorbed and convinced about devotional service.

But at the same time he was also unhappy. He was unhappy when he saw the materialists were trying to convert a position of distress to a position of comfort.

śrī-prahrāda uvāca
 matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
 mitho 'bhipadyeta gṛha-vratānām
 adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisram
 punah punaś carvita-carvaṇānām
 (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.30)

Prahlāda Mahārāja replied: Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, by their own efforts, or by a combination of both.

Just like these days we see that as people begin to get old and wrinkles appear on their cheeks, they actively begin to try for plastic surgeries and make-overs. As your hair begins to become white, you dye your hair. When you become bald, you can even implant hair if you want to. As your hearing becomes weaker, you can use hearing aids. As your eyesight becomes weak and you do not want to face the embarrassment of wearing glasses, then you can have contact lenses.

So there are varieties of activities by which they try to convert distress to happiness. What is science trying to do? Modern science is essentially trying to convert distress to comfort. They may have succeeded in eliminating some diseases. It's a fact that many diseases have been eliminated or completely controlled due to scientific advancement but on the other hand as soon as this got controlled, so many other diseases have emerged. And scientists themselves recognize, even doctors, if you speak to them honestly they will tell you, many times they cannot even figure out what is wrong with the patient and they just pose as if they have the answer.

In India doctors tell me that in patients there is a psychological feeling that if you get an injection you recover fast. Especially in the villages when patients come, they cannot even figure out the disease but they will give the injection. That gives a patient some confidence that maybe he is in the path of being cured. As Bhaktisiddhānta Mahārāja used to say, "It is a world of the cheaters and the cheated."

People are ready to cheat and people are ready to be cheated. So Prahlāda Mahārāja's concern was that how

people are trying to convert distress into happiness. He was always involved in preaching. Even though Hiranyaśaśipu had posted security guards everywhere because he wanted to know who was coming and brain-washing his son. He used to think that the Vaiṣṇavas are coming in disguise, and teaching my son, giving him knowledge about my enemy Viṣṇu. So he had heavy security guards.

Śhaṇḍa and Amarka, the sons of Śukrācārya were his teachers and Hiranyaśaśipu would chastise them, “Are you teaching my son about Viṣṇu?” And they would panic and say, “No, no, no, we don’t know ourselves where he is getting his knowledge from!” But he had already received his knowledge when he was in his mother’s womb.

PAINS FOR OTHERS

The nature of a Vaiṣṇava is that he wants to give Kṛṣṇa Consciousness to everyone, and Prabhupāda exhibited that mood also. We saw that even when Prabhupāda was physically unwell he did not stop his preaching mission. On one occasion in Bombay he was advised to rest by his doctors, but when he heard that people had come for his darshan and they were being turned away by his secretary, he said, “no, let them come in” and he gave them darshan. We know that when he translated the Tenth Canto, he was physically old and very sick. He would just whisper the purports. He had some devotee reading the commentary, another devotee holding the mike, another two helping him sit up, and he still translated the books. Why? Because of his concern for the suffering humanity. He wanted to leave behind as much literature as he could, so that humanity could be saved.

So a Vaiṣṇava's desire is that Kṛṣṇa Consciousness should be spread. Lord Caitanya went on His tour to Southern India and on this tour He converted almost everyone to Vaiṣṇavaism. People came to see Him from great distance and by seeing Him in his ecstasy even from a distance they began to chant and dance. And when they returned to their villages, by seeing them chant and dance others also began to chant and dance themselves!

VĀSUDEVA VIPRA

During this tour he stayed at the house of a devotee called Kurma *brāhmaṇa*. And there was another devotee called the Vāsudeva Vipra. Vāsudeva Vipra was suffering from leprosy. His whole body was full of worms. His whole body had boils and there was pus in these boils. And he was so compassionate that when a worm fell off his body he lifted it back and put it on his body. When he heard about Lord Caitanya, he proceeded to Kurma's house to meet Lord Caitanya. But he found that he had already left. He was heartbroken. He almost fainted due to the loss.

But Lord Caitanya is also the Supersoul, *antaryāmī*. He knew that Vāsudeva Vipra was heartbroken because he could not meet Him. So Lord Caitanya returned to Kurma's house. He saw Vāsudeva Vipra and He embraced him. And when He did that, Vāsudeva Vipra, whose body was ugly, diseased, releasing a bad smell, by the mercy of Lord Caitanya, he became a handsome young man. His disease was healed and he was transformed into a handsome young man.

But then a thought entered into his mind. He recited a verse from the Tenth Canto of the Bhāgavatam, which

Sudāmā recites after he finds out that his house has been transformed into a palace by the mercy of his friend Kṛṣṇa, and he composed some very nice prayers in the glorification of Kṛṣṇa. So Vāsudeva Vipra recited those verses and presented a question to Lord Caitanya. He said that earlier I was so diseased that people would not even come near me. But now you have caused this mercy, I have become handsome and my disease is totally gone, I am concerned if I become proud.

Generally a man who is very rich, handsome, educated, and has a sweet family—these are all factors that can cause a man to become proud. So he asked Lord Caitanya that what should he do to remain humble. Lord Caitanya replied, “Chant the Mahamantra and preach its glories. By doing so you will always remain humble and meek.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the purport of the story that just as Vāsudeva Vipra was relieved from his obnoxious condition, every devotee in The Kṛiṣṇa Conscious movement is also saved from a similar situation. So each devotee should chant the holy name and spread the glories of the Mahamantra to everyone, and that is preaching. A Vaiṣṇava preaches because he is concerned.

In the Fifth Canto we read about Lord Rṣabhadeva, and he gives a very nice example. He says that a gentleman does not tolerate a blind man walking on the wrong side of the road; rather he holds his hand and puts him on the right track. You see a blind man with a cane, about to cross the road and there is a car coming, what do you do? You run to him and rescue him. Similarly, a Vaiṣṇava, having a spiritual mission, tries to guide blind people to the path of spiritual advancement.

KING RANTIDEVA

In the Bhāgavatam we read a story about a king called Rantideva. He was a very compassionate and magnanimous king. He had once fasted for a period of 48 days. He was very magnanimous, and the demigods wanted to test how magnanimous he was. So Rantideva and his wife tried to break their fast by some food stuffs made of milk and water. At that time a *brāhmaṇa* came to his house and seeked audience with the king. He said, “King, I am hungry you need to feed me.” So the king gladly gave him the food with which he and his wife were going to break their fast with.

Then another śūdra guest came in. And the king was ultimately left with nothing, so then the king composed a very nice prayer. He said, “My dear Lord! I do not want to achieve these mystic perfections, but what I want is that you transfer all the sinful reactions caused by everyone and take them back.” So his plea was to take everyone back to Godhead.

SUFFERING FOR OTHERS

So charity is something a Vaiṣṇava should cultivate. In the Caitanya-caritamṛita we read about Vāsudeva Dutta, who was a very exalted devotee of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His glories cannot be described even with a thousand mouths. He was such a compassionate Vaiṣṇava, that he would spend almost all his income in serving the Vaiṣṇavas.

Vāsudeva Dutta is described as an incarnation of Prahlāda Mahārāja. He went to Caitanya Mahāprabhu and said, “My dear Lord! I want to ask you something, I want to ask for a favor, but first you promise me you

will give me this favor." He said, "Take everyone back to Godhead, and let me suffer for their sinful reactions." It is said that Vāsudeva Dutta was even more magnanimous than Jesus Christ.

So there are many more stories like this in scriptures that show the mood of the devotees. After hearing these stories we can easily conclude that all these were exalted devotees. In modern days, things are so much more degraded. But by reading these stories we get inspired. We may not be at Prahlāda Mahārāja's level or at Vāsudeva Dutta's level, but by hearing these stories we get the inspiration to follow in their footsteps. And if we endeavor Kṛiṣṇa will help us. Just as we can see how the book distribution started, how the devotees endeavored because Prabhupāda wanted it to be done, how it developed and picked up.

So Śukadeva Gosvāmī is described as very fortunate and opulent, and Parīkṣit Mahārāja is enquiring how people can be saved from going to the hellish planets, and Prabhupāda explains this is the mood of the Vaiṣṇavas. We are enrolled in an institution where we can eventually become Vaiṣṇavas.

Lord Caitanya appeared in this world and started showering his causeless mercy on most fallen souls by giving them the Holy Name. He also ordered to His associates to go home to home and preach Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. Then Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura made a team. And they were going house to house in Navadwip. Some homes they went to, received them very warmly. They said, "Oh, you sādhus! have come to purify my contaminated house, and they

received them very nicely.” In some homes they went to, people would not even open their doors. They would say “you are spies; you are coming in the guise of old sādhus, to see what is inside our homes and then you will come and steal later on. Like this they said to Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura.”

And some homes they went to, people would say that when we came to Śrīvas Aṅgan you would not let us in. Now, tit for tat. We will not let you come into our house. Because when Lord Caitanya had started his saṅkīrtan movement and he was doing his exhaustive kirtans, only his most confidential devotees were allowed to gain access to this kirtan. At that time most of the Navadwip people would come, and they were not allowed when Lord Caitanya was displaying his ecstatic symptoms which he would only reveal to his most confidential devotees. Thus, many people of Navadwip would come and want access but they were denied. So when Nityānanda started to go from house to house these people would say, “When we wanted to come in, You would not let us come in, so now You cannot come in.”

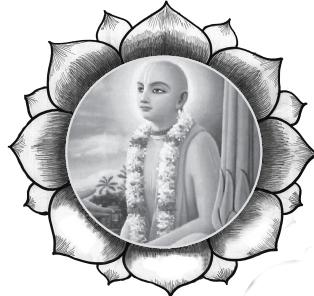
But still they persisted; even though Jagāi–Mādhāi had threatened them the previous day, still on Lord Caitanya’s order they went back the next day. So when we go for preaching and we find someone is receiving us, someone is insulting us, someone is refusing to talk to us, we do not feel bad. Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura had a similar reception. So we should tolerate it even if we get insulted and so on.

Prabhupāda says that the duty of all sane men is to save them by preaching. There are so many opportunities to

preach. We have harināmas, festivals, Bhakti-vrikshas, and book distribution. Prabhupāda said that of all the preaching activities, book distribution is the best. So we should take part in these activities and thereby perfect our life.



CHAPTER NINE



MOST CONFIDENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyaṁ
pavitraṁ idam uttamam
pratyakṣāvagamaṁ dharmyaṁ
susukhaṁ kartum avyayam*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.2)

“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.”

We are all very happy to be here in the Bhaktivedanta Yoga Center, also known as Bhakti Yoga Center. This is like an extension of the Marilyn University campus and can be called Bhaktivedanta Yoga Center extension, Marilyn University. We have many such campuses next to universities around the world and in some places, it is called Bhaktivedanta Yoga Center. Someone may question about the purpose of having a yoga center in a campus area. The purpose is to give people knowledge.

THE ART OF DYING

Most of us think that when we talk of knowledge we mean engineering, chemistry, physics, medical, accounting, law,

history, geography, sociology, languages, arts, martial arts, etc. We all know different aspects of learning in many universities and one can get a course on any subject one wants, just like Marilyn University offers a course in virtually everything. Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master was once giving a lecture in MIT, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to a very learned audience that comprised of professors, intellectuals, students, deans. Śrīla Prabhupāda opened his lecture with a question and asked if in that great university of United States of America there was any department that tells one what happens after death, if there was such a subject of matter. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda went on to explain how it was very important to understand the science “What happens after death?”

The Bhaktivedanta Yoga Center teaches people the art of living and the art of dying. One may say, “Art of dying! Why should we think about death? It is ridiculous to even entertain the thought. Hopefully in the next few years the scientists will come up with a formula that will throw the funeral homes out of business, they will be able to make a deathless society.” A Certain section of the society even thinks, “Death! That is a long way to go. I am just 20, 25, and 30. The average age of an American male is 70 years so even if I consider that I will live the average age and not beyond that, though everyone wishes to live beyond the average age, still I have a long way to go. So I don’t have to worry about that right away.” We may give various arguments to dismiss the concept of thinking what could happen after death or even think about death but the reality is that there is uncertainty in life everywhere. Am I right? You have been born and brought up in America

which is considered the world leader in technology and people all over the world flock to come to this country. Despite this can anyone deny that there is danger at every step and people are in pain over here?

PAIN MANAGEMENT

One devotee doctor was telling me that one of the new branches of medical science is a branch called “Pain Management.” Maybe you are aware of that but I was not quite aware. It is just a decorative term which means “how do you manage pain?” In North America, it is customary to use fancy titles that sound very decorative. Actually if one is in pain, where is the question of managing one’s pain? One can just try and take pain killer medicines and injections and try and reduce the pain! But calling it pain management makes it more interesting. Since people are in pain, there is a class of doctors specializing in pain management.

HOW TO AVOID DEATH

The reality then is that you may have the best of technology, you may have medical devices to keep people artificially alive, you may have medicines to keep the heart going, to keep your kidneys functioning but the reality is death is going to come anytime for anyone. Old age does not spare anyone. Do people get old in America? They do! Do people like to get old in America? No! You tell an old man how young he looks and he gets flattered and if you ever want to insult a young man, you just have to tell him how old he looks, he won’t even talk to you again, because nobody wants to identify with old age. You tell anyone, “You look 20, 10 years younger.” Our devotee Nṛsiṁhānanda said

that he is 44 years old and another devotee said that he didn't look 44, so he was very happy. The fact is nobody likes old age, nobody likes disease. The only people who like disease are, the doctors, hospitals, pharmaceutical manufacturers. If people don't get disease they will be out of business, the medical schools will be empty. So the fact is that the basic miseries of life go everywhere and this Bhakti Yoga Society is teaching people "How to become deathless" which has been an old challenge. This is what Kṛṣṇa Consciousness teaches— "how to avoid death."

IS THERE SEX AFTER DEATH?

Once our spiritual master was driving around in Los Angeles and he saw a big billboard which said "Is there sex after death?" Śrīla Prabhupāda commented on this, "So this is all they are thinking about even after death!" The point is what happens after death, what is our real constitutional position, how can we avoid miseries, how can we find real happiness—this is the subject matter of this ancient book of knowledge called the Bhagavad-gītā.

The verse is composed in the ancient Sanskrit language. Sanskrit may be foreign to many of us but it is not foreign to those who have studied languages. Sanskrit is without doubt the oldest language of the planet, even Latin and Greek derived a lot of their sources, information from the ancient Sanskrit language and so Sanskrit is considered the mother of all languages. Unfortunately, it is not as widely used as should be but that doesn't deny the fact that Sanskrit is a very ancient language. It is the language of the sages and it is the mother of all languages. The Bhagavad-gītā was composed in Sanskrit language and Kṛṣṇa here is saying that the knowledge in this book is

the king of education. The Bhagavad-gītā contains a summary of the vast Vedic knowledge just like we get to learn different subject matters in the University of Marilyn. So the Vedas contain great detail about the philosophy of life and how one should worship the God. This knowledge is so vast that even if one takes several years to study it, one would end up studying only a small portion.

THE KING OF EDUCATION

Here Kṛṣṇa says that this knowledge is the king of education. Someone may question how it is the king of education because certainly it is not that the moment one gets this knowledge, it is like getting a Harvard degree and one gets a job right away, so why is it called the king of education. It is called so because it educates one to understand material science and spiritual science.

The knowledge that we get in the universities and in the research institutes around the globe only helps us to understand how we can make the body more convenient, how we can give the body more sense enjoyment. Nothing beyond that is there. Is there any discussion about the spirit soul in any university in North America? No! Is there any such discussion around the world? No! So material knowledge only caters to the body and the extensions of the body, whereas spiritual knowledge caters to the needs of the individual namely the spirit soul.

MATERIAL PROBLEMS AND SPIRITUAL SOLUTIONS

The Bhagavad-gītā offers both material science and spiritual science, for example, America is facing a severe

drought in almost 50% of the territory. Some states like Montane a haven't had rain for 7 years in a row. There are over 1,000 forest fires blazing in this country and no fire brigade can put it off, people are just praying when rain will come and put it off. Fortunately, this country is blessed with so much land that even if there are 1,000 forest fires, there is enough land. And all this is connected to the discussion on Bhaktivedanta Yoga Center, the point that was made earlier, that the Bhagavad-gītā offers a material solution as well as a spiritual solution. In the third chapter, Kṛṣṇa gives us the science of attracting Indra's attention who is the demigod in charge of rain. In the third chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa says that food grains come from rainfall, rainfall comes from performing *yajña* or sacrifice and if there is no sacrifice, there will be no rainfall; further if there is no rainfall, the land cannot produce vegetables. When we go shopping to the super market we notice that we are paying about double for vegetables this year as compared to last year, if not double, we are paying significantly higher and we are paying high because the crop production has gone down because of drought etc. Very soon we will be paying a premium for honey also because the bees are not producing honey anymore. There is a bee shortage because of all these cell phones. These cell phones are producing so much of radio-active waves that the bees are losing their ability to navigate. By God's laws the bees can navigate and can come back to their bee hives but now they are not coming back and as a result the honey production is suffering and several fruits and flowers will not be taking birth anymore because they need the touch of these bees etc for their growth.

THE RESULT OF GREED

No amount of technology can adjust the global warming that we are seeing. Because of global warming, we are being warned that the world temperature is going to be higher and higher. I just heard that there was a heat wave in India in which several people died. The temperatures are getting warmer. The year 2006 was globally the warmest year in 100 years. The scientists took the aggregate temperature of the whole world and then calculated it. They found that 2006 was the warmest year in the last 100 years for which they have data. They are also projecting that in another 20 years England's climate is going to be as warm as India. England will also be warm like India but if England is going to get warm like India then the India is going to get as warm as the Sahara Desert. India is also getting warmer day by day, it is not that rest of the world will get warmer and India is going to get still. So what we are seeing is the result of global warming. One may ask, "Mahārāja what is the relation of all this with the Bhagavad-gītā?" We will see what the spiritual relation is. As we know, global warming is the result of too much emission release from factories, from cars, cutting the trees etc. In India to make the underground Metro in Delhi, they cut several thousand trees. When the trees are cut then it affects the clouds ability to absorb water and release it in the form of rain. The point is that material nature has been made by God in a very scientific way, more scientific than any scientist can dream of and when you play with material nature, the material nature hits back. The global warming that we are seeing is in simple language the result of mankind's greed to have more and more comforts.

SIMPLE LIVING AND HIGH THINKING

The Īśopaniṣad says, “*iśāvāsyam idam sarvam.*” man should accept as much as he needs and not more than what he needs for survival. While the Vedic scriptures say that our philosophy should be “simple living and high thinking,” our philosophy has now become “high living and simple thinking.” We want to live high, we want to be a step ahead of the neighbor, we want to be a step ahead in competition, we want to be a step ahead of everything, and we want so many automobiles on the road. When we study these automobiles, we can see that every big car is made to accommodate six people but if we take a look at the average car on the road, 95% of the cars have one person in it. Now whether the car carries one person or six people, it is the same amount of gas. So the point is that we want all these facilities, more cars, more this, more that and when we do all this, material nature cannot support it and when there is too much burden on the earth, mother earth hits back. So our philosophy is to practice what the Bhagavad-gītā teaches, “Simple living and high thinking.” Simple living does not mean that we sleep beneath a tree. What it means is that we live simply, minimize our bodily demands so that we can focus on spiritual life also.

WE ARE SELLING DIAMONDS

Kṛṣṇa then says that this knowledge is the king of education because it teaches us about our self, the difference between the body and the soul. One may ask why only a handful of people are interested in this philosophy. This is so because largely everybody wants to cater to the bodily demands and only a handful will be most intelligent. At one time, our spiritual master was in

Australia in a press conference when someone asked him, “If your bhakti yoga is so perfect, why the audience is not fully packed?” Śrīla Prabhupāda reminded the audience that we are selling diamonds which only a few will buy.

So the point is that this is the king of education because this knowledge educates us about the difference between body and spirit and also tells us how material nature works. For example, Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad-gītā that this material nature is working under His direction. We are not saying that one should not cultivate material knowledge, but as it is said in the ancient book called Śrī Īśopaniṣad, one should cultivate material knowledge and spiritual knowledge side by side. If we cultivate the two then we can have success and what this yoga centre is going to do, is give the students in Marilyn University an opportunity to cultivate material knowledge and spiritual knowledge side by side.

THE MOST SECRET OF ALL SECRETS

In this verse it is further said that this is the most secret of all secrets but one may ask why is it a secret? ISKCON devotees freely distribute Bhagavad-gītā on the road so what is the secret? When we have a Bhagavad-gītā discourse we don't screen our audience, we did not screen anyone before coming, we are discussing it publicly so how this can be called the most secret of all secrets? It should be understood that it is the most secret of all secrets from the angle that if one really wants to understand this knowledge, one has to take assistance of a genuine devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is but natural that if we want to understand someone, we can understand him through an agency. If we want to understand the United

States government, we naturally have to deal with the spokesperson of the government and this knowledge is the king of education but it can be understood with the help of a devotee of the Lord and if we get it through a devotee, we will get that potent knowledge as it is.

Further it is said that it is the purest knowledge. In brief, there are two types of knowledge, one is called “relative knowledge” and the other is called “absolute knowledge.” Relative knowledge may be true today, may not be true tomorrow but absolute knowledge, since it emanates from the Supreme Lord, is eternal and so is the purest knowledge. It is described as the purest knowledge as it comes from the purest personality—namely God. No matter which faith one belongs to, there is no one purer than God. We all say that God is great, “Allah o Akbar.” God is the purest and the greatest and since He is the purest, the knowledge coming from God is also pure. Pure knowledge does not suffer from any inability or any shortcoming. We may have a tendency to cheat, our senses are imperfect, we make mistakes, we get illusioned, but pure knowledge is not subject to these defects.

THE PERFECTION OF RELIGION

This verse says that it gives direct perception of the self by realization. This is not just some theoretical knowledge; it is a knowledge that can be put into practice. Someone may say, “Bhagavad-gītā was spoken some 5,000 years ago, and even before that it was spoken some millions of years ago. But now we are living in the modern day civilization and hence this knowledge is outdated. However, it is not outdated because it is coming from a perfect person and it

can be practiced in today's environment also. The essence of Bhagavad-gītā is not to preach inaction but to act for the pleasure of the Lord. One may be a professional, a student, it doesn't matter. We have thousands of students around the world who are Kṛṣṇa Conscious, still brilliant in their studies. One of our members graduated from the university at the age of 14 in America. He broke all records in America and then he finished his Ph.D. from the University of Oxford at the age of 19. So this philosophy can be practiced and this is the perfection of religion.

The real meaning of religion is to develop love of God. These days people argue, "My religion is better than your religion so I don't want to listen to you." But it doesn't matter what faith one belongs to, the essence of religion is to develop the love of God and to give up one's love for so-called sinful activities. Just like if one is diseased one just wants to see a doctor and doesn't care whether the doctor is South Indian or East Indian or North Indian or Indian or American or Russian, one just wants someone who can treat one. If there is fire, one just calls the fire brigade and doesn't necessarily say that he wants fireman from a particular nationality. The meaning of religion thus is to develop love of God and make one give up love for sinful activities.

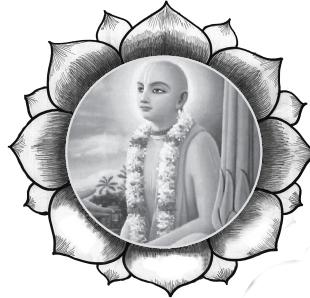
Religion must include the following ingredients: it must have the ingredient of austerity, it must have the ingredient of truthfulness, and it must have the ingredient of mercifulness and cleanliness. Austerity, truthfulness, mercifulness, and cleanliness are the four essential ingredients of religion and if these are absent then it cannot be accepted as a bonafide religion. So this

is the perfection of religion and it is everlasting which means it is permanent and not temporary, it is not limited to time and space, and it is permanent.

Just like this knowledge that we are reading was first given 5,000 years ago and prior to that it was given millions of years ago, so this knowledge is not something stale, it is not that one reads the Bhagavad-gītā today and says that it is stale. No, it is ever lasting, it is eternal because it is coming from the Supreme Lord and it is joyfully performed. In other words, anyone who takes to this process will experience real joy. We should not think that if I practice Kṛṣṇa Consciousness this will not give me real happiness. And also we should not think that it is a boring process. It is a process that gives ones real happiness and anybody who practices it can experience. This is a process that can be practiced by anyone around the globe.

Today the “Bhagavad-gītā As it is” has been translated in more than 100 international languages of the world. People are reading it all over the world and finding peace of mind, and so we can have Bhagavad-gītā study courses. Let people study these courses and see that here is the book that answers everyone’s questions. Here is the book that can help one find peace of mind, here is the book that can give one everlasting peace. This philosophy is practical and it is universal, it is not Indian or Hindu but it is Vedic and it is for the entire humanity and anyone who takes to it will experience unlimited happiness. So please take to it carefully, study it, practice it and perfect your life. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

CHAPTER TEN



DEVOTION WITH ATTENTION

*mahābhīṣeka-vidhiṇā
sarvopaskara-sampadā
abhiṣiccyāmbarākalpaire
gandha-mālyārhaṇādibhiḥ
tad-gatāntara-bhāvena
pūjayaṁ āsa keśavam
brāhmaṇāṁś ca mahā-bhāgān
siddhārthān api bhaktitāḥ*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.31)

Following the regulative principles of mahābhīṣeka, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa performed the bathing ceremony for the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa with all paraphernalia, and then he dressed the Deity with fine clothing, ornaments, fragrant flower garlands and other paraphernalia for worship of the Lord. With attention and devotion, he worshiped Kṛṣṇa and all the greatly fortunate brāhmaṇas who were free from material desires.

KING AMBARĪṢA

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam we read the glorious pastimes of King Ambarīṣa. Ambarīṣa Mahārāja was undoubtedly a great devotee of the Lord and was also the ruler of the

world. He was a ruler and a devotee at the same time. A person who is a ruler and a devotee at the same time is called a “Rājarṣi.” We read in Vedic history that there were several Rājarṣis and even Parīkṣit Mahārāja was a Rājarṣi. He was a king and a sage at the same time. He and his wife were both God conscious. Sometimes we see a situation where the husband is godly and the wife is not or the wife is godly and the husband is not but that creates an imbalance in the family situation. However, here we see that King Ambarīṣa and his wife were both completely Kṛṣṇa Conscious and they observed the vow of Ekādaśī and Dvādaśī for one full year.

When we observe Ekādaśī fast for one day, we are anxious to break it. But they observed Ekādaśī for one full year, and in the month of Kārtika after observing the vow for one year Ambarīṣa Mahārāja took bath and worshipped the Supreme Lord in the Madhuvan forest in Vṛndāvana. Since time immemorial Madhuvan is acknowledged as a forest where great sages have gone to practice meditation. There was another great sage, Dhruva Mahārāja, who practiced meditation and performed austerities there. In the Braja Maṇḍala Parikramā, also, we visit the Madhuvan forest.

ESSENCE OF EKĀDAŚĪ FASTING

It is explained that Mahārāja Ambarīṣa also performed a *mahā-abhiṣeka*. While he was fasting and observing Ekādaśī vows, he was also performing service. It was not like us, when we observe Ekādaśī vows, we don't do any service. Sometimes devotees would ask Prabhupāda if they should fast completely on Ekādaśī, even from water.

Prabhupāda said, “You can fast, but you should not fast and then go to sleep. If you want to fast then you can fast but make sure that you are also able to do your prescribed duties and devotional service.” If, for example, fasting puts one to sleep then it is better not to fast, instead take fruit *prāsāda* and still do one’s service, preaching, chanting, etc.

MAHĀ-ABHIŞEKA

Ambarīṣa Mahārāja followed the regulations and principles of *mahā-abhişeka*. *Abhişeka* is a process in which we bathe the Lord. All over the world in every ISKCON temple, we bathe the deities every day. Just like we take bath every day, some of us take bath twice or thrice a day. Similarly, the Lord also should be given bath every day. We see temples in India today where they have deities but unfortunately they don’t even change their dress every day, they don’t give them bath every day. But the proper etiquette is that deities must be bathed every day. In the temples, along with the big deities we often have small deities and the general tradition is that the small deities are representatives of the big deities. In this verse it is said that Ambarīṣa Mahārāja performed the *abhişeka* ceremony for his deities with all their paraphernalia and then he dressed deities with fine clothing, ornaments, fragmented garlands and, other paraphernalia for the worship of the Lord.

TWO TYPES OF TRANSCENDENTALISTS

A Vaiṣṇava acknowledges that the Lord is capable of descending in any form. There are transcendentalists that can be broadly divided into two categories, personalists

and impersonalists. When the impersonalists see a deity of the Lord in temple, they say that it is idol worship. Their argument is that the statue is made of marble or brass or wood or stone so how can one expect God to be present in this form. It is inconceivable for them but that is a limited vision of God. Just like in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.11 this conception of the Absolute Truth is explained as

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvam yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmeti
bhagavān iti śabdyate*

“The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding by the knower of the Absolute Truth, and all of them are identical. Such phases of the Absolute Truth are expressed as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.”

The Supreme can be realized in different phases- Brahman, Paramātmā, and ultimately in the ‘Bhagavān’ feature. The impersonalists argue that when God descends on this earthly planet, He becomes like one of us or even if He doesn’t become like one of us, He gets contaminated and there is no question of His body being transcendental. They further argue that if God is all pervasive- He is present everywhere- then how can God retain or have an individual form. The Vaiṣṇavas counteract this argument with several other logical arguments. For example, they say that if a sun disc can be in one location and still have the rays spread everywhere and this despite the fact that the sun disc is a material entity then why God can’t be all pervasive, why can’t He still be present in His original form.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave another example, if you take a piece of paper and then tear it in small pieces then, in material condition, the original paper is lost but Lord Kṛṣṇa though present everywhere in the form of His expansions still retains His original transcendental form. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad-gītā

*janma karma ca me divyam
evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā deham punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.9)

“One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.”

“My appearing and disappearing are both completely transcendental and anybody who understands it becomes free from the cycle of birth and death.” So when the Vaiṣṇavas hear and read about Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental and inconceivable pastimes, they are not shocked. Why, because they know that God can do anything.

KṛṣṇA IS INCONCEIVABLE

In the Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa gives suggestions on how we should think of Him. One of the things Kṛṣṇa tells is to think of Him as one who is inconceivable, which means that He is capable of doing things that one cannot imagine with one’s material senses. Just like if you tell scholars of today’s world that God appeared with four hands, ornamented, decorated with silk cloth and jewels and then at the request of His parents He converted

Himself into an ordinary two-armed child; they will say it is mythology or it is humanly impossible? Many years ago, we had a court case in Los Angles where the opposite party brought to the court a picture of Lord Nṛsiṁha deva and said, "My Lord, this is the god they worship, half man and half lion. Is it possible that God can be ever half man and half lion?" Naturally, the president of the jury said no to this concept. So the point is that people in general have very limited concept of God but in Vedic concept, we have far more details and comprehensive information about God than any other concept. It is described in Vedas how God is inconceivable and how He can appear in any form. When we read about Kṛṣṇa we see how He executed His wonderful transcendental pastimes and because He is God, He can appear as bear or tortoise or half lion or fish, etc.

ARCĀ-VIGRAHA

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes how Ambarīṣa Mahārāja worshipped the deity. He first bathed the deity. As we all know that after *mangala-ārati*, we close the curtains and sometimes people may wonder what is happening behind the curtain. They do not know that behind the curtains, the Lord gets undressed, gets bathed, His body is wiped and again decorated with fresh clothing and then He is also offered incenses, camphor, flowers, fan, etc. So the Supreme Lord descends in the *arcā-vigraha* form which may be made of stones, marble, brass, etc, but when that form is as per the direction of the scriptures and is installed by one of the Ācāryas then that form is non-different from the Lord Himself. This is not just academic understanding and can be realized only by one who executes the path of devotional service.

When He descends in His *arcā-vigraha* form, the Lord can take many forms. In the Washington temple, for example, there are deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Rādhā-Madana Mohan, and Sītā-Rāma Laksmaṇa Hanumān as God. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa himself it is therefore said, *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahi anya*. He appeared with His elder brother Nityānanda, who is an incarnation of Balarāma. Very soon a Ratha Yatra will be organized and in that Ratha Yatra, the forms of Lord Jagannāth, Subhadrā, and Balarāma are taken in a chariot procession. These are another form of the Lord that we see in many temples including Jagannāth Puri where we have a deity of Lord Jagannāth made of wood. Jagannāth means Lord of the universe

HERE IS GOD

So we see that the Lord descends in His *arcā-vigraha* form or deity form and Ambarīṣa Mahārāja as a king set his own personal example. He would go and dress the deities, bathe the deities, and worship the deity with various paraphernalia. He worshipped the deity with attention and devotion. When we come in front of the deity, we should not think in any way that we have come in front of a brass statue. If someone thinks with that mentality, that is very offensive. When we come in front of the deity, we should understand that here is God. In Second Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, it is described what one should do in front of a deity. The first thing that one should do is to fall flat in front of the deity or bow down. Śrila Śukadeva Gosvāmī says that a head that doesn't bow down before the Lord should be separated from the body. We should understand that the head that doesn't bow down before

the Lord is actually offensive. It pains us to see that so many thousands of Indians come to our temple but the tradition of bowing down seems to have vanished, we see them standing and doing *namaskār*.

We should understand that the deity is a personality. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the difference between deity worship and idol worship. He said that it is idol worship if one thinks of the deity as a statue but in deity worship, one says, “Here is God, He is living, witnessing, reciprocating.” In deity worship, we worship God with many endeavors as if He were personally present, for example, we feed the Lord seven times a day. Starting with 4:30 am, then 8:30 am, 12:30 pm, 4:15 pm, 7:00 pm, and then finally at 9:00 pm. someone may say, “God has such a big appetite? He eats seven times a day?” But why not? Lord Jagannāth in Jagannāth Purī eats 64 times a day, He eats all day. In Jagannāth Purī temple they have such a big kitchen where there is cooking and cooking offering them to the Lord. So the point is that God is unlimited.

GOD IS UNLIMITED

There is a story in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta where several devotees were coming and giving Lord Caitanya gifts of prasāda and the Lord would give all the food to His secretary Govind. The devotees would approach Govind and would say, “This is the prasāda we have cooked for Lord Caitanya, so please offer it to Him.” Govind would give it to Lord Caitanya who would ask him to keep it in the room next door. Several days went by when devotees were offering prasāda and Lord Caitanya would not eat. Finally, Govind said to the Lord, “These devotees are

cooking for you with so much love and they come and ask me whether Lord Caitanya ate the *prasāda* and I tell them, "Yes he ate it." Then they ask me, "Did He like it?" and I tell them, "Yes, He loved it," but actually all the *prasāda* is there in the room next door. Then Lord Caitanya said, "Ok, bring it to me" and He finally ate the *prasāda* that would have been normally consumed by 200 people. So that is God and God is unlimited.

THE PASTIME OF KṢĪRA-CORĀ-GOPĪNĀTHA

When we worship the *arcā-vigraha* form of the Lord, we should understand that here is God and that He witnesses everything and reciprocates with us based on our desires. In Caitanya-caritāmṛta we read a story of Mādhavendra Purī. When he went to Orissa, he saw Lord Gopīnātha in the temple of Remuṇā. In that temple, the sweet rice offered to the Lord is known as *amṛta-keli*, which means nectar produced in heaven. It is very delicious and when Mādhavendra Purī came to the temple, he developed a desire to taste the sweet rice they were offering to the Lord.

His intention was that when he would go back to his deity Gopāla in Govardhana; he would also cook nicely and offer the *amṛta-keli* to His deity. But he manifested his desire while the offering was being made to the deity and when he discovered this, he was so embarrassed and ashamed that he left the temple without tasting the sweet rice. The general tradition is that when we are cooking for the deities, we should be thinking that this *bhoga* is being cooked for the deities and when we transport it from the

kitchen to the altar, it should be covered so that no one can actually see it. The offering should then be made with the chanting of mantras and then fifteen minutes later or half an hour later, the *prāsāda* is lifted out. It is important that at least fifteen minutes should be given to the Lord to eat as if one gets too fast in eating, it causes indigestion.

One should not be thinking, “Oh! I am cooking this nice pizza for myself, let me just offer to Krishna for 1 second in altar and then take it and eat it.” That is not a proper mentality. However, Mādhavendra Purī was not selfish and was a very exalted Vaiṣṇava. He wouldn’t even eat anything till somebody offered it to him but because he manifested the desire to taste the sweet rice when the offering was being made, he felt very embarrassed and left without tasting the sweet rice. He left the temple of Remunā and went to the market place to chant Hare Krishna.

The Lord knew that Mādhavendra Purī wanted to taste the sweet rice. So He stole a pot of sweet rice and hid it behind the curtain. The *pūjārī* of Gopinātha saw in a dream that Lord had hidden a pot of sweet rice for His devotee and that the devotee could be found in the market place where he would be chanting Hare Krishna Mahamantra. The Lord asked the *pūjārī* in dream to go and find the devotee and give him the sweet rice. When the *pūjārī* had this dream, he couldn’t believe that the Lord indeed stole a pot of sweet rice and hid it behind the curtain. He said, “Impossible! Anyway let me go and check if it is true or not.” So in the morning after having his bath, he woke up deities and when he went and saw behind the curtain, there was a cup of sweet rice.

The *pūjārī* didn't know who Mādhavendra Purī was and wondered who this fortunate person was, for whose pleasure the Lord stole the sweet rice. So he went to the market place and shouted, "Is there anyone by the name Mādhavendra Purī?" When Mādhavendra Purī heard his name being called, he said, "Yes I am Mādhavendra Purī." The *pūjārī* then said, "Do you know how fortunate you are? For your pleasure the Lord stole this pot of sweet rice and hid it behind the curtains." Hearing this, Mādhavendra Purī's happiness knew no bounds. When he saw that the Lord had personally stolen the sweet and got the sweet rice, he broke the clay cup into pieces and had tied it down to his dhoti. Every day he would take one piece and lick it. Gradually, the word spread in the whole town that there was a devotee there for whose pleasure the Lord stole the sweet rice.

So wherever Mādhavendra Purī travelled, huge crowds of people would assemble and say, "Here is that fortunate devotee for whose pleasure Lord stole the sweet rice." But Mādhavendra Purī didn't like his being adorned and worshipped by so many people, so he left for Jagannāth Purī. So in this story we see how the Lord stole sweet rice *bhoga* for his devotee.

IF YOU CAN TALK THEN YOU CAN ALSO WALK

Lord Caitanya was very fond of the pastime of Sākṣigopāla. In that pastime, we see how an old *brāhmaṇa* was rich and promised his daughter in marriage to a poor *brāhmaṇa*. When the old *brāhmaṇa* went back to his home and told his wife and son how he had been saved

by a young selfless *brāhmaṇa* and in reciprocation he had offered his daughter in marriage to him. The wife said, "If you marry my daughter to the poor *brāhmaṇa*, I'll commit suicide," and the son said, "No, my sister can't be married to a poor *brāhmaṇa*."

Sometime elapsed and when the poor *brāhmaṇa* didn't hear from the rich *brāhmaṇa*, he went to the rich man and said, "Sir, remember you promised something on the pilgrimage?" The old man was in a fix and though he really wanted to honor his promise, but his family was putting pressure and he just kept himself quiet. Then the poor *brāhmaṇa* came back with other *brāhmaṇas* to remind the rich man of his promise. The rich man kept quiet and anyway he couldn't speak a lie. His son however said, "You *brāhmaṇas*, do you know what this *brāhmaṇa* did when my father was in pilgrimage? He drugged him up. Do you think my rich father would ever agree to marry his daughter to the poor *brāhmaṇa*?" The whole *brāhmaṇa* community then turned against the poor *brāhmaṇa* and said, "You are such a liar and greedy. You brought us here saying that this old man has promised you his daughter in marriage." So there was argument and the young *brāhmaṇa* said, "No, they are lying." The old *brāhmaṇa*'s son then asked, "Do you have any proof that my father promised my sister in marriage to you?" And the poor *brāhmaṇa* said, "Yes, I have a proof." Upon being asked what the proof was, he said, "The deity of Gopāla." Hearing this, the rich *brāhmaṇa*'s son laughed, and said, "The deity of Gopāla! You mean that the deity would justify that my father promised my sister in marriage! Are you crazy? Can a statue justify?" The young *brāhmaṇa*

said that the deity could. The rich *brāhmaṇa*'s son then said, "Ok, if your deity, that statue will testify then I will give my sister in marriage to you." So the young *brāhmaṇa* went to the deity.

The young *brāhmaṇa* travelled from Vidya Nagar to Vṛndāvana, to the deity of Gopāla and said, "My Lord You know the old man who had promised his daughter to me in marriage. But now they are saying that I drugged him up. Please save my honor. I am your beloved devotee." The deity took sympathy on the *brāhmaṇa* and said, "I can't walk so far, I am a deity." Hearing this, the *brāhmaṇa* said, "My dear Lord, if You can talk, You can also walk." Then an agreement was made that the deity would walk behind the *brāhmaṇa* and if he ever looked back, the deity would stop walking. The *brāhmaṇa* knew from ankle bells of deity that the deity was walking. Finally, after walking a long distance, the deity came to Vidya Nagar and testified. The deity was thereafter being worshipped in Vidya Nagar and after the king of southern India got defeated by the king of Orissa, the deity was brought from Vidya Nagar to where it is now, near Jagannāth Purī.

DIVINE APPERANCE OF RĀDHĀ-RAMANA

The important point is that there are so many other stories to show how these deities are non-different from the Lord who actually descend in His *arcā-vigraha* form. There is another famous pastime of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī who was worshipping the Dāmodara śīlā. At one time Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī went to Gaṇḍakī river and while taking bath few śīlās came in his hand. He tried to place them

back in the river, but every time he placed the śīlās in the river, they would jump back into his hands. So he finally concluded that the Lord wanted him to worship them and thus brought the śīlās back with him. The big śīlās are normally worshipped in a very simple way with sandalwood, *tulasī*, and water. One day a businessman gave very opulent paraphernalia like silk sārīs and jewellery to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and he was now thinking what to do with all the paraphernalia. If he had a deity he could have made clothes but for the śīlās one doesn't need a silk sārī and jewellery. He went to sleep meditating thus and when he woke up in the morning, he saw that the Dāmodara śīlā had transformed itself into a deity. That deity is still being worshipped in the Rādhā-ramaṇa temple in Vṛndāvana. So that śīlā manifested as a deity and then Rādhā Rāṇī was added and it became Śrī Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa temple. Rādhā-ramaṇa means one who gives pleasure. So it was a Śāligrāma śīlā which is a form of the Lord who appears as stone and this form of Lord is non-different from the Lord Himself.

THREE TYPES OF BIRTHS

So deity worship is one of the processes of worship. If one is initiated as *brāhmaṇa* then one can worship the deity. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Nārada Muni says that a civilized being has three births, the first birth is from the womb of the mother that is called *śaukra-janma*, the next birth is when one gets initiated by a bonafide spiritual master, *hari-nāma dīkṣā* and this birth is called *sāvitra-janma*. The third one is realized when one gets initiated in chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra and that is called *yajñika-janma*. Once one is initiated as *brāhmaṇa*, one is qualified to cook for the deities, bath the deities, and worship the Śāligrāma śīlā.

OUR STANDARD

Generally, the devotees say, “I will only eat *prāsāda* that is offered to the deity,” and the devotees do not eat something which is not offered to deity. We have a famous story of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswati Ṭhākura. When he was five year old, he was trained by his father to eat only what is offered to the deity and not eat anything without offering. So Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta was only five year old when one day he ate a mango without offering it to the deity. His father very kindly rebuked him in a nice way and said, “My dear son, this is wrong. You shouldn’t have eaten mango without offering to deity.” Since that day Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta never ate mango in his entire life. He said, “I offended when I was young,” and even when his disciples would offer him mangoes, he would not eat it. So our standard should be that we will only eat *prāsāda* offered to the deities.

CLEANLINESS AND PUNCTUALITY

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has listed in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* thirty two items of offenses in worshipping the deities. Regarding deity worship on the altar, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that two things are essential, one is punctuality and the other is cleanliness. The altar should be clean and the offerings and *ārati* should be on time. Unfortunately in India, even in big temples, nowadays the *āratis* are on variable times. In winter, they perform *ārati* whenever the *pūjārī* gets up, they have a fluctuating schedule. In ISKCON temples, however, we perform *āratis* punctually. Even in Moscow temple where the temperature is minus thirteen in winters, we do *mangala-ārati* at 4:15 am and

devotees get up for the *ārati*. So the deity worship must be punctual and it must be based on cleanliness.

SERVICE OF DEITIES

There are thirty two offenses that one should avoid in worshipping the deity though we can't list them all here. A few of them are to talk in front of deity, to eat in front of deity, to praise somebody in front of deity, to favor somebody in front of deity, to criticize in front of deity, to sit with back towards deities, to sit with legs towards the deity, to sit with ankle at height in front of deity, to be worshipped in front of deity, etc.

We worship Śrīla Prabhupāda in front of deity because he is a very pure devotee having very exalted status. But we all should not be worshipped in front of deity nor should we glorify anyone in front of deity. Also the deities should be offered opulence according to our ability. It is not that though we have our ability, we offer the deity *patram puṣpam phalam toyam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda wants to say is that if one has nothing else to offer then one should offer at least *patram puṣpam*, or something like this, not that we eat *samosa*, *kachoris*, *pakoras* in golden, silver plates and to the deities we offers *patram puṣpam*. Ambarīṣa Mahārāja worshipped the deities with all the opulent paraphernalia. The deities should be offered maximum opulence as per one's ability.

EVERY CORNER THERE IS A MOSQUE

In Middle East we see that in every corner there is a mosque. In Dubai when I was walking, I saw that in every corner, one doesn't even walk two blocks and there is a

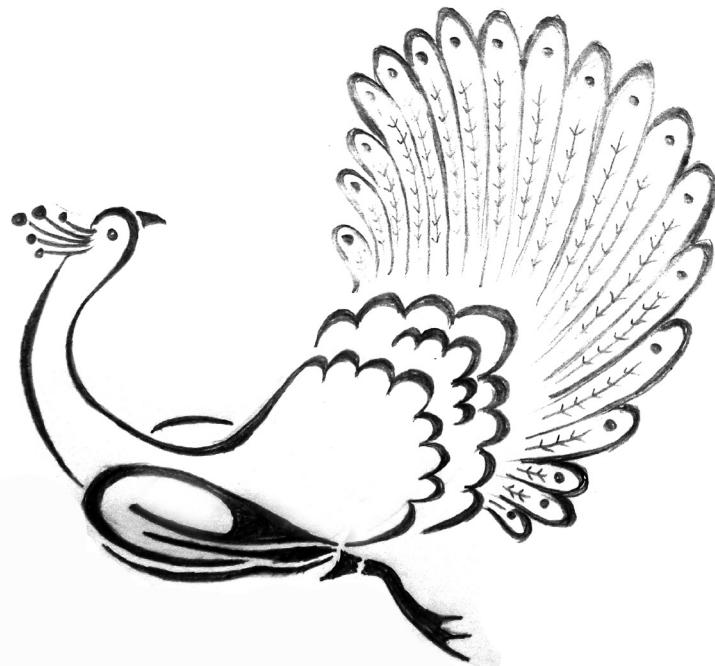
mosque. So I asked the devotees if these mosques were made by the government and they said that they were actually made by individuals. The moment a Mohammedan makes money, the first thing he wants to do is to make a mosque and then he will make his own house. But in case of Hindus, they first store up money for ten generations, and then they give some money for temples.

In ancient times, traditionally all the big temples in south India, north India were made by kings. Similarly in Europe, all major churches were made by kings in the past. So if we have money, we should use this money to make temple for the Lord, and worship the deity according to the *pāñcarātrika* system. In *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has given a very detailed explanation about the process of deity worship and we should realize that this deity is non-different from the Lord. As one worships the deity, one gets more attached to the deity and less attached to the illusory energy.

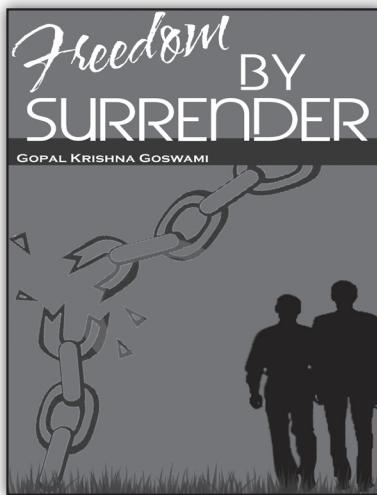
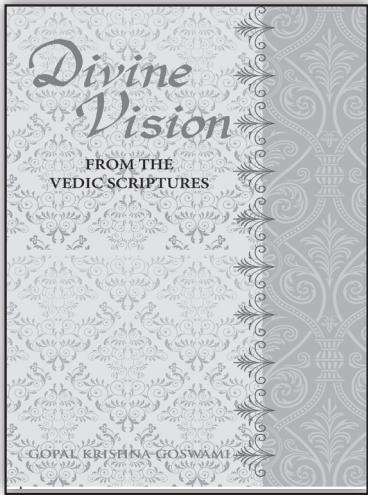
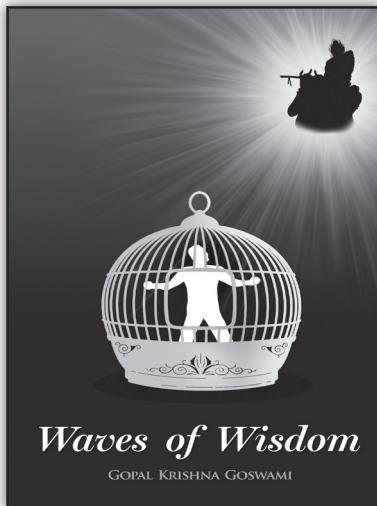
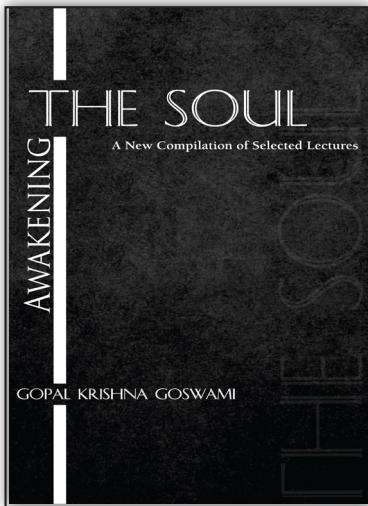
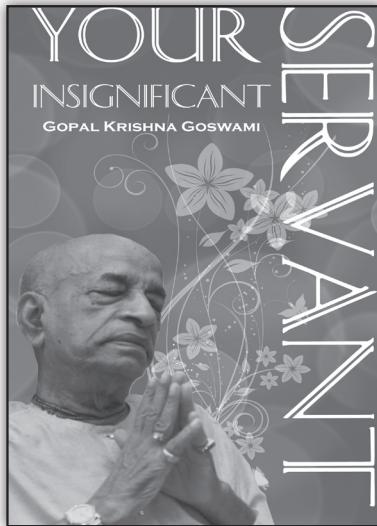
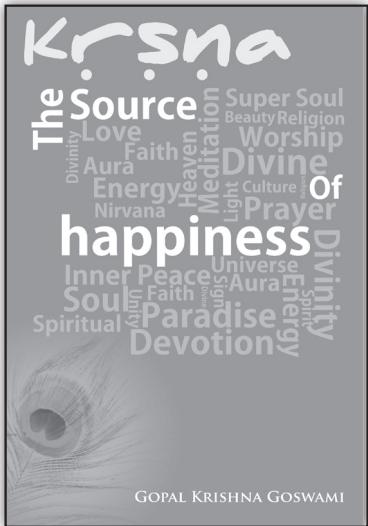
ĀRYA-SAMAJĪ

A few months ago a big lawyer came to see me in Delhi and I told my secretary to take him for *darshan* in the temple but he was hesitating in going up. I tried so many times and so hard, I told my secretary to take him for one minute but he was giving so many arguments why he didn't want to go up. Finally, I discovered that the man was an Ārya-samajī; he comes from a sect who doesn't believe in deity worship. There are several classes of impersonalists in India who won't even go in front of the deities, thinking that it's an offense to go but that is a very limited concept of God.

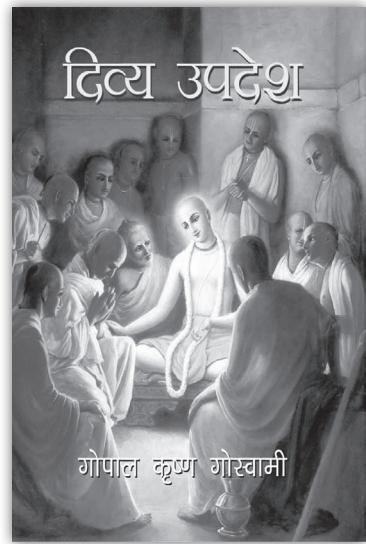
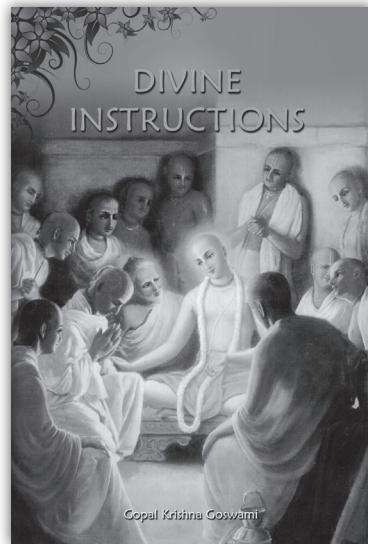
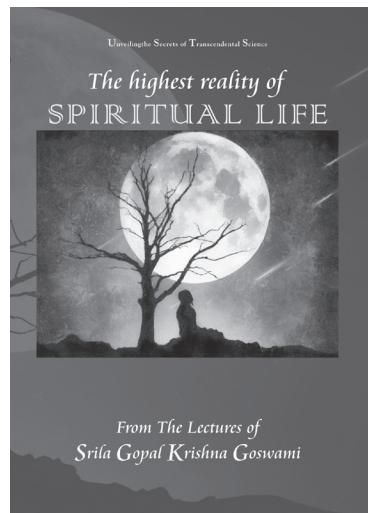
Those who deride this form of the Lord are people with less intelligence. This verse thus explains how Ambarīṣa Mahārāja worshipped the deity and that we should understand that deity is non-different from the Lord who is capable of descending in any form, even that of a tiny Śāligrāma śilā, and this form is non-different from the Lord Himself.



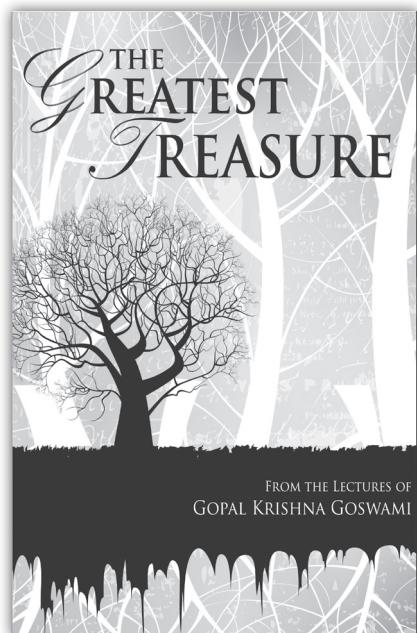
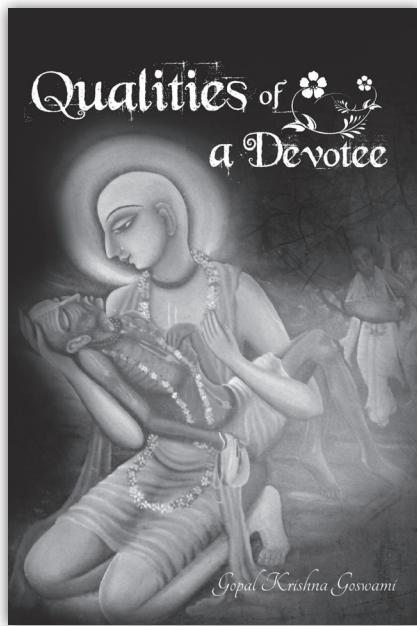
BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR



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नायं देहो देहभाजां नृलोके कष्टान्कामानहर्ते विडभुजां ये।

जीवन की पूर्णता



क्षमा आपको कभी लौंगा है कि
आपके जीवन का लक्ष्य क्या है?

गोपाल कृष्ण गोख्वामी

तपो दिव्यं पुत्रका येन सत्त्वं शुद्धयेद्यस्माद्ब्रह्मसौख्यं त्वनन्तम्॥

नायं देहो देहभाजां नृलोके कष्टान्कामानहर्ते विडभुजां ये।

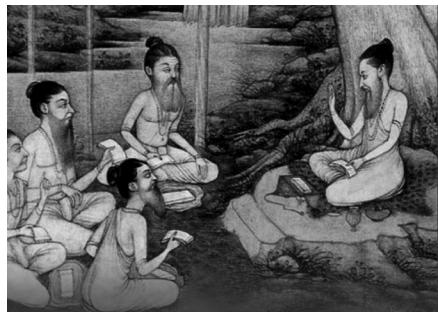
The Purpose of Life



Did You Ever Wonder
What Your Purpose in Life is?

GOPAL KRISHNA GOSWAMI

तपो दिव्यं पुत्रका येन सत्त्वं शुद्धयेद्यस्माद्ब्रह्मसौख्यं त्वनन्तम्॥



SĀDHU-SĀNGA

THE BIRTHPLACE OF BHAKTI



GOPAL KRISHNA GOSWAMI