

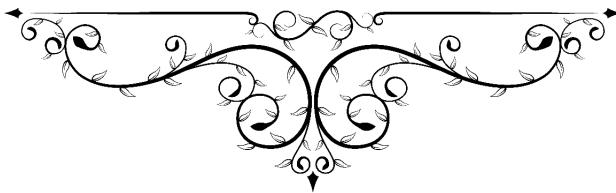
The
Purpose of
Life



*grantha-dvāra vaisnava-janer krpa pāi
vaisnava-krpāy krsna-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.”

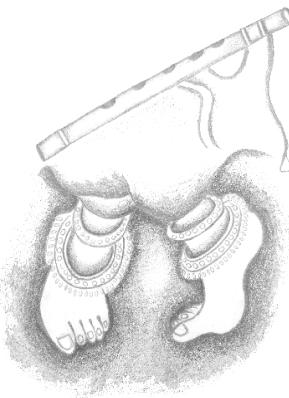
(From *Sri Sri Kalyana Kalpa-taru* by
Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)



The
Purpose of
Life

SRILA GOPAL KRISHNA GOSWAMI





COMPILED & PUBLISHED

SARVASA KSHI DASA

ISKCON, Sri Sri Radha Govind Mandir,
Gita Bhawan, Ashoka Enclave-II,
Sec-37, Faridabad
Mobile: +91-9311197714
sarvasakshi.gkg@gmail.com

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CONTACT US

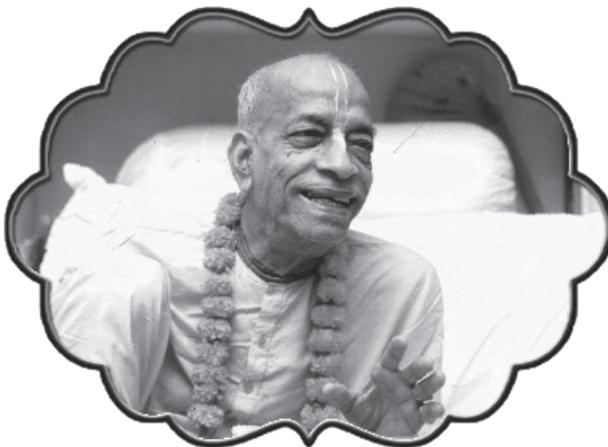
Golden Age Media
Nandgopal Jivan Dasa
Mobile: +91-8506805060
E-mail: ngjd.gkg@gmail.com
Web: www.goldenagemedia.org

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Dedication



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



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Introduction

Thousands of years ago during its glorious days, India was known as Bhāratavarsa. This pious land was named after the powerful and generous King Bharata who was also a saintly devotee of Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa. King Bharata was not merely the ruler of one country, but he was the emperor of the entire world!

According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, once, King Rṣabhadeva, the illustrious father of the famous Bharata Mahārāja, sat down with His one hundred sons to teach them the ultimate purpose of human life. He told them not to waste their vital energy enjoying their bodies. He explained that among the millions of varieties of living entities, only the human being can perform penances and austerities to attain permanent divine pleasure in the unlimited dimension of the soul.

Living a life in pursuit of sense gratification, said the King, means wasting the human potential by simply imitating the dogs and hogs who eat stool in the street. Attachment to sex life, which is the main illusion of this world, binds one to the misconception of “I” and “mine.” One thus becomes trapped in the prison house of the material world to suffer the miseries of repeated birth and death.

King Rṣabhadeva stressed that human life is especially meant for the revival of our relationship with the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, and to achieve this, all kinds of austerities and penances should be accepted. In twenty seven beautifully composed Sanskrit verses, King Rṣabhadeva taught his sons precisely how to attain peace, happiness, and the perfection of life. He was both a master of brevity and profundity. Indeed, true eloquence is essential truth spoken concisely.

“The Purpose of Life” is a series of compiled lectures of Srila Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī on teachings of Lord R̄śabhadeva. In this book Srila Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī expands these verses in the context of the modern paradigm. He expertly shows how the “so-called” modern man is actually nothing more than a polished animal. The timeless teachings of King R̄śabhadeva are as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago in the land of Bharata. In the words of the author, “Here we are living in twentieth century Uzbekistan, yet on all sides we see everyone engaged in sense gratification.” In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “The instructions of R̄śabhadeva are very essential at the present moment” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.1 purport). King R̄śabhadeva set the ideal example of what He Himself defined as a true guru, father, or teacher. Parents must not only train their children to be educated and cultured, but also teach them how to realize God, and go back home, back to Godhead. Reading and following these beneficial instructions one can discover the real purpose of life and advance on the path of devotion.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the devotees who helped me to compile and publish this wonderful book for the pleasure of Vaiṣṇavas. First and foremost I would like to thank Sītārāṇī Devī Dāsī for her editorial service. I would also offer thanks to Anuttama Hari Dāsa for the layout. We pray to our worshipable deities Sri Sri Rādhā Pārthaśārathī to bless them all with pure devotion.

Sarvasākṣī Dāsa
Lord Balarama Appearance,
19 August 2005,
New Delhi, India.



7

ETERNAL BLISS

*r̄śabha uvāca
 nāyam deho deha-bhājām nr̄loke
 kaṣṭān kāmān arhate viḍ-bhujām ye
 tapo divyam putrakā yena sattvam
 suddhyed yasmād brahma-saukhyam tv anantam*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 5.5.1)

Lord R̄śabhadeva told His sons, “My dear boys, of all the living entities who have accepted material bodies in this world, one who has been awarded this human form should not work hard day and night simply for sense gratification, which is available even for dogs and hogs that eat stool. One should engage in penance and austerity to attain the divine position of devotional service. By such activity, one’s heart is purified, and when one attains this position, he attains eternal, blissful life, which is transcendental to material happiness, and which continues forever.”

In this verse Lord R̄śabhadeva tells His sons about the importance of human life. The word *deha-bhājām* refers to anyone who accepts a material body, but the living

entity who is awarded the human form must act differently from animals. Animals like dogs and hogs enjoy sense gratification by eating stool. After undergoing severe hardships all day, human beings are trying to enjoy themselves at night by eating, drinking, having sex, and sleeping. At the same time, they have to properly defend themselves. However, this is not human civilization. Human life means voluntarily practicing suffering for advancement in spiritual life. There is, of course, sufferings in the lives of animals and plants, which are suffering due to their past misdeeds. However, human beings should voluntarily accept suffering in the form of austerities and penances in order to attain divine life. After attaining this divine life, one can enjoy happiness eternally. After all, every living entity is trying to enjoy happiness, but as long as one is encaged in the material body, he has to suffer different kinds of misery. A higher sense is present in the human form. We should act according to superior advice in order to attain eternal happiness and go back to Godhead.

It is significant in this verse that the government and the natural guardian, the father, should educate subordinates and raise them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, every living being suffers in this cycle of birth and death perpetually. To relieve them from this bondage and enable them to become blissful and happy, *bhakti-yoga* should be taught. A foolish civilization neglects to teach people how to rise to the platform of *bhakti-yoga*. Without Kṛṣṇa consciousness a person is no better than a hog or dog. The instructions of Rṣabhadeva are very essential at the present moment. People are being educated

and trained to work very hard for sense gratification, and there is no sublime aim in life. A man travels to earn his livelihood, leaving home early in the morning, catching a local train, and being packed in a compartment. He has to stand for an hour or two in order to reach his place of business and then he takes a bus to get to the office. At the office, he works hard from nine to five; then he takes two or three hours to return home. After eating, he has sex and goes to sleep. For all this hardship, his only happiness is a little sex – *yan maithunādi-grhamedhi-sukham hi tuccham* (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.45). Rṣabhadeva clearly states that human life is not meant for this kind of existence, which is enjoyed even by dogs and hogs. Indeed, dogs and hogs do not have to work so hard for sex. A human being should try to live in a different way and should not try to imitate dogs and hogs. The alternative is mentioned. Human life is meant for *tapasya*, austerity, and penance. By *tapasya*, one can get out of the material clutches. When one is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service, his happiness is guaranteed eternally. By taking to *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service, one's existence is purified. The living entity is seeking happiness life after life, but he can make a solution to all his problems simply by practicing *bhakti-yoga*. Then he immediately becomes eligible to return home, Back to Godhead. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*janma karma ca me divyam
evam 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.”

THE LORD INCARNATES AS R̄ŚABHADEVA

This verse is one of the most important verses in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and Śrīla Prabhupāda has quoted this verse extensively and lectured on it many many times. In this chapter, there is the description of “*bhāgavata-dharma*”—religious principles and devotional service that transcends religious principles from liberation and the mitigation of material miseries.

King R̄śabhadeva was the son of a great King called King Nābhi, whose wife’s name was Merudevī. King Nābhi was a very religious, God conscious person. He was performing a *yajña* with the desire to have a son like God, and was praying, “My dear Lord, please, may I have a son who is exactly like You.” However, the Lord replied, “Nobody can be exactly like Me.” Who can be like God? The Lord said, “Nobody can be like Me but since you want a son like Me, I will incarnate Myself.” In Sanskrit, the word “*r̄śabha*” means the best. In fact, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the best of all. King R̄śabhadeva was the emperor of the whole planet and He had one hundred sons.

FUTILITY OF SENSE ENJOYEMENT

Here we see the King delivering a lecture to an assembly in which there are many learned sages including all His sons. He said “My dear boys, of all the living entities who

have accepted material bodies in this world, one who has been awarded this human form of life should not work hard day and night simply for sense gratification, which is available even to dogs and hogs that eat stool.” Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva makes a point, which has been explained again and again in the scriptures, “Stop using this human life for sense enjoyment.” He says that this sense enjoyment is also available to dogs and hogs that eat stool. We are mad after sense enjoyment, mad after sex life, mad after so many objects of sense enjoyment but we do not realize that the animals are ten steps ahead of us in sense gratification. The pigeons have sex over fifty times a day and monkeys also have sex for over forty to fifty times a day. They are far ahead of the human beings.

Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva makes the point that one can get sense enjoyment even in lower forms of life. Now that this human form of life is obtained after so many millions of births and deaths, why must one waste this valuable human body? So “*deha-bhājām*” means anyone who accepts a human body. The human body is different from animals. Animals cannot think beyond eating, sleeping, defending and mating. In no part of the world have we seen the government passing legislations for animals. Is there any school for animals in Russia? Is there any nursery? This shows that human life is more important than animal life. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* explains that this human form must not be used for sense gratification but for inquiring about the goal of life. The same theme is being emphasized again and again in the Vedic Scriptures, “Give up sense enjoyment.”

The King says further, “One must engage in penances

and austerities.” Why? Because, without penances and austerities one cannot engage in devotional service. Now many may say, “*Mahārāja*, to talk is easy. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is saying that give up sense enjoyment and you are also asking us to give up sense enjoyment. It is very easy for you to say — “give up sense enjoyment.” But, here we are, living in twentieth century Uzbekistan. All around us, we are seeing everyone engaged in sense gratification. My relatives want sense enjoyment, my friends want sense enjoyment. In fact, when I tell them to give up sense gratification they think that I am crazy. So, how can I give up sense enjoyment?” In many countries like America, if a child is not engaged in sense enjoyment from a young age, the parents force the child, “Come on boy, you must socialize, you must do this, you must do that.”

Therefore, how to give up sense enjoyment? We should take the challenge ahead of us. What is the purpose of sense enjoyment? The purpose of sense enjoyment is happiness! Everything that we try to do in the material world is aimed at one goal, which is happiness. People are thinking that if they can make money, they will be happy. Why do people become happy when they make money? Because then they can enjoy more, they can live in big houses, they can drive Mercedes cars, as a result of which everyone will say “Oh! This man is very rich, he can go anywhere in the world and he may have many girlfriends or boyfriends or whatever.” Everybody wants money and this is why they want it.

But what do the *Vedās* say? They say that sense enjoyment will never really satisfy you. In support of this statement

there is a very nice example of King Yayāti. In the material world, most of the people expect to live for one hundred years or a hundred and twenty years. But then the last thirty to forty years are spent in miseries of old age. This means that even if one wants sense enjoyment, one can only have it till the age of fifty, sixty, or seventy. Once upon a time there was a King called Yayāti who was able to engage in sense enjoyment for ten thousand years. Can you imagine? This is a real story, which Śrīla Prabhupāda narrated. Even after engaging himself in sense enjoyment for ten thousand years, he did not feel satisfied, he said, “I am simply like a lusty goat that can never be satisfied.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda often used to give the example of a lusty goat. If a goat is grazing in front of a slaughterhouse and it gets a chance for mating, it will gladly avail it. It does not matter to the goat whether it will be slaughtered within a few minutes or not. This is the mood of the foolish human being too.

THE HIGHER STANDARD OF HAPPINESS

One can give up sense enjoyment only if one is able to discover a higher standard of happiness. *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms this

*viśayā vinivartante
 nirāhārasya dehinah
 rasa-varjam raso 'py asya
 param drṣṭvā nivartate*

(Bhagavad-gītā 2.59)

“The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher

taste, he is fixed in consciousness.”

Different entities have adopted different standards of happiness. One who has spiritual understanding is satisfied with whatever is provided to him by the will of God. Now, Lord Kṛṣṇa is explaining that sense gratification can be given up only if one is engaged in devotional service.

WHY SERVE THE GOD

For engaging in devotional service, two ingredients are obligatory. What are they? Penance and austerities. Without penance and austerities, one can not engage in devotional service. What is devotional service? To serve God with love — not by force but with love. We were recently talking to a man in Delhi, he asked, “What is the use of serving God? God has everything. He does not need anything from us. Why are we wasting our time in serving God?”

I asked him, “Do you have a child?”

He said, “Yes.”

I asked him, “If the child comes on his own and asks, “Daddy, what can I do for you? Here is a small gift, which I bought for you.” Do you feel happy at that time?”

He said, “Yes, I feel great satisfaction.”

I said, “God also feels the same pleasure.”

Without doubt, all the money one has; all the intelligence one has, is coming from God. One’s eyes through which we see are coming from God. The energy

to talk is coming from God. The ability to hear; the ability to smell; the ability to walk; everything is coming from God. So if all these abilities are offered back to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord feels great satisfaction.

THE PILLARS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

What are the austerities and penance that Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva is talking of in this verse? If one reads *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* carefully, one will come across examples of many different types of austerities. Is anyone aware of the austerities performed by Dhruva Mahārāja? During the first month, he ate fruit and berries every third day only to keep his body and soul together. He was not eating *samosās*, *kachories*, *pakoras*, etc. Then in the second month, he ate dry grass and leaves only once in six days, not fruit and berries but dry grass, this also once every six days. If we start eating once every six days, our cooks will have a feast and they will be happy. The *bhoga* bill will go down. In the third month, he drank only water once every nine days. In the fourth month, Dhruva Mahārāja became a complete master of the breathing exercise thus, he was only inhaling air every twelfth day. By the fifth month, he had controlled his breathing so perfectly that he was able to stand on only one leg, just as a column stands without motion.

Fortunately, one does not have to be so austere! We only have to follow a light package of austerities. In fact, they are not even austerities. It is full of bliss but in the beginning it appears to be austere. What is our austerity package? — No meat eating including garlic, eggs and

fish; no intoxication including tea and coffee; no illicit sex and no gambling.

These are the four pillars of spiritual life. When one does not follow them and engages in these very sinful activities, they become the pillars of sinful life. So many people talk about religion in this country and all over the world but no one talks about these four principles of spiritual life. So many big preachers talk about God and give lectures which are attended by hundreds and thousands of people at a time. Why do they not speak of the four principles of religion? They are too afraid to tell the audience about the need for austerities because if they do so, the people will go away.

AUSTERITIES FOR THIS AGE

The austerity for this age is to restrain from sinful activities. How does one get the strength to perform austerities? The strength to perform austerities comes from rendering devotional service. How does that happen? As one renders devotional service, there is reciprocation from the Lord. What is that reciprocation? Satisfaction! When a hungry man puts food in his stomach, the stomach feels full and he gets satisfaction. Similarly, as one serves the Supreme Lord through the process of devotional service, one experiences satisfaction.

Lord Kṛṣṇa does not tell us to not eat, rather He tells us to eat to our full satisfaction, but only *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. He advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*yat karosi yad aśnāsi
yaj juhoši dadāsi yat*

*yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva mad-arpānam*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.27)

“Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform — do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering to Me.”

Anyone who has eaten *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* will acknowledge that *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* is more delicious than the rubbish we used to eat before coming to devotional service. Many years ago, we were in New Zealand. We went with one of the leaders to meet the Prime Minister. As soon as we walked into the Prime Minister’s office, he asked where was his *samosā*. He was so used to eating *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. Therefore, only eat *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*.

This *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* purifies the mind and the soul. A man is known by the food he eats — “You are what you eat.” By eating *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, the mind automatically gets purified, the intelligence becomes sharp and with sharp intelligence one can discriminate between what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, one should eat *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* and distribute *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that in Kali-Yuga one can win over people through their belly. Everyone wants to eat, so give them *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*.

We have everything under the sun. One of our devotees published a thick cook book called “Vegetarian Cooking.” Four years ago, it was acclaimed as the best cook book of the year. It was written by a lady disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Yamunādevī. She also sang “*Govindam ādi-puruṣam*” prayer that we hear every day in ISKCON temples. She published a two-thousand-page book called “Vegetarian Cooking” which can be consulted when cooking for Lord

Kṛṣṇa. People are buying it like hot cake. This book has recipes of dishes which we can offer to Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is not that we have only rice, *dāl*, *sabzi*, and *chapāti* in our menu. We have thousands of items in our menu, more than the *karmīs* have. So, eat *kṛṣṇa-praśāda*. Is this a difficult austerity? No, it is not.

Everybody wants to chant and dance. This morning, while the devotees were dancing in *kīrtana*, an outsider would have thought that they were drunk. In the material society, one never sees people dancing without getting drunk. When devotees chant and dance, the *karmīs* say that the devotees look intoxicated and they must be crazy. Yes, we are intoxicated but with love of God, not with alcohol.

The Vedic system is so complete that if a man and a woman want to get together then there has to be institutional marriage. This is also an austerity for this age. Lord Rāshabhadeva is telling His sons and the sages gathered there, “Do not move around like cats and dogs but practice austerities and penances and engage in devotional service.” Even a child can be engaged in devotional service. There is the example of Lord Caitanya who trained up a puppy dog in such a way that it was not only chanting but also displaying all symptoms of *bhāva* while chanting the Holy Name of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. When Lord Caitanya went through the forest of Jhārikhaṇḍa (Jharkhanda), He sprinkled water on the elephants, the lions, etc. and they all started chanting “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa”. We are not suggesting that everyone should go to the forest and start sprinkling water on the animals. Lord Caitanya is God Himself and thus He was able to do it.

THE HIGHER TASTE

If we engage in devotional service, there will be reciprocation from the Lord. Why is reciprocation from the Lord there? Because the service is aimed at pleasing God. When we speak of devotional service, we mean service to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Just like when we speak of *kīrtana*, everyone knows that *kīrtana* means glorification of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and nobody else. Similarly, devotional service is for the Supreme Lord. Acting and engaging in devotional service is an experience of higher taste.

Suppose one is working and earning hundred dollars monthly and tomorrow someone else comes and offers a job where one can earn thousand dollars monthly, will one think twice before accepting it? No! He will say, “There is higher pleasure.” Similarly, one derives highest pleasure when one surrenders to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The impersonalists also practice austerities and penances, but there is a difference. Since they do not learn the art of engaging their minds and souls in the service of the Lord, they get frustrated very fast. Then what happens —they return to normal material engagement. They renounce everything and go to the forest or secluded places and after two or three years one sees them back into normal life. Why? Because their minds and senses are not engaged positively.

PURIFY THE HEART

Now Lord Rāshabhadēva is further explaining that by engaging in devotional service the heart will get purified.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also recommended

*ceto-darpana-mārjanam bhāva-mahā-dāvagni-nirvāpanam
śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varðhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanaṁ param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

(Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka 1)

All glories to the *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Saṅkīrtana*, which cleanses the heart, of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditioned life, of repeated birth and death. This *saṅkīrtana* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction- moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.

Does anyone like to wear dirty clothes? One may have one *dhoti* and one *kurtā* or one *sāree*, whatever one has, one would like to wear clean clothes. Does anyone like to live in a place where garbage is lying all around? Does anyone want to keep a dirty body? Sometimes while working, the hands become dirty, all black with grease. Does anyone want to keep them like that? Does anyone like to eat *prasāda* in a dirty place? No! Then why does one keep the heart dirty? The heart is dirty – black, because of unlimited material desires from this life time and previous lives like — “I want to be famous, beautiful, rich, admired, worshipped, adored, respected etc.”

There are unlimited material desires in the heart. That is why the heart is black. On a rainy day, can one see the sun? No, because the clouds cover the sun! Similarly, these material desires form thick layers like clouds, and these layers prevent one from realizing that one is an eternal

servant of God. These material desires must be removed. Just like if one wants to see the sun then the clouds must disappear for one to be able to see the sun again. In the same way, we have to clean the heart.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Unless your heart becomes cleaned of the impurities you will not be able to understand your constitutional position.” For example if someone has cataract he cannot see clearly, but once it is removed then he can see. Lord Rṣabhadeva is guaranteeing us that if we engage in devotional service by practicing austerities and penances then our hearts will get purified.

If someone gives a hundred dollars note, will we ever doubt that this note may not be real? No, we take it. In a material situation one has faith and here God Himself is assuring us — Lord Rṣabhadeva is guaranteeing us that if we engage in devotional service then our hearts will become purified. This proves that devotional service is the way to purify the heart. There is no other means by which our heart can be cleaned. Sometimes people try many different types of *yoga* as a mean to purify their hearts but if one can directly touch one’s nose, why should he take his hand behind the neck and try to touch it?

It is essential for us to have full faith in the words of the Lord, practice austerities and penances and execute devotional service to the Lord and in exchange of this, our heart will be purified.

If one has cancer what will one do? One will go for a surgery. If the body is to be cut, one lets a surgeon cut it and not just allow anyone to cut it. One agrees to that because one thinks, “Yes, now there is pain, but I will be healthy

after the surgery.” Similarly, when one comes to devotional service, in the beginning one may find it painful but we do not give anyone false hope. It is painful in the sense that one is used to sense enjoyment and to give that up results in unhappiness in the beginning. But very soon one will experience pleasure and that pleasure will more than compensate for the temporary loss of sense gratification.

BLISS—OUR BIRTH RIGHT

Lord R̄ṣabhadeva is making another very important point in this verse. It is very scientifically explained how one progresses from one point to another. Lord says that as one’s heart gets purified, one becomes blissful. Blissful life is the goal of the materialist, the goal of the spiritualist and the goal of an impersonalist. We all want bliss.

Everyone wants happiness — the animals want it as well as we do. Who does not want it? Someone may say, “Hey, you are blissful and this means that your service to God is motivated”. But it is not motivated. Why? Because the Lord is *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha* and we are His parts and parcels. The water of the vast ocean is salty but if one takes a drop of it, will it be sweet? If one finds a rich man, a millionaire, naturally his son is also entitled to the comforts. Similarly, when the Lord is all blissful, we as His parts and parcels, are also entitled to that bliss.

Unfortunately, one may be experiencing the opposite — miseries! One will continue to be miserable as long as one keeps forgetting the Lord. There must be no doubt that without sacrifice one will always be miserable under the influence of the illusory energy of the Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etāṁ taranti te*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.14)

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

By performing devotional service to please the Lord under the direction of a bonafide spiritual master, one will get spiritual happiness.

SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS VS. MATERIAL HAPPINESS

Material happiness has a beginning and an end, whereas spiritual happiness is eternal. If one is a very powerful man today, how long will he remain powerful? Forty, sixty or at the most seventy years and then finally he will have to surrender to old age and death. Suppose one is very handsome, how long will he remain like that? How long does a movie star remain on the top of the charts? These movie stars have a very short cycle, they remain only for a few years and gradually they fade away. This is the proof that material happiness is temporary. That is the first point and the second point is that whatever is giving one happiness today, will give pain tomorrow. Today it is making one laugh but tomorrow it will make one cry. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*mām upetya punar janma
duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānah*

samsiddhim paramam gatah

(*Bhagavad-gita* 8.15)

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

This is the reality of this material world. For example, if one has a very sweet son, definitely one will be attached to the son and the son will be attached to the father. But if tomorrow something happens to the child then because one is attached to him, the son becomes a source of distress instead of happiness. For instance, if one is very rich today then he will get used to a high standard of living and somehow or other if he becomes poor tomorrow, then what happens? He just cries and cries and cries, “Oh! how to maintain my high standard of living.” Today one is very healthy but tomorrow one falls sick and thus is admitted to the hospital. Then he laments, “Oh! when I was healthy I used to run like this but now I am sick. I am tied up in the hospital’s bed. I cannot do anything.”

There is happiness in material life but this happiness can turn into distress anytime because one has to suffer for every sinful act committed against the will of the Lord. Therefore, one must always remember that material happiness has a beginning and an end whereas spiritual happiness is eternal. It stays eternally. In this life, we are serving Kṛṣṇa and when we leave this body, we still continue to serve the Lord —spiritual service. For example, when Haridāsa Ṭhākura left his body, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu lifted the corpse and danced in ecstasy. Eventually He had a big feast and made everyone eat to his fullest capacity. If someone dies in the material world, do people dance and

feast? No!

A devotee continues his service to the Lord and that service always remains with him. Devotional service is our eternal asset and it continues forever. Of this there must be no doubt. It is not that devotional service is a part-time occupation. The Māyāvādīs will say that after death one is going to merge in the Lord, but the Vaiṣṇavas say, “We are going to be engaged in the service of the Lord. We are not going to lose our identity.” The Māyāvādīs say that there is a green tree with green leaves on which there is a green bird. Since it cannot be seen, it has become one. But the Vaiṣṇavas say, “No it is still separate.” The point is that one must keep on serving eternally.

PRACTICE WITH FULL DETERMINATION

Lord Ṛśabhadeva is asking to give up sense enjoyment which is the principal activity of those who eat stool. He is telling us to engage in devotional service by undergoing penances and austerities. By doing so one’s heart will get purified and one will experience more and more spiritual happiness.

Sometimes devotees ask, “Mahārāja, we have been chanting for a long time, why are we not experiencing the happiness that you are talking about everyday in classes?” The bliss is there but the problem is that many times we do not practice the process properly and with full determination. If one practices sincerely, one will be fully satisfied.

Once there was a very poor *brāhmaṇa* who was fully fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lived very simply. He

did not give trouble to others. He was living in a small hut. He was very advanced and many people would come and pay respect to him. Once the King came and asked him what he could do to help him since he appeared to be very poverty stricken. The *brāhmaṇa* replied that he was not poverty stricken and on the contrary, he was very happy. He said that his disciples go begging for alms and bring back some rice, which his wife boils and they would eat. He told the King that he didn't want anything.

This example shows that a transcendentalist is happy with the holy name, as the Holy Name is the biggest asset. Śrīla Prabhupāda says that our eternal happiness is guaranteed if we take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Lord Kṛṣṇa is guaranteeing something which His devotee is further confirming. Lord assures in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*kṣipram bhāvati dharmātmā
śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktah prāṇasyati*

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.31)

“He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace.
O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never
perishes.”

The reason for which we are not experiencing bliss is very simple — we have vanity in our heart and we want both sense gratification and spiritual happiness! We must become single pointed.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir
ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-śākhā hy anantāś ca*

buddhayo ‘vyavasāyinām

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41)

“Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.”

Devotional service is an activity coming from the spiritual world. *golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the treasure of divine love from Goloka Vṛndāvana has descended as congregational chanting of Lord Hari’s holy names. We have got this opportunity after a long, long time. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti
sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.19)

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.”

Please take to this process very sincerely and enthusiastically.



2

A RARE HUMAN BIRTH FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE

*mahat-sevāṁ dvāram āhur vimuktes
tamo-dvāram yoṣitāṁ saṅgi-saṅgam
mahāntas te sama-cittāḥ praśāntā
vimanyavaḥ suhṛdaḥ sādhavo ye*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 5.5.2)

“One can attain the path of liberation from material bondage only by rendering service to highly advanced spiritual personalities. These personalities are impersonalists and devotees. Whether one wants to merge into the Lord’s existence or wants to associate with the Personality of Godhead, one should render service to the mahātmās. For those who are not interested in such activities, who associate with people fond of women and sex, the path to hell is wide open. The mahātmās are equipoised. They do not see any difference between one living entity and another. They are very peaceful and are fully engaged in devotional service. They are devoid of anger, and they work for the benefit of everyone. They do not behave in any abominable way. Such people are known as mahātmās.”

The human body is like a junction. One may either take the path of liberation or the path leading to a hellish condition. How one can take these paths is described herein. On the path of liberation, one associates with mahatmas, and on the path of bondage one associates with those attached to sense gratification and women. There are two types of mahatmas—the impersonalist and the devotee. Although their ultimate goal is different, the process of emancipation is almost the same. Both want eternal happiness. One seeks happiness in the impersonal Brahman, and the other seeks happiness in the association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As described in the first verse: *brahma-saukhyam*. Brahman means spiritual or eternal; both the impersonalist and the devotee seek eternal blissful life. In any case, it is advised that one becomes perfect. In the words of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*

*asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'strī-saṅgi'—eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra*

(Sri Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 22.87)

“To remain unattached to the modes of material nature, one should avoid associating with those who are *asat*, materialistic. There are two kinds of materialists. One is attached to women and sense gratification, and the other is simply a nondevotee. On the positive side is the association of mahatmas, and on the negative side is the avoidance of nondevotees and women-hunters.”

Kṛṣṇa RECIPROCATES

Lord Kṛṣṇa incarnated as the son of King Nābhi and his wife Merudevī. Although they were king and queen, they were great devotees of the Lord. In these days of Kali-yuga, if one is a big man then automatically one is the most

corrupt as well as the most polluted person. Generally, this is the trend seen all over the world. The more money one has, the more polluted he becomes. But in the Vedic days, even though the kings and queens were very-very rich, beautiful, and intelligent, they were also great devotees of the Lord. King Nābhi and his wife performed a very elaborate sacrifice with the desire to have a son who would be exactly like God. Lord Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with His devotees according to their surrender. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says –

*ye yathā māṁ prapadyante
tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśah*

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.11)

“As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly.
Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pṛthā.”

He is not partial to anyone — this must be clearly understood. The Lord is totally impartial and says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*samo ‘ham sarva-bhūtesu
na me dvesyo ‘sti na priyah
ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā
mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.29)

“I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.”

However, He is inclined towards His devotees who surrender unto Him and depend on Him. The devotees are surrendered to His teachings and recognize Him as the

cause of all causes. Kṛṣṇa is more inclined towards His devotees just like a judge is equal to everyone in the court but he has special affection for his own son. It may be concluded that the Lord reciprocates with the devotees according to their level of surrender.

King Nābhi and his wife Merudevī were completely surrendered to the Lord. The whole purpose of their lives was to just please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They had no other desire. Even in the *grha**stha-āśrama*, one can live with the purpose of just pleasing God. If the *grha**stha-āśrama* is used for the purpose of serving God under the directions of a *bonafide* spiritual master then it does not become an impediment for spiritual advancement. But if we do not follow correctly then we become *grhamedhīs* because we then use this facility for sense enjoyment. As King Nābhi and his wife were totally surrendered to the Lord, the Lord reciprocated fully. The Lord told King Nābhi that if he wanted a son like Him, that would be impossible, as nobody can be like Him. He said that He would Himself come in the form of King Rṣabhadeva.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD, WITHOUT GOD

The Lord, in His incarnation as Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva, had one hundred sons. He instructed His sons about the value of utilizing the rare human birth for a higher purpose — self-realization, and not let it be wasted like cats and dogs. He further told them, “You must understand the importance of performing austerities for the pleasure of the Lord.” Many times people ask, “What am I going to get if I perform austerities? What am I going to get in exchange?”

When we talk about our standard of austerities, it means

1. No meat eating, including fish, eggs, onion, and garlic;
2. No gambling;
3. No intoxication, including tea and coffee;
4. No illicit sex.

One may ask if one stops all this then what is the use of living. When Śrīla Prabhupāda first went to America, he met one Swāmi whom he was trying to preach to. The latter said, “Swāmijī, if you talk like this in America, no one is going to listen to you. You mean that you are going to tell the Americans to follow these four regulative principles! Forget it!” Śrīla Prabhupāda did not agree with him and by Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, people are now following these principles.

Once, one of Prabhupāda’s Godbrothers, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, went to England. There was a British man ranked very high in society and had received the title of “Lord.” In England, there is a system that if someone is very important then he is given the title of “Lord.” “Lord” actually means God, so there are tiny Lords in England. They have a parliament called “House of lords,” and there is another one called “House of commons.” This man was a “Lord.” He went to Prabhupāda’s Godbrother and asked him, “Swāmijī, can you make me a *brāhmaṇa*?” The Swāmi gave him a positive reply. Then the latter asked, “What will I have to do to become a *brāhmaṇa*?” The Swāmijī gave him the four regulative principles to be followed. “That is impossible,” the man shouted, “How can I live without these things?” This is the reality! People want the kingdom of God, but

without God. They do not want to follow His teachings. They only want those teachings that suit them, whether it is Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, or Judaism. The reality is that people only accept what they want to accept, without understanding the meaning of religion and act as if they are religious.

SPIRITUAL LIFE — GETTING OUT OF ILLUSION

In exchange for the austerities one performs, one gets spiritual pleasure and that spiritual pleasure is unending. Material life no doubt has some happiness, but it also has an end. Even if one becomes a very powerful dictator, how long will he be able to live? Fifty, sixty, seventy years! If one is a very rich man or a very successful playboy or a very big businessman, how long do all these assets stay with one? Maximum of sixty to eighty years! Today somebody might be glorified, worshipped but tomorrow he would be criticized, scolded, or even attacked. This is material life! The illusory energy of the Lord bewilders everyone and everyone thinks, “I am a rich man and I shall be worshipped and glorified eternally.” This is the power of illusion and the material world is basically a world of illusion. Spiritual life means getting out of illusion that “I am God, I am worshipable.”

Sometimes when we preach, people say, “Yes, there are miseries but I do not want to think of them. Why should I think of miseries? Even though there is death, when death comes I shall also die. Everybody will die. Why to think of what will happen after death?” People often say like that. But they should be asked why they went to school. They

did that so that when they grew up they would get a good job. People save money in banks because they are always planning for the future but what will happen after death, that they do not want to plan. It is ok not to plan, but then they should not call themselves human beings, for they are living like cats and dogs. The problem is that people live like cats and dogs but call themselves civilized. Just like the sunshine destroys darkness, spiritual association destroys illusion of bodily identification.

MAHAT SEVĀ— SERVING ADVANCED SOULS

Mahārāja R̄ṣabhadeva explained to His sons how one can get spiritual knowledge. *Mahat-sevā* means serving advanced souls. By serving advanced souls one gets enlightenment in spiritual life. In fact, it is said that without getting the mercy of advanced souls, one cannot make any spiritual advancement. If one wants to make spiritual advancement, then one must endeavor to get the association of advanced souls. Lord R̄ṣabhadeva is referring here to the importance of serving advanced souls.

What is the definition of an advanced soul? — He is always fixed on the path of devotional service to the Lord; represents a disciplic succession; lives by the teachings of the Lord; and guides others to take to the path of devotional service by his example and teachings.

MERCY, DETERMINATION, AND WISDOM

By serving these advanced souls, one gets their mercy. These advanced souls give their blessings. They come and say, “I bless you,” which means that the advanced souls

want one to make spiritual advancement. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa sees that His devotee has blessed an individual to make spiritual advancement then He sees to it that this devotee who is blessed makes spiritual advancement.

An essential element for spiritual advancement is determination. Without determination one cannot make spiritual advancement and unless one is determined, one cannot stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sometimes we see people come and leave soon after. Why is this? Because they are not determined! Yes, there may be some faults but at least the medicine which we are administering is pure and *bonafide* and by following a *bonafide* process, one makes spiritual advancement. When Lord Kṛṣṇa sees that His devotee has blessed an individual to make spiritual advancement, then He makes that individual advance spiritually; He makes that devotee more determined to practice spiritual life. This is how the mercy works.

By serving the advanced souls, one also obtains the wisdom by which one can make spiritual advancement. Therefore, it is said in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

‘sādhu-saṅga’, ‘sādhu-saṅga’—sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-māṭra sādhu-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.54)

The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.

Why do all the scriptures say — associate with *sadhus*. “*Lava-māṭra*” means one fourteenth of a second. If one associates with a *sādhu* for even one fourteenth of a second,

one can make spiritual advancement. A *sādhu*'s association is not based on how many hours one is in his company. Even one fourteenth of a second is invaluable, provided one follows his instructions.

Spiritual association is very important. Therefore, we find that *sādhus* are always travelling and preaching. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī also used to travel. He used to travel and visit different householders but he would stay at each householder's house only as long as it would take to milk a cow, then he would go to the next house. We also have experience of how people associated with Śrīla Prabhupāda for only one minute and became exalted devotees.

For Mahat-sevā — serving the advanced souls, one should not be miser when it comes to serving them and getting their association. By serving advanced souls, one gets their mercy along with wisdom and determination.

NĀRADA MUNI'S DETACHMENT

Who was Vyāsadeva's guru? Nārada Muni. Śrīla Vyāsadeva was once talking to his guru and he asked him, "How did you become such a powerful saint?" One can ask questions from the spiritual master. There is no issue if one asks in the right way. Nārada Muni explained to Vyāsadeva how he was able to obtain such a high birth and gave him his background.

He said, "In my previous life I was the only son of a maidservant. I had no father, no brother, and no sister. As I was the only son, my mother was very attached to me. For four months during the rainy season, my mother

was serving in the house of great sages — washing their pots, cleaning the house, etc. Being the only son I had the opportunity of eating the remnants of food left by the sages. I also had the opportunity to listen to their spiritual discourses. One day while my mother was returning from the forest after milking the cow, she was bitten by a snake and she left her body.”

What would an ordinary person do in such a situation? He would go crazy crying. But Nārada Muni, even though a young child, did not cry because he had heard the discourses of the great sages. He knew how everyone’s life is temporary and everything is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As this was known to him, he was completely detached and he just went on travelling to different places of pilgrimage.

The point that Nārada Muni makes is that one should take the association of great sages and this is how he could obtain such a high birth. By associating with spiritual personalities, one can obtain a very high birth, one becomes highly intellectual and very determined.

A HUNTER BECOMES A DEVOTEE

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* there is another story. Once there was a hunter who used to half-kill animals and derive great pleasure in seeing them die. Nārada Muni saw these half-killed animals flapping to death in the forest and asked, “Who is responsible for half-killing these animals?” The hunter behind the bushes said, “I. It is our family profession to kill animals and sell their flesh. I live by selling their flesh.” Nārada Muni then explained to him that this was indeed a very sinful profession and he inquired from him, “Why are

you half-killing these animals giving them atrocious pain? If you want to kill, then kill them straight away rather than leaving them flapping to death.”

By Nārada Muni’s association, this hunter became purified and asked him, “If I give up this profession of killing animals, how will I get my means of livelihood? Where will I get my food to eat? I have a wife and children to maintain. What will happen to them?” Nārada Muni assured him, “Do not worry.” After some time, the hunter became a great devotee of the Lord. Everybody wanted to see him and offer respects. In India, it is a custom to not to go to see a saintly person empty-handed. Everybody comes with some gifts. Many people would come to see him with gifts. Finally, he saw that he had so much and there was no starvation. The hunter became so careful that he would not step over even an ant. By spiritual association one makes very fast spiritual advancement.

Kṛṣṇa Gets Indebted

Sometimes one may get chastised by one’s spiritual master or by an advanced soul. This chastisement is actually a source of pleasure for one who wants to make spiritual advancement.

Most devotees have heard of Kuvera. He is the treasurer of the demigods. He had two sons called Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva. Once these two sons of Kuvera were very intoxicated and they were enjoying with some females in a lake. Being sons of a very rich man, they were in a fully drunken state. Nārada Muni happened to be passing by. The ladies, who were in the lake with the sons of Kuvera, saw him coming and they immediately covered their

bodies, being respectful to the great saint Nārada. The sons of Kuvera, who were naked, drunk, and intoxicated, did not pay any heed to the great saint. Nārada Muni cursed them, "May you become trees."

Trees, as we know, are always standing naked. Those persons who are very lusty, those who like going to beaches nude and performing all such similar activities will become trees in their future life. Nārada Muni cursed them to become trees, but not in Dushanbe (Tajikistan). They became trees in the courtyard of Nanda Mahārāja and he told them that after one hundred years, they would be able to see Lord Kṛṣṇa.

After one hundred years, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa remembered that His devotee Nārada had given a promise to the two sons of Kuvera that they would be able to see Him. Kṛṣṇa always fulfills the promise of His devotees. Kṛṣṇa said, "Now I will arrange a situation by which these two sons of Kuvera will be able to see Me." Why? Because Nārada Muni had said so!

What did Lord Kṛṣṇa do? He crawled and pulled down two huge Arjuna trees, and who came out of these trees? The two sons of Kuvera —Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva. Kṛṣṇa did all that only because His devotee had promised to the two sons that one day they would see Him.

This example is given to show that Kṛṣṇa gets indebted to fulfill the blessings and promises that His devotees give.

BEING ANXIOUS FOR CHASTISEMENT

Even the advanced devotees are anxious to be chastised by the Lord. Of course, they purposefully do not commit

foolish mistakes, which will result in chastisement from the Lord.

Advaita Ācārya was almost equal in age to Lord Caitanya's grandfather. Lord Caitanya's mother, Śacī devī, used to consider Advaita Ācārya's wife as her mother; Just like if in our family there is somebody who is very elderly, we consider them as our parents. Advaita Ācārya is Mahā-viṣṇu Himself and the Godbrother of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's spiritual master, Śrī Īśvara Purī. Lord Caitanya would always treat him like His grandfather. But Advaita Ācārya did not like this and was thinking how he could get chastised by Lord Caitanya. So he started preaching Māyāvādī philosophy. He started preaching to everyone that they could become God, he could become God and they could all become God.

Lord Nityānanda heard about this new philosophy preached by Advaita Ācārya. He was shocked. On one hand, Lord Caitanya was destroying impersonalism and on the other hand, Advaita Ācārya was preaching impersonalism. He went to Lord Caitanya and informed Him. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised Nityānanda Prabhu that these might just be rumours; it would be better to go and check the reality. Nityānanda Prabhu went to Advaita Ācārya and discovered that it was a fact. Advaita Ācārya started preaching Māyāvādī philosophy to Nityānanda Prabhu. Nityānanda Prabhu soon returned to Lord Caitanya and narrated the whole story. Lord Caitanya went to Advaita Ācārya and chastised him very heavily. He kicked him with His leg and said, "You rascal, you are preaching this Māyāvādī philosophy!" Advaita Ācārya said, "Yes, that is what I wanted. I wanted to be chastised and kicked by You. That is why I was preaching this Māyāvādī

philosophy.” This led Lord Caitanya to understand Advaita Ācārya’s drama to be chastised by Him.

THE ASSOCIATION OF NON-DEVOTEES

By rendering service to advanced souls, one makes quick spiritual advancement. Now there are some people who like to associate with *mahātmās* and some who do not. What happens to those who associate with people who are fond of women and sex? For them the path to hell is wide open. As per *Bhagavad-gītā*, lust, anger, and greed are highways leading to hell. If one associates with those who are engaged in sinful activities, one also becomes contaminated. A person is known by the company he keeps. It is mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

*asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'strī-saṅgi'—eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra*

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.87)

A Vaiṣṇava should always avoid the association of ordinary people. Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaiṣṇavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, one should be very careful with one’s association.

ASSOCIATION: AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Nārada Muni explains that there are three different types of associations which one can get

1. Association with somebody who is more advanced than oneself;

2. Association with somebody who is equally advanced;
3. Association with somebody who is less advanced.

How does one behave in these different types of associations? When one gets the opportunity to associate with those who are more advanced, one becomes joyful. Just like while having a feast, one becomes delighted. The example of peacocks is also given. When they see the clouds for the first time in the rainy season, they dance in ecstasy. Why are the devotees happy when they get the opportunity to associate with those who are more advanced? Because they get a chance to hear Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The more one hears about Him, the easier it will be to give up the desire for sense enjoyment.

What happens when one associates with those who are equally advanced? One becomes happy. If a devotee associates with somebody who is more advanced, he becomes very joyful, whereas if he associates with somebody who is equally advanced, he becomes happy. Why? Because at least he will be able to discuss about Kṛṣṇa. If one cannot discuss about Kṛṣṇa then one is associating with the wrong person.

SYMPTOM OF A DEVOTEE

The symptom of a devotee is that he is always engaged in discussing about Kṛṣṇa and he is extremely careful not to lose even a second without engagement in devotional service to the Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*“satataṁ kīrtayanto mām
yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ*

*namasyantaś ca māṁ bhaktyā
nitya-yuktā upāsate”*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.14)

Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion.

Discussing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa is constructive for spiritual life whereas *prajalpa* or frivolous talk, is destructive for spiritual life. A devotee must be very-very careful to make the best use of his time and avoid *prajalpa* or frivolous talk, in order to advance spiritually. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says in *Upadeśāmṛta*

*atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyaṁ ca
śad�hir bhaktir vinaśyati*

(*Upadeśāmṛta* 2)

One's devotional service is spoiled when he becomes too entangled in the following six activities: (1) eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required (2) overendeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain (3) talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters (4) Practising the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically (5) associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and (6) being greedy for mundane achievements.

PREACHING —A PRIVILEGE

What does a devotee do when associating with those who are less advanced? Does he say, “Oh! He is less advanced than

me. I am not going to talk to him!" Is that what a devotee does? What will he do with somebody who is less advanced? He displays compassion. When an advanced devotee sees a junior devotee, he displays compassion. When one sees a gross materialist then also one displays compassion. That is why we preach. If compassion is not there, we would not preach. Many times, devotees say, "I do not have this feeling of compassion, so how should I really preach?" By having faith in the words of the spiritual master a devotee goes out to preach and then the compassion is automatically there. Just like a child who only follows the instructions of the parents and becomes perfect.

All the gurus coming down in the *paramparā* (the line of disciplic succession) of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are passing on the same instructions to their disciples — to preach. A devotee is in great distress when he sees others leading a rebellious life against God. If an intelligent man sees a blind man walking on a wrong path, he does not keep quiet but catches his hand and puts him on the right path. This is like giving him the path of God consciousness. Every human being must base himself on the instructions of the Lord, otherwise, everything is a waste.

We must display compassion. We must go out and preach. We must distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. We must distribute this transcendental knowledge. If Śrīla Prabhupāda had not preached, we would not have been together here today in Dushanbe. We want Lord Caitanya's movement to expand and that is why we must strive hard.

To preach on behalf of the Lord is a great privilege, which is only awarded to very few fortunate souls. Once Śrīla Prabhupāda was in America and his disciples suggested

to him that he should stop travelling, take rest in a farm and translate. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Please do not take away my privilege to struggle for Kṛṣṇa.” To struggle for Kṛṣṇa is a privilege. In the material world when the government finds out that somebody has struggled to make the country victorious, it gives him a big award. Similarly, to struggle for Kṛṣṇa is undoubtedly a boon for us. We must display compassion — this is further described as the quality of a *mahātmā*.

THE QUALITIES OF A MAHATMĀ

The *mahātmās* are not interested in sense enjoyment or association of women. One cannot be a *mahātmā* and a sense enjoyer. These days we have religious leaders in every country and all these big leaders are big sense enjoyers. People have become so degraded that they say, “Oh, so what if our spiritual master is a sense enjoyer? How can one live without sense enjoyment?” In America, there was one religious leader who was caught having an affair with his secretary. It was discovered that he had been having this affair for a long time. Some people objected but others said, “What’s the problem.” A real *mahātmā* always stays away from sense enjoyment. This verse is very clearly stating that. The advanced souls are equipoised, which means to be equal in all situations. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

“*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha
daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso
jñātvā bhūtādīm ayyayam*”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.13)

O son of Pṛthā, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible.

The *mahātmās* are equipoised as they do not discriminate — they are equal in happiness and distress. Generally, when one gets what one wants, one becomes very happy and if one does not get what one wants, one becomes morose. A *mahatma* is always undisturbed. The spiritualist knows that today he may be happy but tomorrow he will be sad. A spiritualist is not attached to the so-called material happiness. He does not get overjoyed when he gets what he wants. He does not see any difference between one entity and another. If someone else is giving any pain, he understands that it is just a reaction of his sinful activities, what to speak of taking revenge. This is a very advanced philosophy.

In 1968 we went to a program in a Christian school with Śrīla Prabhupāda. After finishing the lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, “Is there any question?” An Indian was present in that assembly. He was a Bengali gentleman who used to come and see Śrīla Prabhupāda every day in his room. That day he started insulting Śrīla Prabhupāda in public. He said, “Why are you talking about Kṛṣṇa in this Christian country?” He also said so many other things. All the devotees were very-very angry with him, as he was insulting Śrīla Prabhupāda but His Divine Grace was completely cool and undisturbed. A month later when Śrīla Prabhupāda was about to leave Montreal, he asked us to go and call that gentleman. I asked, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, why do you want to see that man again?

He insulted you so badly.” His Divine Grace replied, “I must have done something bad in my previous life for which he is taking revenge.” Finally, Śrīla Prabhupāda blessed him. So, even if somebody is giving trouble, a *mahātmā* does not identify him as his enemy.

Parīksit Mahārāja was cursed by a *brāhmaṇa* boy called Śringi. Even Śringi’s own father was very much upset when he heard what his son had done. But did Parīksit Mahārāja get angry? Did he say, “Why did you curse me? I am the king.” He did not say anything like that. He accepted the curse and prepared himself to die. This shows that a devotee accepts any difficult situation as the causeless mercy of the Lord and prepares himself to face it.

Why are *mahātmās* peaceful? Only for one reason — they are fully engaged in devotional service. That is the path for becoming peaceful. Full absorption in devotional service makes one peaceful. If one is not fully absorbed in devotional service, then he should forget about leading a peaceful life.

Sometimes devotees say that they are chanting but still they are not peaceful. The cause is that they are not fully engaged in devotional service, “I am a devotee but also want to fulfil my material desires. Not like the gross materialists who eat cow, no I do not want all that, still I have some material desires.” This is the cause of our distress. If a devotee becomes single-pointed, then his only business is to be absorbed in devotional service which will result in a peaceful life. That is guaranteed. If he acts according to the instructions of the spiritual master, scriptures and Vaiṣṇavas, he will be very peaceful.

TRUE WELFARE OF HUMANITY

A Vaiṣṇava is one who works for the welfare of everyone. We should dedicate our lives for the benefit of others. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that one who is a devotee works for the benefit of others. Did Śrīla Prabhupāda work for his own pleasure? No! Śrīla Prabhupāda worked for the pleasure of humanity. Even when Śrīla Prabhupāda was very sick and doctors would ask him to take rest, he would not accept it. He went on with his translation work as he was concerned for the welfare of humanity.

Once, the great sages were having a big discussion. Sixty-four thousand sages assembled in the spiritual forest of Naimiṣāranya, which is about one hundred and fifty kilometres from Delhi. What was the theme of their discussion? — How long will the civilization of Kali-yuga last? — They invited Sūta Gosvāmī to enlighten them. Sūta Gosvāmī recited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as he had heard from Śukadeva Gosvāmī while he was reciting it to Parīkṣit Mahārāja.

Whatever we do, it must be for the benefit of everyone. We have a nice temple room which does not need any further improvement, so we must take this opportunity to invite people and engage them in the glorification of God. We do *prasādam* distribution — that is all right, we may make a little profit for the temple. Why do we do *prasādam* distribution? Everybody wants to eat, but when they eat food, which is first offered to God then their minds and senses get purified. If someone eats only *prasādam* for the whole of his life, he will get purified. If he comes and bows down before the Deities, then also he will be purified. Just by bowing down, one gets lots of benefit.

Our business is to use this one life for the benefit of humanity. We should not hesitate and we should give this one life for the welfare of humanity. Humanity today is on the verge of destruction. No doubt science is making great advancement, but if we analyze carefully we will find out that science is just making death easier. All these terrorists from all over the world want this AK-47 Chinese gun by which they can shoot thirty bullets in a second. One can throw a bomb, which is controlled with a remote control. This is science! One can identify the sex of a child in the mother's womb and if one does not like it, have an abortion. Science is very destructive if misused and it is constructive if properly used. For example, a microphone, which is used to communicate with devotees, is also a by-product of science. The plane, which we take from Delhi to come to Russia, is also a by-product of science. We are not against scientific technology but we are against the misuse of scientific technology. A knife in the hand of a child is unsafe, whereas in the hand of a surgeon, it is safe.

THE SPIRITUALIST HAS NO ENEMY

The sages, the *mahātmās*, do not act in an abominable way. Lust, anger, greed and hatred are all obstacles on the path of spiritual life. This verse explains that a real spiritualist has no enemy. Prahlāda Mahārāja's father wanted to train Prahlāda in diplomacy — divide and rule, by fighting against the enemies. Prahlāda said, "I do not want this philosophy. No one is my enemy, everyone is my friend." Generally, people become angry when they do not get their quota of sense enjoyment. A child becomes

angry when he does not get what he wants. This is not our standard. Lord Caitanya preached humility as the means for attracting God.

*trṇād api sunīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyah sadā hariḥ*

(*Śikṣāṣṭakam* 3)

One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.

What did Lord Caitanya do when He saw that Nityānanda Prabhu was attacked? Did He keep quiet? He came with His Sudarśana *cakra*. Immediately, Lord Nityānanda intervened, “My dear Lord, You promised that in this incarnation, You would not use any weapon.” Hearing Lord Nityānanda’s speech, Jagai and Madhai melted. So *sadhus* or saintly persons are very anxious for everyone’s well being. They want everyone to benefit.

BACK HOME — BACK TO GODHEAD

We must follow in their footsteps. Many devotees may say, “Yes, what is the use of all this talk, it is so much above our head. We can never come to that standard.” But one should know the standard at which one must come to or improve oneself to. Suppose, someone is very sick with a high temperature but he should know what the standard temperature of a healthy body is. Suppose someone has to

drive from here to Tashkent, at least if he is aware of how many miles he has to travel then he may know if he can reach there within one day or not.

God helps those who help themselves. If the Guru sees that there is somebody who is trying to come up to a higher standard, then he reciprocates. He is anxious to help. A devotee should try and Lord Kṛṣṇa will reciprocate. The Supreme Personality of Godhead wants everyone to become a *mahātmā* and return to the spiritual world. The sages desire to reduce the Lord's anxiety by bringing back to Him His rebellious children. Therefore, we must endeavor to develop these qualities, serve the advanced souls and take instructions from them and then we will be able to make spiritual progress and return back home, back to Godhead.

3

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS AT HOME

*ye vā mayīśe kṛta-sauhṛdārthā
janeṣu dehambhara-vārtikeṣu
gṛheṣu jāyātmaja-rātimatsu
na pṛiti-yuktā yāvad-arthaḥ ca loke*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.3)

“Those who are interested in reviving Kṛṣṇa consciousness and increasing their love of Godhead do not like to do anything that is not related to Kṛṣṇa. They are not interested in mingling with people who are busy maintaining their bodies, eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. They are not attached to their homes, although they may be householders. Nor are they attached to wives, children, friends, or wealth. At the same time, they are not indifferent to the execution of their duties. Such people are interested in collecting only enough money to keep the body and soul together.”

Whether he is an impersonalist or a devotee, one who is actually interested in advancing spiritually should not mingle with those who are simply interested in maintaining

the body by means of the so-called advancement of civilization. Those who are interested in spiritual life should not be attached to homely comforts in the company of a wife, children, friends, and so forth. Even if one is a *grhastha* and has to earn his livelihood, he should be satisfied by collecting only enough money to maintain the body and soul together. One should not have more than that or less than that. As indicated herein, a householder should endeavor to earn money for the execution of *Bhakti-yoga* — *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoh smaraṇam pāda-sevanam arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātmā-nivedanam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23). A householder should lead such a life that he gets full opportunity to hear and chant. He should worship the Deity at home, observe festivals, invite friends and give them *prasāda*. A householder should earn money for this purpose, not for sense gratification.

FRIENDS OF KRŚNA

In the first two verses of this chapter, Lord Rṣabhadeva has established the importance of practicing austerities and not wasting this human form of life like animals. He has also stressed on the benefits, which we derive by serving great souls, and how service rendered to them is very conducive for spiritual advancement. The opportunity to render service to great souls does not come very easily it comes only by great fortune.

In this verse, King Rṣabhadeva is pointing out the attitude that a Krṣṇa conscious person must cultivate. Whether one is a full-time devotee living in temple or a *grhastha* practicing Krṣṇa consciousness at home, all are

friends of Kṛṣṇa. Even those who are coming to the temple for the first time are at least interested in understanding Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In fact, this verse directly applies to all such persons. King Rāshabhadeva is directly speaking to all of them. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is nothing but Kṛṣṇa speaking directly to all of us, through Śrīla Prabhupāda and the speaker. In this way one can understand what Lord Kṛṣṇa is saying, a little better.

THE DESIRE TO ENJOY

There are many important points in this verse. The first point is that those who are interested in reviving their Kṛṣṇa consciousness as well as increasing their love of God must not do anything which is not related to Lord Kṛṣṇa. One must always be eager to develop love of God. Here we are using the word “reviving” Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What does “reviving” mean? It means that one had something, then lost it, and now is trying to retrieve it. There is no doubt about this.

The moment we develop a desire to enjoy like Kṛṣṇa, we immediately have to leave the spiritual world and come to the material world. In the spiritual world, everyone is Kṛṣṇa conscious. Yesterday somebody asked about how life is in the spiritual world. There is no birth, disease, old age, and death in the spiritual world. No misery of any type! Men are thousands times more handsome than men on this planet. The women are thousands times more beautiful than women on this planet. But still they are not attracted to each other. The only attraction is towards Lord Kṛṣṇa. Because they get so much pleasure in serving Kṛṣṇa, they do not get attracted to each other. Sometimes,

some living entities foolishly become envious of the Lord. They think, “Why should the Lord always be the enjoyer? Why we cannot enjoy like Him?” As soon as this desire develops, they have to leave the spiritual world and come to the material world, transmigrating from one body to another, experiencing nothing but miseries. It is explained in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 19.151)

“According to their *karma*, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, only one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a *bonafide* spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.”

ALWAYS REMEMBER KRŚNA, NEVER FORGET KRŚNA

Those who are serious about becoming free from the miseries of birth and death must not waste this valuable human form of life. They should not do anything, which is not related to Kṛṣṇa. Very simple guidelines, nothing very complicated. One does not have to learn thousands of rules and regulations for becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, just this one rule is required to be learnt — anything which is not related to Kṛṣṇa must be rejected at all cost, and anything

which is related to Kṛṣṇa must be accepted. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī instructs in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that anything which is favorable for Kṛṣṇa consciousness we accept, and anything unfavorable for Kṛṣṇa consciousness we reject.

Developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness means reviving our love of God. An intelligent devotee only wants to understand what is the mission of this human form of life and works hard to realize it, i.e., increase his love of God. Just like in the material world if one is earning some money, one desires to have more, more, and more; one needs everything to the greatest extent. Similarly, a devotee is always anxious to increase his love of God by having knowledge about the greatness of God. It is not enough to simply know that God is great and how one is subordinate to develop love of God.

Why is a devotee desirous of devotional service? Because, there is reciprocation from the Lord as soon as one begins the process of devotional service. Why would anyone be here if there was no reciprocation? No one is getting any economic incentive. There are many people who are deriving economic benefits just by changing their religion in India, but no one here is getting any economic benefit. Is someone secretly giving the devotees any economic benefit for chanting? No! Why are all such people still chanting? — because there is reciprocation, and that reciprocation is realized in the form of satisfaction. The animals are hankering for satisfaction, the *yogīs* as well as the *jñānīs* are also hankering for satisfaction, but only the *bhaktas* are able to derive satisfaction. This is the beauty of the process of devotional service. There is reciprocation when

we sacrifice something for the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That reciprocation is in the form of satisfaction.

Since we are interested in becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, we should be determined that every activity we are performing is for the pleasure of the Lord. We should also check whether we are advancing spiritually. This rule applies to everyone regardless of one's *āśrama*. If one is a *grastha* then one may have to operate in situations which are externally a little unfavorable, just like somebody might have to do a job or do some business. Our interest is in engaging in those activities, which will help us to make spiritual advancement. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has given many rules and regulations in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which he finally summarizes as one point — always remember Lord Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him.

The material mind may tell us that there is no harm if one engages in the activities of sense enjoyment. However, those who are intelligent never listen to the unbridled mind, because they remember that they have been cheated from time immemorial by listening to the mind and senses. One should only engage in those activities which will help him make spiritual advancement. Because the devotees are surrendered to the Lord, He reciprocates with them. A devotee should have full faith that when he surrenders and sacrifices the opportunity for sense gratification in favour of devotional service to the Lord, he would always be the gainer, not the loser.

AVOIDING ASSOCIATION OF THE WORLDLY MINDED

Another important point that Lord Rṣabhadeva is making

in this verse is that those who are serious in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are not at all interested in associating with those who are worldly-minded. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advises in *Upadeśāmṛta*.

*utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ
śadbhir bhaktih prasidhyati*

(Upadeśāmṛta 3)

“There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic; (2) endeavoring with confidence; (3) being patient; (4) acting according to regulative principles (such as *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoh smaranam* — hearing, chanting, and remembering Kṛṣṇa); (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees, and; (6) following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.”

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is also making the same point that those who are serious about spiritual life should not associate with those who are on the bodily platform of life.

What are the symptoms of those who are on the bodily concept of life? This has been explained by Lord Rāshabhadeva in this verse. They are very fond of eating. Everybody wants to eat. If someone looks at the dogs and hogs, he will remark that they are just searching for food all day. Spiritualists also want to eat, but they eat with discrimination. One should remember before eating as to what Lord Kṛṣṇa wants one to consume. Lord Kṛṣṇa advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*patram puṣpam phalam toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchatī
tad aham bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanah*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.26)

“If one offers me with love and devotion — a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I will accept it.”

The materialists do not follow this. They want to make sleep as comfortable as possible. Our devotees are happy just by putting a mat on the floor and sleeping. The materialists, on the other hand, have invented so many different ways of sleeping. In western countries, they have a new type of bed called waterbed. Normally, there is cotton inside a mattress. When one goes to sleep on this water bed, it feels like one is swimming and floating on water. These beds are very expensive. They may claim that this is a big advancement as well as an invention.

The materialists want to eat more sumptuous food and sleep more comfortably. Why? Because they have mating as their principal goal. When one eats without discrimination, this food creates passion and when one wants to sleep in a comfortable environment, the ultimate goal is mating. If one does not control the mind and senses, this desire for mating stays till the end of one’s life. There are some doctors in the European countries who are now saying that old people should not give up mating otherwise they would get heart disease and other diseases. Unfortunately, this is how material life is revolving around the spirit of sense enjoyment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to narrate the story of a Mohammedan King called Akbar who was very

philosophical and who had an extremely intelligent prime minister. Once Akbar asked his prime minister how long does lust trouble the living entity? The prime minister replied, "If you want an honest reply, I will tell you that lust does not leave us till our very last breath." The King said that he found it hard to believe that lust would still be there in the old age. One day the prime minister called the King and invited him to pay a visit to a dying man who was in the hospital. He requested him to come along with his young daughter. Akbar knew that the prime minister does not say anything without reason. As he was entering the hospital, the prime minister told Akbar to please watch where the eyes of the dying man would be. The King saw that the dying man's eyes were on his daughter rather than him.

One who does not control his mind and senses, cannot give up sense enjoyment till the very last breath. However, one who learns the art of engaging the mind and senses in devotional service to the Lord is successful in controlling them. Such a person is undisturbed even though he is young. It is not the age which determines whether one's desires for sense enjoyment should go or not. It all depends on how one engages one's mind and senses. An idle mind is a devil's workshop. If the mind is not engaged spiritually then it will only contemplate on destructive habits. That is exactly what is going on in society nowadays. In the name of advancement, they are just making destruction easier. This is the result of an uncontrolled mind.

Defense takes various forms. All over the world countries are spending huge amounts of money on armaments. Many countries do not even have food to feed their citizens, but

they are spending a huge amount of money on armaments. They are spending millions of dollars in buying the latest technological planes and missiles etc. This is the biggest trade nowadays. Why do people buy armaments? To defend themselves and to kill others.

This is the mentality of the materialists — eat, sleep, defend, and mate. If one attacks a dog, it will run away. That is its system of defense. But if one attacks a human being, he may defend himself by further attacking the first one. If someone tries to conquer a nation, they may defend themselves through more sophisticated means.

PERFORMING ONE'S DUTIES WITHOUT ATTACHMENT

Lord R̄shabhadeva is giving us further information about the mentality of a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee. Even though a householder, a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not attached to his home. Despite having a wife, children, and a house, a householder is not attached to them.

Now some outsider hearing this verse partially may say that we are neglecting our duties. Lord R̄shabhadeva is saying that they (devotees) are not attached but at the same time they are performing their duties. The Lord is explaining everything very beautifully. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is presenting unparalleled philosophy. It has an answer to every question that humanity can possibly raise. The only problem is that we do not turn to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for solutions. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is saying that a householder may have his wife, children, wealth but he must neither be attached to these possessions and relationships nor must he abandon his duties towards them. Actually,

this philosophy is exactly the same as what Lord Kṛṣṇa presented in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Did Lord Kṛṣṇa tell Arjuna, “Abandon fighting and run away from the battlefield?” No! Lord Kṛṣṇa cautions in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu
mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir
mām evaisyasya asaṁśayah*

(Bhagavad-gītā 8.7)

“Therefore, Arjuna you should always think of Me in the form of Kṛṣṇa and at the same time carry out your prescribed duty of fighting. With your activities dedicated to Me and your mind and intelligence fixed on Me, you will attain Me without doubt.”

Similarly, a householder may have his family and wealth but he must bring them up as a matter of duty towards Lord Kṛṣṇa rather than as bodily attachments. Of course, some bodily attachments will be there. One cannot expect a mother to have zero attachment towards her children; that will be artificial. But the difference between a Kṛṣṇa conscious mother and a material mother is that the Kṛṣṇa conscious mother is fully aware that she has these children due to the agency of the Lord and God is the real proprietor and it is her duty to train them from a very young age so that they can remain in the service of the Lord throughout their lives. That is why Lord Rṣabhadeva has explained further in this chapter, “You should not become a father or a mother or a spiritual master if you cannot deliver your dependants.” This is also the instruction from Prahlāda Mahārāja in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*śrī-prahrāda uvāca
 kaumāra ācaret prājño
 dharmān bhāgavatān iha
 durlabham mānuṣam janma
 tad apy adhruvam arthatam*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.6.1)

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: “One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the very beginning of life — in other words, from the tender age of childhood — to practice the activities of devotional service, giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection.”

If one cultivates spiritual life from the age of five then, as one grows up, one’s spiritual determination will become stronger and stronger while living in the material world. The *Bhagavad-gītā* gives the example of the lotus flower that is in water but not touched by the water. We do our duty towards the relatives, family members etc. But we do it from the Kṛṣṇa conscious perspective.

SIMPLE LIVING, HIGH THINKING

Even if one has to earn money, one earns money but he does so on the principle of simple living, high thinking. Obviously, if one is a family man, one is going to need some money. What should be the guideline? Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has given us a very valuable guideline and that is, one should accept only as much as one needs for one’s survival. This is spiritual philosophy — simple living high thinking. Then even if one is a householder, one can

practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

If someone's philosophy is high living and simple thinking, then where is the time for practicing self-realization? What is materialistic philosophy? High living and simple thinking! What does it mean, "I want to lead a luxurious life!" In western countries, there are new fashions of clothing that come out twice a year. Every company that makes cars brings out new designs yearly. Unfortunately, everyone is anxiously waiting to see what the new fashion as well as the new design will be. They add one light here, change the color there and say this is a new model and foolishly people accept it. Does this latest model come free? No! They have to work like an ass to get it. During the eight hours drive in Dushanbe, we noticed lots of asses at work. How much load are they carrying? A few months ago, a man in Washington told us that he is doing three jobs, twenty-one hours daily. We asked him, "How long do you sleep?" He replied, "two hours only." We asked, "Why do you work so hard?". He replied, "I have to pay the mortgage of my house, pay for my cars, and pay for my wife and children. Everything is so expensive. Therefore, I have to work a lot." Working on three jobs and no time for chanting "Hare Kṛṣṇa" — this is material life. High living simple thinking, "I want to live like a king but I want to think like a child."

Spiritual life means simple living. "I only want *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* to eat, I am happy with a few sets of clothes, I am happy to have a place where I can sleep, as I must find time to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness." This is what is meant by simple living and high thinking.

CHANTING AND HEARING

“Human life is nothing but miseries. There is one God who is controlling everything. As I am His part and parcel I must serve Him and thus achieve the goal of life.” Lord R̄shabhadeva is advocating that one may be a householder who is engaged in some business, but the spirit should be that of pleasing Guru and Kṛṣṇa. Such a person is under the full protection of the Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the purport that a householder should lead such a life, which will enable him to get full opportunity of chanting and hearing. Without chanting and hearing, one cannot make spiritual advancement. While Lord Caitanya was travelling in southern India, He paid a visit to a *brāhmaṇa*. This *brāhmaṇa* received the Lord with great respect and said, “I am so fortunate because even Lord Brahma is anxious to have Your association.” While Lord Caitanya was requested by the *brāhmaṇa* to accept his company in travelling, Lord Caitanya refused the proposal saying, “You are a householder, stay at home, but do the following:

- Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and make all the members of the family chant also;
- Read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Bhagavad-gītā;
- Worship the Deities;
- Associate with devotees;
- Live in a sacred place.

Thus, you will never be separated from Me, nor will I be separated from you.”

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very practical and can be practiced by everyone. One just has to follow these

guidelines. Śrīla Prabhupāda says that the only solution is to take shelter unto the lotus feet of Lord Hari. So how does one take shelter? This is important. An answer is given by Prahlāda Mahārāja in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* :

śrī-prahrāda uvāca
 śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoh
 smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
 arcanam vandanam dāsyam
 sakhyam ātma-nivedanam

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23)

Prahlāda Mahārāja said, “Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia, and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord as one’s best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) — these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service.”

Those who are approaching the Lord on the path of devotional service do not try to enter into any business with Him. They know that there is happiness and distress, victory and defeat, and cold and heat in this material world, that is why it is known as the world of duality. Even if one has to go through all these difficult situations, one should not be discouraged. Lord Caitanya says that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only master and we are all His servants. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “My dear Lord, if I have to take birth again let it be in the house of a Vaiṣṇava.” In fact, he says, “If I have to take birth even as a worm, let it be in the house of a Vaiṣṇava.” Why in

the house of Vaiṣṇava? Because there one will at least have the opportunity to hear the holy names.

ASSOCIATE AND DISTRIBUTE KR̄ṢNA CONSCIOUSNESS

Earlier in this verse we have discussed the point that one should avoid the association of gross materialists. To be very practical, no one can avoid the association of gross materialists. Even if a devotee goes on book distribution, he will have to associate with them. This is also the case if he goes on *prasāda* distribution or to preach.

Someone may say that there are some contradictions in this philosophy. There isn't any contradiction. We associate with these gross materialists with the purpose of influencing them rather than being influenced by them. We associate with them so that we can give them Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We want to give them something.

The conclusion is that a devotee, be he a *brahmacārī* or a *grhastha*, associates with these gross materialists only to carry out the mission of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. While associating with worldly-minded people, the purpose must be to influence them to the path of devotional service unto the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In fact, this is possible if and only if we maintain ourselves spiritually.

PRACTICING INTERNAL SAMĀDHİ

A devotee should always practice internal *samādhi*. What is internal *samādhi*? It means that one always meditates on the instructions of guru and Kṛṣṇa. In his mind, he

is always thinking, “Here I am on the street to distribute books, *prasāda*, etc. I am doing this on behalf of my spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa.” As his mind is internally absorbed in the spiritual mission that has brought him there, Kṛṣṇa will help the devotee and Māyā will not be able to touch him. Similarly, a householder may be engaged in business but if he is always internally absorbed in meditating on the mission of life then he will also be protected. This is very important. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*man-manā bhāva mad-bhakto
mad-yajī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyam te
pratijāne priyo ‘si me*

(Bhagavad-gītā 18.65)

“Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer your homage unto Me. Thus, you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend.”

If someone follows the advice of this verse, there is no question of his being touched by the illusory energy. On the contrary if one does not follow the advice of this verse, one can get easily tempted by Māyā.

HANKERING AND LAMENTATION

Our standard should never be compromised. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says, “Whatever price you have to pay, do not hesitate, pay it, but become Kṛṣṇa conscious.” Hence, whatever sacrifice one may have to make, one must just do it but should not give up the opportunity to become Kṛṣṇa conscious in this lifetime. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda says that a devotee is pessimistic whereas materialists are optimistic. The devotee

being pessimistic means that he knows that material life has no real comfort to offer; he knows that the show can end at any time. Materialists however are thinking the opposite. Devotees are realistic, as they know that life is temporary. Our goal should be how to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and make others Kṛṣṇa conscious also. As we are fully convinced that without devotional service to the Lord there is no happiness, we have to execute our responsibilities, which will enable us to develop the spirit of detachment. We should not forget that if we surrender to Kṛṣṇa, we would become very happy. This is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samah sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktim labhate parām*

(Bhagavad-gītā 18.54)

“One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.”

This material world is full of hankering and lamentation — hankering for those things which one does not possess and lamenting for those things which one has lost. But one who is transcendently situated is undisturbed. He also laments because he has spent so many lifetimes independent of Kṛṣṇa and he hankers that he may become Kṛṣṇa conscious and not waste a single minute. This should be practiced with determination and then we can achieve the goal of life. Devotees should meditate on the above points of this verse and try to implement them in their lives.

4

SENSE GRATIFICATION: THE MADNESS

*nūnam pramattah kurute vikarma
yad indriya-prītaya āpr̄noti
na sādhu manye yata ātmano ‘yam
asann api kleśada āsa dehaḥ*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.4)

“When a person considers sense gratification the aim of his life, he certainly becomes mad after materialistic living and engages in all kinds of sinful activity. He does not know that due to his past misdeeds he has already received a body, which, although temporary, is the cause of his misery. Actually, the living entity should not have taken on a material body, but he has been awarded the material body for sense gratification. Therefore, I think it not befitting an intelligent man to involve himself again in the activities of sense gratification by which he perpetually gets material bodies one after another.”

Begging, borrowing, and stealing; to live for sense gratification — is condemned in this verse because such consciousness leads one to a dark, hellish condition.

The four sinful activities are illicit sex, meat eating, intoxication, and gambling. These are the means by which one gets another material body that is full of miseries. In the *Vedas* it is said: *asaṅgo hy ayam puruṣah*. The living entity is not really connected with this material world, but due to his tendency to enjoy the material senses, he is put into the material condition. One should perfect his life by associating with devotees. He should not become further implicated in the material body.

SENSE GRATIFICATION LEADS TO SIN

Lord R̄ṣabhadeva is saying that when one makes sense gratification the goal of his life then he simply becomes mad and engages in all types of sinful activities. We can see that so many people are performing sinful activities these days. They are doing so because they have greed for money. Being very greedy for money, they will do anything to get it. People are engaged in sinful activities, like smuggling drugs, selling armaments, etc. They are inducing children to take drugs. In India, we find these people going to schools for selling drugs. They tell children, "Come on, and try this brown sugar which is very good for you." They are doing like this all over the world.

Here people like to keep cows and sheep, which is very nice because the Vedic system is to have a small plot of land and some cows, and live happily. Unfortunately, we were told that when these cows cannot give milk then they would be slaughtered. They kill the cows and sell the meat or consume it. This is a lamentable fact. The cows give us milk just like a mother breast-feeds her child, how is it that eventually people kill them?

When Lord Caitanya started the *sāṅkīrtana* movement in Navadvīpa, He was stopped by the local Kāzī. He organized a massive demonstration of hundreds and thousands of people and then He proceeded to meet the Kāzī. Afterwards, Lord Caitanya went to have a philosophical discussion with the Kāzī. “What type of religion is this in which you are killing your mother,” He chastised.

In India, there is a community which is very nonviolent. It is the Jain community. They are pure vegetarians but there is one Jain businessman who is running a very big slaughterhouse in South India. Why is he running the slaughterhouse? Because he wants to earn money. What will he do with the money? He will engage in sense gratification. When sense gratification is the goal of life then people engage in all types of sinful activities.

From this it can be concluded that although Lord R̄ṣabhadeva spoke this verse thousands of years ago, it looks as if it was spoken only yesterday. These things are very much evident in everyday life. When one is greedy, one will do anything provided he can make money. He will engage in all types of sinful activities, just like in the western world there is child prostitution. All these activities are taking place simply because people have made sense gratification the goal of their life. This is what is happening in society today.

THE BUSINESS OF SPIRITUALISTS

Religious preachers are scared of controlling this. Why is this so? Because they cannot control themselves, so how can they control others? They are too scared to speak on these points. The business of the spiritualists is to speak

the truth that sense gratification is just like an itching sensation. One scratches and then one gets some instant pleasure but then the disease becomes worse. This is exactly what happens if one takes to the path of sense enjoyment. Can people become happy by drinking Vodka? Can they become happy by going to the casino? Or by having more mating partners? No, these people are becoming more and more miserable instead of deriving happiness.

Real happiness can be experienced by taking to the path of devotional service. We should remember that the main reason for which a holy scripture like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is discussing this foolish point of sense gratification being made the goal of life is that unless one gives up sense gratification, one cannot come to a higher level of realization. It is a lamentable fact that people are submerged in an ocean of sinful activities. Why is it so? Because by hook or by crook they want to make sense gratification the goal of life.

REAL VS UNREAL

One should not misunderstand the meaning of sense enjoyment. We do believe in sense enjoyment. You may say, “Really? You just finished telling us that sense enjoyment is bad!” We believe in the real sense enjoyment and not the false one and the path of devotional service offers the real solution.

Once there was a man who had never heard of or seen sugarcane. His friend was describing to him, “Sugarcane is always very sweet, wherever you bite it, top, bottom or centre. By experiencing its sweetness, you will like it very much.” In due course of time, the friend asked about its

appearance. “It looks like a bamboo,” the latter replied. A short time later, the friend tried many bamboos. None of them was sweet. Then this person went to his friend and narrated the story. He said, “This is very amazing, you informed me that sugarcane looks like a bamboo but I tried so many bamboos and none of them was sweet.” Immediately his partner shouted, “I told you that sugarcane looks like bamboos but it isn’t bamboo.”

Similarly, material life offers happiness, which Śrīla Prabhupāda compares to lightning in the sky at night. How long does it last? Just for a few seconds. Śrīla Prabhupāda compares that the pleasure derived in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is like sunshine available on a bright sunny day. Just like today in this city it is very bright, it is not cloudy. When does one get more light — during the day or at night when there is lightning? During the day obviously. Similarly, material life offers happiness like lightning during the night and Kṛṣṇa consciousness offers bliss like light during a bright sunny day. Those who are intelligent will immediately go for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

BEG, BORROW, OR STEAL

When sense gratification is the goal of life, the formula one follows is to beg, borrow, and steal. Has anyone heard of this formula before? The philosophy of our new generation is to first borrow from someone, “Please give me a loan which I will pay you back in one year’s time,” and then, that year will never come! If someone does not borrow then he begs. We do not know in this country but in India, begging is a big business. Beggars are trained to go and beg on the street. Similarly, we are also begging,

everyone is begging. The president of one country goes to the president of another country for loans. This is also begging. But if nothing happens by begging then stealing is always there. One cannot park one's car at night leaving it open and go to sleep inside the house. If one keeps the house open just for five minutes, it will be empty. Suppose someone stands at the railway station and leaves his briefcase just for two minutes then as soon as he returns, he would not find it. Beg, borrow, or steal is the goal of materialistic life because everyone wants to make money.

Long-long ago, there was a criminal who used to rob and even murder people for their money. Fortunately, once he came across Nārada Muni. The dacoit told the sage to give him whatever he had. The sage replied, "I have a lot to give you. I have a lot of things but tell me, why do you need all these things?" The thief replied that he is taking all these things for his wife, parents, and children. Immediately the great sage asked, "Do you know that you will have to take the sinful reactions incurred by these activities?" The thief replied that it does not matter. He said that as he was doing all this for the benefit of his wife, parents, and children, they would also share it. Nārada Muni asked, "If you are so confident that your relatives are going to share the sinful reactions then just ask them. If they say, 'Yes', I will give you unlimited wealth."

After a short lapse of time, the thief returned to his relatives and told them that he had just discovered that he would have to suffer for the sinful activities he was engaging in for giving comforts to them. After that, he asked his relatives whether they would share twenty-five percent of his sufferings. They replied that they were very

sorry and they could not do that. Then the thief went to his beloved wife and told her, “Do you know that all this jewellery and *sārīs* that I have been buying for you are all coming from the money which I get by murdering and robbing people? Somebody has just told me that I will have to take on the reactions of my sinful activities.” The thief asked, “Will you share only twenty-five percent of the results?” This criminal was thinking that his parents would share twenty-five percent, his wife would share twenty-five percent, his children would share twenty-five percent, and he would share the remaining twenty-five percent. His wife said, “No, I never told you to do all that, and it is your duty to maintain us.” The children also gave him a negative reply.

Then this criminal went back to Nārada Muni and acknowledged that he was right. The thief explained, “I am engaging in all these sinful activities for my family but none of them is ready to share the suffering with me.” This criminal later became a great sage and compiled the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He became the great sage Vālmīki and he was enlightened by Nārada Muni.

SLAVE OF THE SENSES

We engage in so many sinful activities, for what? Just to get sense gratification. The nature of this human life is that it can come to an end at any moment. Therefore, it is destructive to adopt the path of sense gratification as the goal of life.

In the association of devotees, one learns about the value of spiritual happiness. One cannot learn about the value of spiritual happiness in the association of materialists.

In the association of materialists, the appetite for sense enjoyment will go on increasing. This is the reason for which a devotee has to be very careful regarding his association. One is known by the company he keeps. By spiritual association, one begins to understand how real happiness can be found.

The scriptures are constantly saying that one should not be mad after sense enjoyment because animals also get it very easily. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives a nice example to show how different animals meet their destruction by becoming slaves of their senses. For example, the fish is very fond of eating. It can keep on eating the whole day. So, if somebody wants to catch it, then what does he do? He puts some kinds of food in a hook and drops it with the help of a string in the water. Upon seeing the bait, the fish is forcibly driven to it, hence ends up in a frying pan. Similarly, the moth is very fond of satisfying its eyes. It wants to see something attractive — like the light. The moth knows that it cannot go to the sun. However, it knows that at night when the lights are on, it can very easily reach the bulb. Then at night when one switches on the light, the moth desperately tries to go near the bulb. Its desire is to reach there, sit on the bulb and break it. When it gets near the bulb, the heat is so strong that the moth gets burnt to ashes. Then comes the famous example of the bee. The bee is very fond of nice fragrance, so it flies all day travelling from one flower to another. At last it finds the lotus flower and it goes to sit on it — it is just like *samādhi*, heaven. As per the laws of nature, the lotus flower closes in the evening and the bee is stuck there. Hence, being suffocated, it is delivered to the cruel hands of death. We also have the example of the he-elephant who follows the she-elephant. On the way, a hunter digs a ditch and covers it with grass. While following

the she-elephant for a relationship, the he-elephant falls in the ditch and this is how it meets its death in the hands of the hunter. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that if one makes sense gratification the goal of life then life is going to end exactly like these animals.

REAL HAPPINESS

The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains:

*dhyāyato viśayān pūṁsaḥ
saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ
kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.62)

“While contemplating on the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises.”

*krodhād bhāvati sammohah
sammohāt smṛti-vibhramāḥ
smṛti-bhrāmśād buddhi-nāśo
buddhi-nāśāt praṇāsyati*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.63)

“From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool.”

The mentality of people is such that if A sees that B has more money than him; he thinks, “My neighbor has bought a nice car and I am still travelling by the public bus!” So, he becomes envious.

Lust is the enemy of the living entity. However, it can be conquered by the process of devotional service. Therefore, one should constantly devote one's time hearing and chanting as recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā*

*mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā
bodhayantah parasparam
kathayantas ca mām nityam
tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca*

(Bhagavad-gītā 10.9)

The thought of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me.

Spiritual life means discovering and realizing a higher standard of happiness. It is not that we do not want happiness, but we are after real happiness. What is real happiness? The happiness that one gets by engaging in devotional service related to the Lord. If someone has to eat, let it be *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* only. We are not asking devotees to fast like Dhruva Mahārāja. Who does not like *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*? This morning, we took some cakes for an official we went to see. He liked it very much. Nowhere in the world, have we met a single person who shows distaste for *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. If someone wants to sing and dance, he can do that, but should do so to glorify the Lord. The devotees do more dancing than the *karmīs*. The *karmīs* do not dance two or three times daily. They probably dance once a week when they go to the club on Saturday night, but devotees are dancing every morning and evening. So, it is not that spiritual life does not offer any happiness rather it offers real happiness.

Mahārāja R̄ṣabhadeva is also making this point in the first verse of this chapter. He has explained that one must perform austerities and in exchange of these austerities, one will get unending pleasure. That is the difference between material pleasure and spiritual pleasure. Material pleasure has an end, but spiritual pleasure has no end. Even if someone is a very famous man, his fame will not last eternally. Just like in the time gone by, there was a very famous man in the former Soviet Union, but he is not famous anymore now. Practically everyone has forgotten him. This is material life. Someone may be a very rich dictator, someone may come from a very rich family but all these assets will finish in due course of time. Material happiness is temporary. The happiness derived from chanting the holy names is inexhaustible — *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*. This is also recommended in the *Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa*:

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

(Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa 3.8.126)

“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.”

PLEASURE TODAY, PAIN TOMORROW

This will make us happy eternally. Material happiness is temporary. If one engages in activities of sense pleasure, they may give some pleasure today but tomorrow they will increase the pain. Just like if one drinks a lot, will

he remain healthy? He will get a heart attack very soon. The chances of alcoholics getting heart attack is ten times more than non-alcoholics. It is a fact! If someone wants to consume meat, he can go ahead, but he should be prepared to take the risk of getting cancer, and would also be most welcome on the path to hell. He will be eaten by animals in future life. If someone wants to mate without discrimination, he can go ahead and get AIDS.

When people defy the laws of God, they get material suffering and spiritual suffering as well. This should never be forgotten. All these diseases are there due to our defying the laws of God. Modern society is a very sinful society. People are killing cow which is considered to be our mother. How is the cow our mother? We are drinking the cow's milk every day, so she is feeding us. If someone is killing the poor innocent children in the womb, is it not a heinous act? One kills children in the womb, kills the cows and at the same time wants happiness! Every day one is causing pain to others, but wants happiness for oneself! How can we have peace in such a society?

SENSE GRATIFICATION: THE BIGGEST STUMBLING BLOCK

Spiritual life means understanding that one is not this body and one is the eternal part and parcel of God. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke
jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manah-śaṣṭhānindriyāṇi
prakṛti-sthāni karsati*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.7)

"The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind."

We all are God's servants but are revolting against His instructions! This is confirmed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya
yāre yaiche nācāya, se taiche kare nṛtya*

(Sri Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 5.142)

"Lord Kṛṣṇa alone is the supreme controller, and all others are His servants. They dance as He makes them do so."

Why is sense gratification condemned so heavily by all the sages and speakers? Sense gratification is the biggest stumbling block as well as the biggest enemy on the path of devotional service, which leads one back home, back to Godhead.

By engaging in spiritual activities, one realizes and experiences the highest standard of pleasure. This is the reason for which people stay on the spiritual path. Why will somebody take to devotional service if he is not given anything? People will understand this when they connect themselves with the teachings of the Lord, coming down in the disciplic succession. Then they will be blissful. The nature of real happiness is that it is always increasing.

Our goal of life must be to please the senses of the Lord. By watering the roots of a tree, all its branches along with its leaves are automatically nourished. When we put food in the stomach, this strengthens all the different parts of

the body. Similarly, by serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead, our senses automatically derive bliss.

REJECTING FALSE COMPASSION

We do not believe in false compassion or false mercy. False compassion means one wants sense enjoyment. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to give us this story of an aunt who was very so-called merciful towards her nephew. It is a real story. The boy was completely spoiled by his aunt. Whatever the boy did, she would say that it was very good. At an early age, this boy became a thief. He would steal and bring home whatever he had stolen. The aunt would say, "Very good, very good. People work hard and get things but without working hard you get whatever you want. Therefore, what is wrong in it?" As the boy grew up, he started committing bigger crimes. Finally, he became a murderer. Still the aunt did not advise him. She said, "People do die in any case, so what is wrong if they die in your hands." In due course of time, he was arrested by the police and was sentenced to death. As he was about to be hanged, he was asked for his last wish. The boy said, "I want to speak to my aunt." The latter was crying and crying, for her nephew was about to be hanged within a few minutes. Being informed, the aunt came closer and when she came close to him, he bit her ear. He said, "If through these ears you had not have accepted everything that I did as good; if you had corrected me then today I would not have been in such a position." This is a real story. It shows false compassion.

Once Śrīla Prabhupāda said that when he was living as a householder, he heard his neighbor's child crying. Śrīla

Prabhupāda said, “Why is the child crying so much?” Prabhupāda’s servant said that his mother had beaten him very badly because he fed a *pakorā* to his brother who was sick and was not supposed to eat *pakorās*. Due to eating that *pakorā*, the child’s sickness had increased. So, the mother became angry with this child for feeding his brother *pakorā*.

This is an example of false compassion or mercy. Let a man do what he wants to do?! No. We should advise him if he is doing something wrong. We must discriminate and identify what is wrong or right.

SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is nectar. Lord Rāshabhadeva explained in the previous verses that one should accept what is favorable for spiritual advancement and reject those things, which are unfavorable. This is the standard. By raising ourselves to this standard, we will advance spiritually and will return home, back to Godhead.

We also believe in sense gratification but in the spiritual one. Now someone may say, “It is fine to give a speech but in practice I do not feel satisfied while serving Lord Kṛṣṇa.” There is nothing wrong with the process but if someone wants both, spiritual happiness and material happiness then this is the cause of his suffering. Unless we become single minded, we would not be able to attain love of God. We will be able to attain spiritual happiness when we devote ourselves wholly and fully to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā*

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir
ekeha kuru-nandana*

*bahu-śākhā hy anantāś ca
buddhayo ‘vyavasāyinām*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41)

Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one, O beloved child of the Kurus. The intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.

We should take to this path with full faith. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given us the guidelines on how to succeed spiritually. What are the guidelines that he has given in this connection — to be convinced about the success. We must be convinced that this is the real thing. We must be convinced that whatever the bona fide spiritual master is saying is right. The mind will say, “The scriptures may be saying something but how do you know that it is real?” There may be so many speculations, “Who knows whether Kṛṣṇa is real, we are just hearing all this! We have not seen Him with our own eyes, I only believe in what I see.” How does one reject it? By acknowledging that we cannot put much faith in our eyes, mind, and senses and realizing that they all tend to cheat us.

The more we chant, the more we hear, the more we associate with devotees, and the result is that our faith and conviction become stronger and stronger. That is why Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the purport that by associating with devotees, one can make spiritual advancement. We must all be constantly engaged in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahāmantra*.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.

Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

EXPERIENCE NOW!

Many of those present in this room have been coming here for years. We saw many devotees' years ago, when they were chanting just one or two rounds and they are still chanting and look like perfect devotees. Why are these devotees still here? Because they are satisfied with the process! It is guaranteed. We are not bluffing people like the scientists. They say, "You give us your money now and we will give you a post dated cheque and fifty years later, you will get the result." Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that scientists are all giving post-dated cheques, "You give us all your money and we will do the research now, hundred years later, you will be guaranteed that you would not die, you will go to the heavenly planets." We are not telling people to please chant "Hare Kṛṣṇa" now and then fifty years later they will feel the first drop of satisfaction. One starts experiencing happiness as soon as one starts chanting, one starts experiencing happiness as one associates with devotees. The proof of this can be seen in the temple itself. Many people came here for the first time, and still they are chanting and dancing. This is the process — chant, dance, serve Kṛṣṇa and be happy.



5

BREAKING FREE FROM MATERIAL BONDAGE

*parābhāvas tāvad abodha-jāto
yāvan na jijñāsata ātma-tattvam
yāvat kriyās tāvad idam mano vai
karmātmakam yena śarīra-bandhah*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 5.5.5)

“As long as one does not inquire about the spiritual values of life, one is defeated and subjected to miseries arising from ignorance. Be it sinful or pious, karma has its resultant actions. If a person is engaged in any kind of karma, his mind is called karmātmaka, colored with fruitive activity. As long as the mind is impure, consciousness is unclear, and as long as one is absorbed in fruitive activity, he has to accept a material body.”

Generally people think that one should act very piously in order to be relieved from misery, but this is not a fact. Even though one engages in pious activity and speculation, he is nonetheless defeated. His only aim should be emancipation from the clutches of *māyā* and

all material activities. Speculative knowledge and pious activity do not solve the problems of material life. One should be inquisitive to understand his spiritual position. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*yathaidhāṁsi samiddho 'gnir
bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna
jñānāgnih sarva-karmāṇi
bhasmasāt kurute tathā*

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.37)

“As a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burns to ashes all reactions of material activities.”

Unless one understands the self and its activities, one has to be considered in material bondage. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32) it is also said: *ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas tvayy asta-bhāvād avīśuddha-buddhayaḥ*. A person who doesn't have knowledge of devotional service may think himself liberated, but actually he is not. *Āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ patanty adho 'nādṛita-yuṣmad-anghrayaḥ*: [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.32] such people may approach the impersonal Brahman effulgence, but they fall down again into material enjoyment because they have no knowledge of devotional service. As long as one is interested in *karma* and *jñāna*, he continues enduring the miseries of material life — birth, old age, disease and death. *Karmīs* certainly take on one body after another. As far as *jñānīs* are concerned, unless they are promoted to the topmost understanding, they must return to the material world. As explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19): *bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate*. The point is to know Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, as everything and surrender unto

Him. *Karmīs* do not know this, but a devotee who is one hundred percent engaged in the devotional service of the Lord knows fully what is *karma* and *jñāna*; therefore a pure devotee is no longer interested in *karma* or *jñāna*. *Anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam* [Cc. Madhya 19.167]. The real *bhakta* is untouched by any tinge of *karma* and *jñāna*. His only purpose in life is to serve the Lord.

ENQUIRING ABOUT THE GOAL OF LIFE

The one line summary of what we discussed in the previous verse is that one who considers sense gratification as the goal of life is simply a fool and is wasting his human form of life.

Here in this verse is one theme, which is constantly emphasized by all the sages — unless we overcome the influence of the illusory energy of the Lord, we cannot succeed on the spiritual path. Lord Rṣabhadeva says that if one does not inquire about the spiritual values of the life, he is defeated. One may be a great man externally, may be the president of a country or the prime minister of a country, but if he does not inquire about the goal of life then he is defeated. Externally one may be very much honored, but internally if he is acting like cats and dogs then what is the value? Kṛṣṇa does not see what one is doing externally. The laws of material nature do not say, “All right now that you have died, you still can continue to be the head of the state in your next life.” It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*karmaṇā daiva-netreṇa
jantur dehopapattaye
striyāḥ praviṣṭa udaram
puṁso retah-kaṇāśrayaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.31.1)

The Personality of Godhead said, “Under the supervision of the Supreme Lord and according to the result of his work, the living entity, the soul, is made to enter into the womb of a woman through the particle of male semen to assume a particular type of body.”

At the time when one changes one’s body, everything is testified, “Yes, this man has committed this crime, so, he should be punished accordingly.” According to this verse, if we do not inquire about the goal of life, we are defeated.

LORD BUDDHA’S INQUIRY

Abodha jātāḥ means produced from ignorance. We are all born in ignorance. Before speaking, we offer our prayers to the spiritual master and the disciplic succession. Some might be wondering, “What are these prayers?” These are different prayers, offering respect and gratitude to the spiritual master, the predecessor ācāryas, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. One of the prayers we say is:

*om ajñāna-timirandhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitāṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge.”

Abodha jātāḥ means living in ignorance. The opposite

of the word *abodha* is *bodha*. *Bodha* means knowledge, enlightened and *abodha* means ignorance.

Everyone must have heard about Lord Buddha. The word Buddha comes from *bodha*. How did Lord Buddha get enlightened? He was born as a prince. Being born in a king's family, He was brought up in great opulence and comfort. The King, His father, had brought Him up with great care where He was completely protected and He knew nothing of the outside world. One day Lord Buddha left His palace and came on the road. Since He was a prince, His father's secretary was accompanying Him. He saw an old man walking with his stick with great difficulty. He asked His secretary for the reason, "This man looks to be suffering," and the secretary said, "He is an old man, you will also become old one day. We all have to suffer like this old man is suffering and walking with a stick." Lord Buddha inquired, "Will I also become old like him one day and suffer like this?" The secretary gave a positive reply. A little further Lord Buddha saw that a man's funeral pyre being carried and due to which many people were crying. Lord Buddha asked His secretary, "What is this procession?" The secretary replied, "Someone has died, so his relatives are crying and they are taking his funeral procession." A little further Lord Buddha saw that one man was in great pain. Then He asked His secretary, "What is this? Why is this man crying?" The secretary answered, "He is in great pain as he is very sick." Eventually, Lord Buddha came back to His palace and said that He had been

living in great comfort thinking that everybody is comfortable but now He had found out that there was nothing but miseries in life. A short while later, He gave up His kingdom and started Buddhism. Hence, *bodha* means enlightenment and *abodha*, the opposite means ignorance.

We are all born in ignorance and we remain in this state and consider sense enjoyment to be the only goal of life. Why do these miseries come? They are here due to ignorance because of which we think that sense enjoyment is the goal of life. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that we are all born as rascals. If we tell a young child that he is born as a rascal, he will not understand that. We are all criminals in the material world. We are all the time disobeying our eternal father's laws. It is indispensable for us to come out of this criminal mentality. Now it is time for us to wake up and inquire about the goal of life.

KARMA

Lord Rāshabhadeva says that whether a man performs sinful activities or pious activities, *karma* has its resultant reactions. There are three categories of actions that one can perform. *Karma* means acting according to some beliefs in religion but the goal is sense pleasure. *Vikarma* means performing sinful activities. *Akarma* means activities that are performed strictly for the pleasure of the Lord under the direction of a *bonafide* spiritual master.

This verse refers to karmic and vikarmic activities. *Vikarma* means actions against religious principles. What happens if we engage in sinful life? We become liable for punishment. Karmic activities are definitely better

than vikarmic activities. One should not misunderstand. Performing *karma* is definitely superior to vikarma. *Karma* means pious activities. One does some religious functions with a goal that he must get some sense pleasure. Like *karma-kāṇḍa*, fruitive activities, “I am doing this austerity and in exchange of it I want some benefits.” Of course, engaging in fruitive activities is far superior to sinful activities because in fruitive activities one does acknowledge the position of God. At least one turns to God for direction, at least one understands that even if he wants sense pleasure, he should go to God and nobody but God. Still we find that *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* does not recommend fruitive activities.

ŚRĪLA VYASADEVA’S QUESTION

Why was Śrīla Vyāsadeva, even after compiling the vast Vedic literatures, feeling unsatisfied? Even after compiling the *Vedās*, *Upaniṣads*, the *Purāṇas*, and the *Mahābhārata*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, who was the literary incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, was still not satisfied in his heart. So, he went to his spiritual master — The great sage Nārada. After reaching the bank of river Sarasvatī, Śrīla Vyāsadeva went to his spiritual master and said, “My dear guru Mahārāja, I want to present a question before you. I have compiled these vast Vedic literatures, summarized everything in the *Vedānta-sūtra* but still I do not feel satisfaction. What is the cause?” Then Nārada Muni instructed, “Since you are asking me this question I will give you the answer. Even though you have compiled these Vedic literatures, you have also given people the opportunity to engage in *karma-kāṇḍa* activities and as long as they engage in *karma-kāṇḍa* activities,

the living entities cannot be satisfied. Now, present the philosophy properly where the *karma-kāṇḍa* activities are rejected and pure devotional service is established."

At that time Śrīla Vyāsadeva compiled this spotless *Purāṇa*, *Amala Purāṇa* which is the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* rejects the utility of *dharma* for the purpose of *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. The point that we are making is very simple — *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* does not recommend fruitive activities.

DRINKING POISON FROM A GOLDEN CUP

Fruitive activities are no doubt better than sinful activities but they do not enable one to achieve the love of God. What can fruitive activities do for one? They can give a higher birth, beautiful body, material education, and one can even be promoted to the heavenly planets.

Suppose one does get promoted to the heavenly planets, where the standard of living is far higher than that of the earthly planets, just like in America the standard of living is higher than in Russia. In different countries, there are different standards of living. In this city of Bishkek also some people live like kings and some are very poor. Some have many cars while others travel by public bus. In the heavenly planets, the standard of living is far higher than the standard of living on this earthly planet. However, if one does get elevated to the heavenly planets, will he be able to stay there permanently? No, one can stay there only as long as pious *karmas* allow one. Just like an airplane flies in the sky and stays there only till its fuel allows it; one may be driving a car, but before the petrol runs out one must refuel it.

Pious activities elevate one but they do not free one from the miseries of birth and death nor do they give a taste of real love of God. Therefore, the great sage Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has said that pious activities are like drinking poison from a golden cup. Does this mean that one will not die? Whether one is drinking poison from a golden cup or a silver cup, it is going to have the same effect. Therefore, Lord R̄ṣabhadeva is saying that whether one's activities are sinful or pious, *karma* has its resultant reactions.

FRUITIVE ACTIVITIES MEANS IGNORANCE

Karmātmaka means covered with material desires, absorbed in material activities. If one is engaged in fruitive activities, the goal is sense gratification, “I want to be a famous man, I want to be a very powerful man, I want everyone to respect me, I want to have a big house with all luxurious facilities, etc.” These are all different types of material desires and they pollute the mind and consciousness. Rainwater is pure in the sky, but when it hits the earth, it becomes impure. Similarly, the living entity in its spiritual constitution is pure but when it comes in contact with the material world, it becomes impure, contaminated, polluted, etc.

Engaging in fruitive activities is also as a result of ignorance. There are different layers of ignorance, just like the different stages of sleep. Sometimes one is in deep sleep, snoring, while sometimes one is in light sleep. Similarly, when one is in deep ignorance then he just engages in fruitive activities for the pleasure of the senses, or in sinful activities.

FROM IGNORANCE TO KNOWLEDGE

One has to come to *bodha* from *abodha*. One has to get out of this ignorance and reach enlightenment. How can one do that? — by taking the assistance of spiritual personalities! One has to take guidance from spiritual personalities who are the transparent via medium. Just like glasses are transparent via media as they help one to see things as they are, similarly transparent via medium means one who presents the instructions of the Lord as they are so that one can receive them in a pure form.

As long as the mind is impure, the consciousness will also be impure. What does this mean? If one purifies one's mind then the consciousness will also be purified. Therefore, a great emphasis is laid upon the purification of the mind. How to purify the mind? — By offenselessly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* —

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*

The ten offences against the Holy Name are

- To blaspheme the devotees who have dedicated their lives for preaching the Holy Names of the Lord.
- To consider the names of the demigods such as Lord Śiva or Lord Brahmā to be equal to or independent of the names of Lord Viṣṇu.
- To disobey the orders of the spiritual master and to consider him an ordinary human being.
- To blaspheme the Vedic literatures or any other literature in pursuance of the Vedic version.
- To consider the glories of the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to be imagination.

- To give some mundane interpretations of the Holy Names of the Lord.
- To commit sinful activities on the strength of the Holy Name of the Lord.
- To consider the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to be one of the auspicious ritualistic activities mentioned in the *Vedas* such as fruitive activities, *karma-kāṇḍa*.
- To instruct to a faithless person the glories of the Holy Names of the Lord.
- To not have complete faith in the chanting of the Holy Names and to maintain material attachments even after understanding so many instructions on this matter. It is also an offence to chant inattentively.

That is why we see so many verses in the *Bhagavad-gītā* which stress on the point of controlling the mind. Lord Kṛṣṇa advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*yato yato niścalati
 manaś cañcalam asthiram
 tatas tato niyamyaitad
 ātmān eva vaśān nayet*

(Bhagavad-gītā 6.26)

“From wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the self.”

Lord R̄shabhadeva is very clearly explaining in this verse that if the consciousness is impure then the actions will also be impure. If the actions are impure then it means that one is engaging in sinful activities. We chant “Hare Kṛṣṇa” to purify the consciousness and ultimately the heart!

CONTROLLING THE MIND

How can we make this mind our friend? The mind has certain very unique characteristics, one of which is that it is restless, *cañcalam* — which means it is very flickering. Arjuna states in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*cañcalam hi manah kṛṣṇa
pramāthi balavad dṛḍham
tasvāham nigraham manye
vāyor iva su-duṣkaram*

(Bhagavad-gītā 6.34)

“For the mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate, and very strong. O Kṛṣṇa, and to subdue it, I think, is more difficult than controlling the wind.”

One moment it is here while the next moment it is there. One may not have money to buy a ticket to America, one may not have the visa for America, but the mind can go to America within a second. The mind does not need money or visa. It is very flickering — even more flickering than a child.

Sometimes, parents get angry with their children. They say, “Oh! I have told you ten times to correct it, why aren’t you correcting it? Why are you so obstinate?” We are very obstinate and the mind is far more obstinate than us. Every day we hear to give up Māyā; to give up laziness and not to engage in sense enjoyment; still the mind does not accept it. It is very-very obstinate; it carries away the intelligence even of the best of the men. Even great sages sometimes get agitated and disturbed.

Once there was a King called Viśvāmitra who renounced

everything and became a great sage. He went to practice meditation. Indra, the King of heaven, wanted to break his meditation and neutralize his meditational efforts. So, he sent a society girl called Menakā. She was wearing ankle bells and by dancing she was trying to seduce Viśvāmitra Muni. By Menakā's voice and her ankle bells Viśvāmitra's meditation broke, later he got attracted towards her. This shows how strong and obstinate the mind is.

One may be able to control the wind, according to Arjuna, but to control the mind is more difficult than that.

Kṛṣṇa advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
asamśayam mahā-bāho
mano durnigraham calam
abhyāsenā tu kaunteya
vairāgyenā ca grhyate*

(Bhagavad-gītā 6.35)

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “O mighty-armed son of Kuntī, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but is possible by suitable practice and by detachment.”

The mind is difficult to control but by practice and detachment it can be controlled. What does this mean? It means that we try to keep the mind focused on Kṛṣṇa. As the mind is flickery, it runs away, but one should bring it back and not let it stay away. Detachment comes from *jñāna* — knowledge, and knowledge comes from *vairagya* — renunciation. What is *jñāna*? — Knowledge that one is not this body; knowledge that one is the eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; knowledge that

one cannot really find happiness by material endeavors. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that no doubt it is very difficult to control the mind but it is possible by constant practice and detachment.

THE PURE CHANTING OF HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKUR

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, we have wonderful example of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. We have just explained how Viśvāmitra got seduced by Menakā. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, we also read the story of how Haridāsa Ṭhākura was attempted to be seduced by Māyā Devī herself and a prostitute. The local Mohameddan Kazi became very envious when he saw that Haridāsa Ṭhākura was getting so much respect from the local people. They were considering Haridāsa Ṭhākura as a great sage. The Kazi wanted to defame Haridāsa Ṭhākura. He hired the most beautiful prostitute of the town. He told her, “I have a mission for you. You must seduce this Haridāsa who is acting as if he is a very advanced spiritualist.” The prostitute agreed, “No problem. Just give me one night and I will give you the result.” Haridāsa Ṭhākura was chanting when she arrived there and took a seat at his feet. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was being dictated by Paramātmā. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15)

*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 *Vedās*, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of *Vedānta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedās*.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa assures in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*kṣipram bhāvati dharmātmā
śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktah praṇasyati*

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.31)

“He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kunti, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.”

As soon as the prostitute came and sat down there, Haridāsa Ṭhākura knew about her mission. He said, “I know why you are here, please let me finish my rounds then I will satisfy you.” Gradually, the entire night passed and Haridāsa said, “Please come tomorrow, I will definitely satisfy you.” The prostitute went back and reported to the Kazi, “Today I did not have much luck, but tomorrow he has promised me.” The same thing happened the next day also. She just sat there and listened to his pure chanting. Haridāsa Ṭhākura requested her to excuse him and told her that he would definitely satisfy her the following day. On the third day, by the purified chanting that she was hearing, not only did she give up her evil plan but she also became a great devotee at Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s feet. Then she distributed all her possessions to the advanced souls and shaved her head. Taking a seat next to the *tulasī* plant, she started chanting the Holy Names. This is the proof that by hearing pure chanting even a prostitute can get

purified.

On another occasion, Māyā Devī wanted to test how serious is Haridāsa Ṭhākura's attachment to the Holy Names. Māyā Devī incarnated herself as the most beautiful damsel which planet earth could have produced and then she came in front of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, making many different attractive poses. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was so much absorbed in the Holy Names that he did not get attracted or tempted by Māyā Devī at all.

PURIFYING THE MIND

We gave this example to show that if the mind is engaged in a positive way then it is easier to resist the influence of the illusory energy. Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14)

*daivī hy esā guṇa-mayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etām taranti te*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.14)

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

The chanting of the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa enables one to develop love of Godhead; it enables one to become more determined on the path of devotional service. The chanting of the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa enables us to be more convinced about success on the path of devotional service. The chanting of the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa enables us to become more patient and have full faith in the instructions

of the *ācāryas*. By constant practice and detachment, we can learn to control the mind. The point to understand is that we have to purify our minds and endeavor to make it our friend. It is mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

sa vai manaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayor
 vacāṁsi vaikuṇṭha-guṇānuvarṇane
 karau harer mandira-mārjanādiṣu
 śrutiṁ cakārācyuta-sat-kathodaye
 mukunda-lingālaya-darśane drṣau

 tad-bhṛtya-gātra-sparše 'ṅga-saṅgamam
 ghrāṇam ca tat-pāda-saroja-saurabhe
 śrīmat-tulasyā rasanām tad-arpite
 pādau hareḥ kṣetra-padānusarpane
 śiro hṛṣīkeśa-padābhivandane
 kāmaṁ ca dāsyे na tu kāma-kāmyayā
 yathottamasloka-janāśrayā ratih

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.18-20)

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa always engaged his mind in meditating upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his words in describing the glories of the Lord, his hands in cleansing the Lord's temple, and his ears in hearing the words spoken by Kṛṣṇa or about Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his eyes in seeing the Deity of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's temples and Kṛṣṇa's places like Mathura and Vṛndāvana, he engaged his sense of touch in touching the bodies of the Lord's devotees, he engaged his sense of smell in smelling the fragrance of *tulasī* offered to the Lord, and he engaged his tongue in tasting the Lord's *prasāda*. He engaged his legs in walking to the holy places and temples of the Lord, his head in bowing down before the Lord, and all his desires in serving the Lord, twenty-four hours a day. Indeed, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa never desired anything for his own sense gratification. He engaged all his senses in devotional service, in various engagements related to the Lord. This is the way to increase attachment for the Lord and be completely free from all material desires.

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa says that he places his mind at the lotus feet of the Lord. We are all aware of the story of Mahārāja Ambarīṣa and Durvāsā Muni — how Ambarīṣa Mahārāja was fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and how powerful a *yogī* Durvāsā Muni was! Durvāsā Muni produced a demon from his *śikhā*. Can anyone produce a demon from one's *śikhā*? When Ambarīṣa Mahārāja saw the demon, he was not disturbed at all as he was a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His mind was under control. This is one reason for which he did not get disturbed.

There is another story of Jāḍa Bharata. As we know, Jāḍa Bharata was King Bharata in his previous life, who was the son of Lord Rṣabhadeva. He got attached to a deer and because of this he had to take his birth in the body of a deer. As he had performed devotional service in the past, he did not have to stay very long in the deer's body. Soon he took his next birth as a *brāhmaṇa*. When he took his birth as a *brāhmaṇa*, he acted in the society as if he was deaf and dumb. He was neither deaf nor dumb but he acted like that in order not to get entangled in the material world. In his previous birth as a king, he had renounced his beautiful wife, children and kingdom but unfortunately got attached to a deer, which spoiled his devotional life. This time he did not want to repeat the same mistake. This is the reason why he was acting as deaf and dumb. One day he was guarding a paddy field. After the death of his father, Jāḍa Bharata was not treated properly by his stepmother and stepbrothers. He was sent to guard the paddy field. Once on duty he was kidnapped by some dacoits who wanted to offer him to Goddess Kali. So, they washed him just like

we wash fruits before offering to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The dacoits were getting ready to offer Jāḍa Bharata to Goddess Kālī as they wanted their leader to have a nice son. They washed Jāḍa Bharata's body, put some perfumes and were ready to offer him by chopping off his head. At that moment, Goddess Kālī came out of the Deity and with the same knife she chopped off all the dacoits' heads. But all this while Jāḍa Bharata did not protest, he stayed perfectly undisturbed, with his mind meditating on Kṛṣṇa.

King R̄ṣabhadeva says very clearly that if one's mind is polluted, the consciousness will also remain polluted. Therefore, we should purify the mind. We must endeavor to purify the mind. This can be done by following the instructions of the *bonafide* spiritual master.

INSTRUCTIONS OF A BONAFIDE GURU

We should not approach the guru just because it is a fashion to approach a spiritual master. Śrila Prabhupāda used to say, "Do not think that since everyone has got a dog or a cat, I must also have a dog or a cat. I will accept a guru but I will do what I want." This is useless. Many times, in India one sees that a lot of so-called rich people have gurus. They like to say, "He is my guru." Once when asked, "Did your guru give you any spiritual standard to follow," they gave us a negative reply. Accepting a guru like this is a waste of time. What is the advantage? The spiritual master must present what the Lord has presented. The spiritual master must present the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as they are, without distortion. By following the instructions of the guru, one makes spiritual advancement.

So, the chief instruction of the guru is that we should make spiritual advancement. The chief instruction of the guru is to always think of Kṛṣṇa, somehow or other, focus the mind on Kṛṣṇa.

DO NOT PRETEND

But one should not be a pretender. If one becomes a pretender then one's spiritual life is spoiled. Śrīla Prabhupāda once gave us the story of a prostitute and a *brāhmaṇa*. In this story, we find that a *brāhmaṇa* was making a big show of studying scriptures while his mind was always meditating on the activities of a prostitute.

There was a prostitute and a *brāhmaṇa* living next to her house. The prostitute was engaged in sinful activities while in her mind she was meditating on the *brāhmaṇa* holding the scriptures and studying them. She was also praying that one day she may become a *brāhmaṇa*. On the contrary, the *brāhmaṇa* was sitting on the balcony with the scriptures, pretending as if he was reading them but in his mind he was just meditating on the sex life of the prostitute. In due course of time, there was a fire and both died in it. The Yamadūtas came to the *brāhmaṇa* asking him to come as Yamarāja was waiting for him. Immediately the *brāhmaṇa* asked, "Why are you coming to me? I think you have come here by mistake, you should go to the prostitute, she was engaged in sinful activities." The Yamadūtas explained, "The prostitute was engaged in sinful work but her mind was always meditating on how to serve Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, you made a big show of being religious with the scriptures in front of you while in your mind you were thinking of the activities of the prostitute."

One should not be pretender. Generally, people like to control their minds by yogic practice. However, if one can control the mind by practice and detachment then the consciousness will be purified.

SUCCESS ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was instructed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to write books on devotional service summarizing the vast Vedic literatures. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has left behind vast Vedic literatures. In fact, the literatures left behind by the Gosvāmīs are the vastest in history. All the rules and regulations mentioned in the scriptures are subordinate to the principle of “always thinking of Kṛṣṇa and never forgetting Him”. Somehow or other we should make our mind our friend. If we read the books of the Gosvāmīs, there is nothing else in them but pure devotional service. Lord Rāshabhadeva says that if the mind is polluted, the consciousness will be polluted. So, we must control the mind. How do we do that? By chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahā-mantra*.

We are not interested in *karma* or in *vikarma*. We are only interested in *akarma*. *Akarma* means activities strictly in accordance with the process of devotional service or instructions of the *bonafide* spiritual master. One may say that this is a very difficult job. It appears to be difficult, but as one tries, it becomes easier.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is anxious that we succeed on the spiritual path, that is why He has given us all these guidelines and so many wonderful engagements. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has so many varieties of engagements. We do not just dance and chant. Chanting and dancing are

only small parts of our activities. Along with chanting and dancing, we are also busy serving. So many different types of activities are there — book distribution, *prasāda* distribution, Deity worship, temple construction and there are so many other services for purifying our minds.

One way to do so is to think about Kṛṣṇa, think about Prabhupāda, think about the guru, think about the *sādhus* and think about their instructions and the instructions of the Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the disciple should always act in the manner thinking that his guru is next to him. When one thinks that the guru is standing next to oneself then one is always more careful. If he thinks that the guru is far, then he will not meditate on his instructions. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “Never for a moment I thought that my guru was far.” He always acted thinking that his guru was right next to him. In this way, the mind will come under control.

Then, to think about the desires of the Lord. The desire of the Lord is to bring all the conditioned souls back to Him. So, a devotee should work to fulfil those desires. Further, everyone should have some service; if one does not have service then he is in real *māyā*, because then he does not have some focus to meditate on. One should meditate on one’s service; meditate on how to improve the service. If one is cooking for Kṛṣṇa, one should meditate on how one can make tastier *prasāda* for Kṛṣṇa. If one is in service as a pot-washer then one should meditate on how one can wash these pots very nicely. So, by meditating on something positive related to Kṛṣṇa, one’s mind will be prevented from going astray on the path

of sense enjoyment. And then one will be able to purify one's consciousness, and with a purified mind, one will be able to control one's senses and then one will be actively engaged in the activities of devotional service.

ŚREYAS AND PRAYĀSA

Śreyas and *prayāsa* are two types of activities. One can engage in *prayāsa* activities that give one immediate pleasure. Śreyas are activities that give one ultimate pleasure. So, everybody in material world wants *prayāsa*, instant pleasure, but the devotees want śreyas, ultimate happiness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is śreyas, material life is *prayāsa*. In the beginning, something may appear bitter but at the end it becomes sweet. Kṛṣṇa says about happiness in the mode of goodness — it is bitter in the beginning, but it brings one up to self-realization and it is very sweet at the end. Happiness in the mode of passion — sweet in the beginning and bitter in the end. We have our choice! Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not bitter. In the beginning, it just may be bitter for the first few days but once one begins to execute devotional service, one begins to get the pleasure of trying to connect with God and it is the strength that one gets from this pleasure which enables one to go on and on and on. So, one should take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness with full determination and not compromise, and Kṛṣṇa will reciprocate.



6

DEVELOPING LOVE FOR GOD

*evāṁ manah karma-vaśam prayuṅkte
avidyayātmany upadhiyamāne
prītir na yāvan mayi vāsudeve
na mucyate deha-yogena tāvat*

Srīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.6

“When the living entity is covered by the mode of ignorance, he does not understand the individual living being and the supreme living being, and his mind is subjugated to fruitive activity. Therefore, until one has love for Lord Vāsudeva, who is none other than Myself, he is certainly not delivered from having to accept a material body again and again.”

When the mind is polluted by fruitive activity, the living entity wants to be elevated from one material position to another. Generally, everyone is involved in working hard day and night to improve his economic condition. Even when one understands the Vedic rituals, he becomes interested in promotion to heavenly planets, not knowing that one's real interest lies in returning home, back to

Godhead. By acting on the platform of fruitive activity, one wanders throughout the universe in different species and forms. Unless he comes in contact with a devotee of the Lord, a guru, he does not become attached to the service of Lord Vāsudeva. Knowledge of Vāsudeva requires many births to understand. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19): *vāsudevah sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*. After struggling for existence for many births one may take shelter at the lotus feet of Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa. When this happens, one actually becomes wise and surrenders unto Him. That is the only way to stop the repetition of birth and death. This is confirmed in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in the instructions given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī at Daśāsvamedha-ghāṭa.

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 19.151*)

“The living entity wanders throughout different planets in different forms and bodies, but if by chance he comes in contact with a bona fide spiritual master, by the grace of the spiritual master he receives Lord Kṛṣṇa’s shelter, and his devotional life begins”

MODES OF MATERIAL NATURE

King Rṣabhadeva considered it His duty to educate His one hundred sons in self realization. Therefore, in this chapter, which is one of the most important chapters of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, King Rṣabhadeva is giving very important instructions. In this verse, He is pointing out what happens when a living entity is covered by the mode of ignorance.

We have all heard that there are three modes of material nature — Goodness, passion, and ignorance. Everyone comes in contact with the material nature and these modes. The mode of goodness is illuminating and is superior to the other two modes. Generally, when one is in the mode of goodness, one has the knowledge that, “I am not this body, I am an eternal servant of God.” In the mode of passion, one has unlimited material desires, hence, one engages in fruitive activities and works very hard. In the mode of ignorance, one is idle, becomes lazy and spends most of the time sleeping. There are people who sleep forty-eight hours at a stretch! In Canada, we have heard of people going to sleep on Friday evening and waking up on Monday morning. They sleep for at least fifteen hours daily. When they wake up, they go to a bar with a big belly and afterwards just keep sitting in the hot sun. They do not have any desire to investigate the cause of their sufferings. Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva says that when the living entities are covered by the mode of ignorance, they do not understand who they are. They identify themselves with the body — *deha*. *Deha yogena* means identifying with the body. Everyone is identifying with the body. From Lord Brahmā to a small ant, everyone in the material world identifies with the body and keeps operating under the influence of the modes of material nature.

WORSHIP OR BUSINESS?

As someone does not understand oneself, he does not also understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His mind is subject to so many desires, hence he engages in fruitive activities. What are fruitive activities? — They are like a

business deal but not with the human beings. As a sense gratifier, one tells the Lord, “I will do this but I want some benefits in exchange.” People go to the demigods for this purpose but when their material desires are satisfied, they do not even want to think of those demigods or the Lord.

Once there was a devotee of Goddess Kālī. He went to Goddess Kālī and pledged, “Please give me this benediction. If this happens, I will come and offer you a goat.” Anyhow, he got the benediction. Many days went by, but he did not offer the goat to Goddess Kālī. So, Goddess Kālī asked, “You promised me that you were going to offer me a goat when I give you this benediction. I have already given you the benediction, so where is my goat?” The devotee said, “I do not have enough money to buy a goat.” Then Goddess Kālī said, “All right, if you cannot offer me a goat then at least offer me a pig.” A few days went by but he did not offer even a pig. So, Goddess Kālī asked, “At first you promised to offer me a goat and then I gave you the benediction. But you did not offer me the goat. Afterwards you promised to offer me a pig which also you did not do. So at least offer me a fly.” Then the devotee said, “There are so many flies around you, why do not you catch one yourself. Why do you need my help?” Śrīla Prabhupāda gave this story to show the mentality of those who worship the demigods.

OUT OF THE BODILY PLATFORM

Spiritual life means getting out of the bodily platform. One has to come to the platform of *Vāsudeva pṛītir*. *Vāsudeva Pṛītir* means to love Vāsudeva. So, we have to move from the stage of *deha-yogena* to the stage of *Vāsudeva pṛītir*. In

other words, once one gets out of the platform of bodily identification then one can come to the understanding of how to love God. As long as one is on the bodily platform, one cannot understand the science of self realization. This shows that it is obligatory for us to be free from this bodily identification. We must understand how this is destructive and the cause of various anxieties.

Nowadays people are so deeply entangled in the bodily identification that even those who are born in brahminical families are becoming degraded. In India, one can see people born in the brahminical families smoking, drinking, eating all sorts of nonsense things, and engaging in illicit sex. This is how the whole society is geared up. It is geared up in such a way that even if one does not want to commit sinful activities, one gets pulled towards them. This is the result of bodily identification.

MODE OF GOODNESS

We made a point earlier, that the mode of goodness is superior to the other two modes, namely passion and ignorance. The symptom of the mode of goodness is that it is illuminating. When all the nine gates of the body are illuminated with transcendental knowledge then one is in the mode of goodness. There are nine gates in the body — two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, the mouth, the anus and the genitals, and through these nine gates, one either goes to hell or heaven. When these nine gates are illuminated with transcendental wisdom then one may progress on the spiritual path but when they are not illuminated with spiritual knowledge then these very gates become the cause of one going to hell. Kṛṣṇa says, “One who is in

the mode of goodness has the nine gates illuminated with transcendental knowledge.”

BEYOND GOODNESS

Now the question is whether the mode of goodness is the ultimate standard that we have to achieve. Is it the highest? No, the mode of goodness is not the highest or the ultimate standard. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*trai-guṇya-viṣayā vedā
nistrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho
niryoga-kṣema ātmavān*

(Bhagavad-gītā 2.45)

“The *Vedas* deal mainly with the subject of the three modes of material nature. O Arjuna, become transcendental to these three modes. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the self.”

What is beyond the mode of goodness? Pure goodness. Pure goodness is known as *śuddha-sattva*. Why does Kṛṣṇa tell Arjuna to go beyond the mode of goodness? This is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* — as long as one is in the mode of goodness, there is always competition going on between different modes. Sometimes the mode of goodness may win, sometimes the mode of passion may win, and sometimes the mode of ignorance may win. In India, you may find people who recite prayers, *mantras* and perform *yajñas* for two to three hours every day. But one can see the same people in the evening, drinking and doing other

nonsense. Sometimes one will be in the mode of goodness and sometimes one will be influenced by the lower modes. This competition is going on. One may feel, “Oh! I have done my *pūjā* in the morning. I have done this and now I can do some nonsense. It is ok.” Then one engages in sinful activities. That is why Kṛṣṇa says that though the mode of goodness is superior to the other two modes, it is not the ultimate. Even if one is under the influence of the mode of goodness, one will be subjected to fruitive activities. That is why Lord Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna to go beyond the modes.

Going beyond the mode of goodness means to reach the level of *śuddha-sattva*. What is the difference between pure goodness and goodness? Under the influence of the mode of goodness, the concept of material life is destroyed yet one is still ready for some types of material happiness. In pure goodness, however, one only wants that happiness which is going to please guru and Kṛṣṇa. If some happiness is not for the pleasure of guru and Kṛṣṇa then that is not acceptable.

LOVE GOD OR LOVE DOG

In this verse, the word *prītir* is used. And *prītir Vāsudeva* means to love God. So, somehow or other, we have to come to the point where we develop attachment, love for God. Sometimes people ask, “Why do you need to love God?” While asking for donations for the temple, we have to hear people say, “God does not need anything from me, He has everything. He is the richest person. We need not give God anything, He does not need anything from us.” The fools do not realize that God is giving them the

opportunity to purify themselves. This is for their own welfare.

God is complete and He retains His own original identity. This is important to understand because the Māyāvādīs argue that if God is all pervading then how can God have His original transcendental form? In this connection it can be remarked that the sun is also all pervading but it does not lose its own identity. The sun disc exists separately. So in material situation, if you take a piece of paper and tear small parts of it then the original paper is lost. On the contrary in the spiritual sphere though God distributes Himself, still He retains the original transcendental form. Hence, one should somehow or the other get attached to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Now, what happens if someone does not direct one's loving propensity towards God? Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains in the "Nectar of Devotion" that if one does not cultivate *prītir Vāsudeva* then where else can one give one's love? — towards the cats, dogs, trees, and so many other things! If we make a list of what people like, we will see that they have thousands of items as their hobbies. Some people like to collect stamps, some like to collect coins, some like to collect pictures of movie stars, some like to keep cats and dogs and everything else.

When this loving propensity is directed towards God the living entities become happy. When this loving propensity is not directed towards God then it is directed towards everything except the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To love is natural and to be loved is also natural for us.

THE SEED OF BHAKTI

How to come to the platform of *pṛitir Vāsudeva*? One has to get beyond the influence of ignorance and passion and one has to come to the platform of goodness after which one has to proceed to pure goodness, *śuddha-sattva*, just like someone enters the university after finishing school studies.

When someone comes to goodness, he realizes by the association of *sādhus* that so-called sense enjoyment after which he is hankering is not the real goal of life, and the cause of his sufferings is that he is misusing this human form of life. We have got this beautiful human body, but people want to use it like cats and dogs.

Once there was a mouse who went to a *yogī* and said, “Please save me from the cats”. The *yogī* gave him the benediction so that it could become a cat. Then one day the cat went back to the *yogī* and said, “There is a dog who is always chasing me. Can you please make me a dog, so that I can live peacefully?” The *yogī* gave him the blessing to become a dog. Then there was a fox who was chasing the dog. Then the dog came to the *yogī* and requested him to make it into a fox to which the *yogī* agreed. A little while afterwards, the fox came to the *yogī* and requested to please save it because a tiger was chasing it. So, the *yogī* made it into a tiger. A short while later, the tiger came back to the *yogī* and said that now it was being chased by a lion and it wanted to become a lion. When it became a lion, it started staring at the *yogī*. The *yogī* said, “Now what do you want?” The lion replied, “I want you.” The *yogī* made him a mouse again. We get this human body

after a long process of births and deaths. As Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti
sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.19)

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.”

In spiritual association, if one is fortunate enough, one cultivates devotional service. In this way one can get out of these modes and can come to the platform of *prītir Vāsudeva*. After many millions of births and deaths, one receives the seed of *bhakti*.

SERVING KṛṣṇA

We have to come out of this concept of *dēha-yogena*. Sometimes devotees ask a practical question, “Everyday we are hearing that we have to get out of this bodily identification, but does this mean that I must ignore my body? Should I take care of my body or just ignore it?” No, a devotee should take care of his body. Why? We know that we are not this body, but this body is to be used in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. If one does not regulate one’s body, how can he use it for the Lord’s service? Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*yuktāhāra-vihārasya
yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu*

*yukta-svapnāvabodhasya
yogo bhāvati duḥkha-hā*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.17)

“He who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the *yoga* system.”

Devotees should be regulated in their sleep. They should sleep for six hours, no problem. One does not have to sleep more unless one is sick and one does not have to sleep less. Sometimes devotees think that they are going to reduce their sleep to an average of three to four hours, “Hence I am going to make a big show that I am a very advanced devotee.” But if some devotee is going to sleep for two to three hours at night then automatically he will fall asleep during the *japa* time or during the time of service. Therefore, it is best to sleep for six hours. However, if someone can be like Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and sleep only for three hours then there is no problem. If one sleeps two to three hours in the night and eight hours in the day then it is better to sleep six hours at night and be attentive during the rest of the time.

Some people cheat and go under water and drink water there. Afterwards, they will tell others that they fasted all day and did not take a single drop of water. This is only a show business. Similarly, we just do not want to cheat and end up sleeping more. If someone needs six hours rest then he should sleep for six hours. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that we should avoid more than that. A devotee should not be artificially like Dhruva Mahārāja — we cannot imitate him. If one is regulated in eating only *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* as much as required and if one does not sleep too much then

one's body will be healthy. This healthy body should be engaged in the service of the Lord so that one can get out of bodily identification.

FIND THE OWNER, OFFER TO HIM

We do not say that this body is false. We just say that this body is temporary. What do the Māyāvādīs say? They say that the body is false, the world is false, and everything is false, *mithyā*. They stop doing everything and go to the forest for practicing meditation. They would not touch money; they would not touch anything, as everything is false. Śrila Prabhupāda used to say that it is not false but it is temporary. If God is real how can His creation be unreal? Who can say that this microphone is false? We may not be able to communicate to devotees without the microphone. Thus the answer is that everything is temporary, not false.

Śrila Prabhupāda used to give this example. Suppose one finds a hundred dollar note lying on the road, at that time one has three solutions:

- To let it lie where it is lying;
- To check, find its owner and return the note to him,
- Lift it and put it in your pocket.

As for the first one, just leave it on the road — this means that this person is a fool. Why? Somebody else will come and pick it up. If he lifts it and puts it in his pocket then he becomes a thief. Does it belong to him? Finally, if he lifts it and searches for its owner and hands it over to him then he is honest. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means finding the owner of everything and offering everything back to him.

LOVE AND LUST

Developing love of God does not mean that one does not use one's intelligence or one does not use practical facilities that may be there to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Real civilization is to come to the platform of *prītir Vāsudeva*. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* discusses these two terminologies, love and lust. In the material world, everyone uses the word love, love, and love. We may listen to any song in any part of the world and it must have the word "love" at least once if not hundred times. We may not listen to these songs and we are sure that the devotees must have stopped listening to them. In the material world, when they use the word love, what they really mean is lust.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains the difference between love and lust. He says that love is like gold and lust is like iron, both are metal but there is a difference in the price. Similarly, there is difference between love and lust. We have to somehow or the other develop love of God. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10)

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ
bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogam tāṁ
yena mām upayānti te*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10)

"To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me."

ALL ONE NEEDS IS DESIRE

A devotee may say, "I have no love, I have no attraction towards the Lord." In fact this is the reality. We have no

strong attraction for Lord Kṛṣṇa or the Holy Names or the spiritual master but the process of devotional service is such that as one practices, one's love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead awakens. There is a famous saying in English that practice makes a man perfect. So when we practice the process of devotional service then we perfect our devotional service. What is the process of devotional service? And what is the perfection of devotional service? *Vāsudeva pṛitir*, love for Lord Vāsudeva. In the initial stage, we do not have *Vāsudeva pṛitir*, but we have some knowledge that we must begin to execute devotional service. How? It is mentioned in the Nectar of devotion.

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- saṅgo ‘tha bhajana-kriyā
 tato ‘nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
 athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyañcati
 sādhakānām ayam premṇah prādurbhāve bhavet kramah

(Nectar of Devotion 1.4.15–16)

“In the beginning, there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter, one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus, one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of *sādhana-bhakti*, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

This point was explained earlier. When one starts the process of devotional service, attachment develops

gradually. The beauty of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is that for one to understand Kṛṣṇa, one does not need to have any material qualification. One does not have to be a rich man to develop love of God, one does not have to be a handsome man nor does one have to be a well-educated man to develop love of God. The only thing one needs is desire and love. This is so simple.

Lord Caitanya was once visiting a temple in southern India. At that time He saw an illiterate *brāhmaṇa* holding a *Bhagavad-gītā* and crying. Around him there was a crowd of people who were laughing. Seeing this, Lord Caitanya stopped to investigate the matter. He asked the people present there. They informed him that this man was an illiterate *brāhmaṇa* and everybody was aware of this fact, but here he was holding a *Bhagavad-gītā* as if trying to impress others with his reading. Everybody knew that this man was illiterate. A short while later, Lord Caitanya approached the *brāhmaṇa* and inquired, “Everyone is saying that you are illiterate, so why you are holding the *Bhagavad-gītā*?” The *brāhmaṇa* replied, “My spiritual master told me to read the *Bhagavad-gītā* every day. So I am doing my duty and I am trying to read it although I am illiterate.” Then Lord Caitanya asked the reason for which he was crying. He said, “When I look at the picture of Lord Kṛṣṇa and see that although He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the proprietor of all the planets, He is acting like a driver of Arjuna’s chariot. Seeing the humility of God and His dealings with His devotees, my heart laments.” At that time, Lord Caitanya praised him and said that he had actually understood *Bhagavad-gītā*. Lord Caitanya was very pleased with the attitude of the *brāhmaṇa*. The point

is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead reciprocates with us as per our endeavor to please Him.

BITTER FOR A SHORT TIME

Now, one begins to execute the process of *bhakti*, which may be bitter in the beginning. What does Kṛṣṇa say in the eighteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*? He discusses three different types of happiness — happiness in the mode of goodness, happiness in the mode of passion, and happiness in the mode ignorance. Initially, you may feel some unhappiness or uneasiness or bitterness, but if one tolerates this temporary dissatisfaction, it will become sweet very soon. In Ayurvedic science, the more severe is the disease, the more bitter the medicine. A devotee should not be scared of this bitter medicine. The medicine does not remain bitter for long, it remains bitter for a very short span of time. Afterwards it becomes sweet, just like so many of the devotees sitting here found it difficult in the beginning. But now they are finding it easy.

OVERCOMING MĀYĀ

We have to always struggle with the mind and senses in this material world. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke
jīva-bhūtah sanātanaḥ
manah-śaśhānīndriyāṇi
prakṛti-sthāni karşıati*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.7)

“The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are

struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.”

Māyā is always ready to attack. One may sleep but Māyā never falls asleep, she is always active. Māyā is working overtime, one may get tired but Māyā never gets tired, she has a lot of energy, more than one may have. Māyā is always ready to steal one’s intelligence. However, one good news is that Lord Kṛṣṇa, being very merciful, protects His devotee. This is confirmed by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etāṁ taranti te*

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.14)

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

Kṛṣṇa says that Māyā is very strong and if someone fights Māyā on his own, he will get defeated for sure, and “If you come through Me by following the process of devotional service then you will be able to defeat Māyā.” In the purport Śrila Prabhupāda quotes this verse, which was spoken by Lord Caitanya to Śrila Rūpa Gosvāmī.

HEARING: THE WATERING PROCESS

Śrila Rūpa Gosvāmī was holding a very important position as a government minister. He resigned and went to Lord Caitanya, who instructed him on the process of

devotional service. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave him full explanation on the process of *bhakti*.

We are all going through the cycle of birth and death and by chance we come in contact with the devotees or a book. From then on, we begin investing in the process of devotional service as the seed of devotion has been planted by the mercy of guru and *sādhu*. Now one has to water that seed. A devotee should not take short cuts, he should not avoid gardening. What does a gardener do? He waters the seeds every day, not once a week or once a month. Every day, Then he goes and sees whether there is any unwanted weed. If there are unwanted weeds, the gardener uproots them. Why does he uproot them? He uproots them because if he does not do so, the weeds will consume the water and nutrients from the soil. This will endanger the growth of the flower.

If one wants beautiful flowers to grow then there is always a danger that if one does not protect the garden, it will be encroached by cats, dogs, goats and so on. They will spoil everything. The danger is there. What will one do to protect from cats, dogs and goats? One has to build a fence. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu uses this analogy to explain to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī how to progress on the spiritual path. The watering of the seed is compared to *śravaṇam* and *kirtanam*, hearing and chanting the Holy Names of the Lord. We must chant and hear.

If one does not chant and hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā* then one's spiritual life will be finished. A devotee should not fall asleep when it is time to hear. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to be very alert while hearing his spiritual master's lectures. Even if he could not understand, he would always listen

attentively. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura made this comment about him, “This boy listens very nicely, one day he will preach very boldly.” Spiritual medicine is consumed through the ears, not through the eyes. Hearing is the watering process.

UPROOTING THE WEEDS OF ONE'S MATERIAL DESIRES

Lord Caitanya asked to remove unwanted weeds. One does not want unwanted weeds, which are the different material desires like — “I want fame, honor, prestige, power, control, influence, adoration, distinction, etc.” These are the unwanted weeds. As soon as these weeds are uprooted, spiritual life becomes easier. When one is in doubt, one should approach and seek help from the spiritual master or *sādhu*. One must build a fence. What does this fencing mean? — to keep oneself in spiritual association, to keep having devotees' association. There may be so many faults in devotees but at least they will tell others to chant “Hare Kṛṣṇa”; at least they will tell others to surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and hence one will be victorious over Māyā. One must take full advantage of the devotees' association.

If someone follows these very simple guidelines which Lord Caitanya has given to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, he will be able to develop *Vāsudeva pṛitir*, love of God. It is neither very difficult nor impossible. The only problem is that the mind scares us in the beginning. One may say, “What a theoretical philosophy! How can you love God? What is going to happen to all of us here? I have my sweet wife, my sweet kids, my sweet dog, my sweet house, my sweet car, and my sweet bank balance; they are very dear to me.

How can I give my love to God?" This is the illusion and the reason for which we are taking birth again and again in this material world. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that one must perform one's duty towards one's family, keeping well in mind that the ultimate goal is to develop love of God. This is possible if one comes to the stage of *śuddha-sattva*, pure goodness.

7

THE MIRAGE OF MATERIAL HAPPINESS

*yadā na paśyaty ayathā guṇehāṁ
svārthe pramattaḥ sahasā vipaścit
gata-smṛtir vindati tatra tāpāṁ
āśādyā maithunyam agāram ajñāḥ*

(Śrimad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.7)

“Even though one may be very learned and wise he is mad if he does not understand that the endeavour for sense gratification is a useless waste of time. Being forgetful of his own interest, he tries to be happy in the material world, centering his interests around his home, which is based on sexual intercourse and which brings him all kinds of material miseries. In this way one is no better than a foolish animal.”

In the lowest stage of devotional life, one is not an unalloyed devotee. *Anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*: [CC. Madhya 19.167] to be an unalloyed devotee, one must be freed from all material desires and untouched by fruitive activity and speculative knowledge. On the lower platform, one may sometimes

be interested in philosophical speculation with a tinge of devotion. However, at that stage one is still interested in sense gratification and is contaminated by the modes of material nature. The influence of *māyā* is so strong that even a person advanced in knowledge actually forgets that he is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant. Therefore he remains satisfied in his householder life, which is centered around sexual intercourse. Conceding to a life of sex, he agrees to suffer all kinds of material miseries. Due to ignorance, one is thus bound by the chain of material laws.

KNOWING ONE'S SELF-INTEREST

In this verse, the word *pramattah* is used. *Svārthe pramattah sahasā vipaścit*. *Vipaścit* means advanced in knowledge. It says that one may be advanced in so-called material knowledge but if one does not know the goal of life then one is simply wasting one's time. There are so many people in society who have big- big degrees; holding very high positions, but when we ask them what the goal of life is, they simply say eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ
prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā
āsurām bhāvam āśritāḥ*

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.15)

“Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, who are lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons, do not surrender unto Me.”

One category of such *mūḍhas* includes those who work hard like a beast, very busy all day without any time for self-realization. They go to work at five o'clock in the morning and return late at night. Why? Because they are busy earning money! Why do they need so much money? Because they want to maintain a very high standard of living! We know people who do three jobs a day in America. Why do they do three jobs a day? Because everything is very expensive and all the bills are very high! These people are compared to an ass that carries heavy load just for a bunch of grass.

Then comes *narādhama*. This verse is specifically referring to the *narādhamas*. Who are these *narādhamas*? They are those who are materially well equipped; they may have material education; they may be holding important positions in society and they may pose themselves to be very learned, but their activities are just like those of animals. What is the use of this learning? Material knowledge only tells one how to use matter and analyzes it, while spiritual knowledge analyzes both matter and spirit. Lord R̄ṣabhadeva says that one may be materially very intelligent but if one does not know the goal of life then one is simply wasting time.

In modern society, there are a lot of people who are acting as very learned but in their hearts, the concept of surrendering to God does not take place. What do they believe? That, sense gratification is the goal of life. In this verse, the word *svārthe* is used, which means self-interest. Prahlāda Mahārāja explains in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that people today do not know what their self-interest is.

PLANS FOR SENSE ENJOYMENT

It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*na te viduh svārtha-gatim hi viṣṇum
 durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninah
 andhā yathāndhair upaniyamānās
 te ‘piśa-tantryām uru-dāmnī baddhāḥ*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.31)

“Persons who are strongly entrapped by the consciousness of enjoying material life, and who have therefore accepted as their leader or guru, a similar blind man attached to external sense objects, cannot understand that the goal of life is to return home, back to Godhead, and engage in the service of Lord Viṣṇu. As blind men guided by another blind man miss the right path and fall into a ditch, materially attached men led by another materially attached man are bound by the ropes of fruitive labour, which are made of very strong cords and they continue again and again in materialistic life, suffering the threefold miseries.”

The materialists think that they will serve if they can get some more sense enjoyment. They do not understand that this body is perishable and the soul is eternal. They think, “Let us enjoy as much as we can.” Therefore, even in old age, the predominating thought is sense enjoyment. This further extends to local interest, national interest, and international interest. For instance, one may give some sweets to a child and he will eat these sweets all by himself — this is an example of self interest. He is selfish! But when it extends to sharing the sweet with his friends then it becomes extended interest.

Why is one engaged in sense enjoyment? Because one thinks that sense enjoyment will somehow or the other,

make one happy! Therefore, all plans are made for getting sense enjoyment. One is selfish if one thinks that one should alone become happy. The *śāstras* explain that one cannot realize happiness by material arrangements.

There are two words used in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* — *kāma* and *prema*! *Kāma* means lust whereas *prema* means love. In the material world, it is simply *kāma* which influences our actions, not *prema*. *Kāma* is in reference to sense enjoyment or lust; *prema* is that which is directed towards the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. In the material world, *kāma* is being accepted as *prema*. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says that these two are like an iron bar and a gold bar. There is no doubt that both are matter, but there is a lot of difference between the price of these two. Similarly, there is a big difference between the real love of God and the pleasure that one may derive by fulfilling one's lusty desires.

BE INTELLIGENT

There are various ways by which the foolish living entities waste their valuable time in trying to find happiness. The politicians, for instance, try to become famous by doing local services. Then they go beyond their local areas to the regions, from the regions they go to the country level. People want to become more and more prominent, thinking that this will make them happy. All plans are made to get happiness around one's home and around sensual pleasure. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*nidrayā hriyate naktam
vyavāyena ca vā vayah*

*divā cārthehayā rājan
kutumba-bharanena vā*

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.3)

“The lifetime of such an envious householder is passed at night either in sleeping or in sex indulgence, and in the daytime either in making money or maintaining family members.”

He says that in daytime, the materialists are busy trying to earn money. They are working very hard to earn money and in the night, they just go for sexual pleasure. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* openly discusses this topic so that those who are intelligent will understand the value of human life and not waste their time by engaging in those activities, which even animals can realize. One who engages in materialistic activities has made sense gratification his goal.

If someone wants to eat, he has to put his food in the mouth. There are many other openings in the body also, ears, nose, eyes, so why does not he put his food in these different openings? Because, he wants to enjoy! Sometimes a man gets very sick and he cannot put food in the mouth. At that time, the doctors feed him through the veins; sometimes they feed through the nostrils or even the ears. This is very-very painful and one can only know this when one is very sick. Therefore, to derive pleasure, one should put the food through the mouth, which is the normal channel. Similarly, if one wants to find real happiness then one has to link oneself with God. Trying to find happiness through other material means, which are independent of God, is just like putting food in the stomach through the nose.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says that if you open your eyes, you will see that there is nothing but suffering in the

material life. One who has no eyes, for him there is no suffering in this life. He is just a fool! Everyone can see that this is an ocean of sufferings. Like in the southern region, people are richer than the other parts of Russia. We also understand and all will agree that the Americans are richer than the Russians. Some people also say that Japan is even richer than America. However, if one analyzes intelligently, one will see that everywhere there is nothing but suffering. Therefore, one who understands that there are unlimited sufferings in life, is intelligent, and is also using his intelligence properly. We do not accept them as learned who do not know the purpose of human form of life, even if they have big-big degrees. He who understands the goal of human life and who utilizes this life correctly, is an intelligent person. How can one utilize life correctly? By engaging in devotional service!

GIVING UP: APPETITE FOR SENSE ENJOYMENT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains very clearly that one who thinks that sense enjoyment is the goal of life is no better than an animal. If anyone has read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* very seriously, one would have seen that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is very frank, open and straightforward. We are presenting the real *dharma*, not a concocted religion. Some people in this country accuse us that this is a new religion, and say, “Do not take to this new religion, and rather stick to your traditional one.” But what is religion? Religion means to develop love of God and to give up one’s appetite for sense enjoyment forever.

If you were sick, would you care which nationality or religion the doctor is from? No, you would only want

to be cured. The foolish deer is looking for water in the desert. It sees some mirage then it runs towards it but the that mirage seems to move little ahead. The deer keeps on searching for water, and finally dies without finding water. That is exactly what this material life is. We keep on making adjustments. Just like once in this country they had communalism and now they have capitalism. Are the people happier now? The mirage keeps moving. The previous management did not satisfy them and now the people are thinking that this is going to satisfy them!

In Russia, the Airlines advertise to fly to England, fly to America, fly to India and be happy, and the same Airlines in another country advertises, ‘Fly to Russia and be happy’. Everyone is made to believe that if one changes one’s residence from A to B; changes one’s car; changes one’s standard of living then one will be happy. In the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that even a man advanced in knowledge becomes a victim of the illusory energy. Yes, this is a fact. The illusory energy of the Lord is very powerful. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “If one is not very careful then one can be very easily victimized.” Spiritual life means that, having come to this auspicious path, one must actually be very careful in the execution of devotional service. If one is not careful then one can be easily distracted.

BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam gives the famous story of Ajāmila. He was born in a brahminical family. He had a very nice life, parents, and everything. One day when he was returning from the forest, he saw a prostitute making love with a client

and he started meditating on that incident. Gradually his spiritual life was finished. Ajāmila was so intelligent, had taken birth in a brahminical family, not a *mleccha* family, still he was cheated by the powerful illusory energy of the Lord. If one is walking on slippery ice, one needs to be extra careful as one can fall-down at any moment. And if one does fall-down, one will break one's bones.

A few weeks ago, we were driving from Tashkent to Dushanbe. On the way, we had to go through a very narrow road on the mountains. At that time, the driver had to be very careful. If he had showed a little bit of carelessness, there could very easily have been an accident. Similarly, if a devotee is not extremely careful and if he is not very strict on the spiritual path then he will be deviated from devotional service. Therefore, we should keep reminding ourselves of the reason for which we have attained this human form of life.

KNOWLEDGE IS THE BEGINNING

Cāṇakya Pañdita says that one should not waste even one minute. He says that a minute lost cannot be compensated by the wealth of the whole world. A person is considered learned when he understands that the human form of life should not be wasted like cats and dogs. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says that one should not judge a devotee materially — how he looks, how rich he is, how tall he is — all these material qualifications are not essential for developing love of God. There are many scholars who have big-big degrees and are very expert in Sanskrit but when they translate the *Bhagavad-gītā*, they present all their nonsense points of view. These people do not surrender unto the lotus

feet of Kṛṣṇa; and keep engaging in sense enjoyment. In India, one will meet a lot of people who have memorized the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* by heart, but they still engage in sense enjoyment and sinful activities.

Just having knowledge is not enough. Knowledge is the beginning. There must be practical manifestation of *vairāgya*, renunciation. If one does not manifest *vairāgya* then what is the use of the knowledge? Someone may be a doctor but if he does not put that knowledge into practice then he will forget it. A steel bar gets rusted when it is not used. Therefore, the scriptures say that by the use of knowledge one must develop *vairāgya*. There must be practical manifestation of renunciation.

Lord Caitanya states that a devotee must be exemplary in his behavior and must convey the meaning of religious principles. Our life should be moulded in such a way that we can exhibit this divine philosophy that we are reading and understanding. Our behavior and our dealings should be exemplary so that people will see that we are great devotees of the Lord and our behavior is perfect.

EVERYONE WANTS SENSE ENJOYMENT

Due to ignorance, one gets blinded about the goal of life and by *sādhu-saṅga* that ignorance is destroyed, just like in darkness nothing is visible, but during the day everything is visible. So, *bodha* means seeing things in the right perspective. We are living in a society, which is being run by those who are in complete ignorance and passion. Therefore, wherever we see there is only one thing, which is sense enjoyment.

Even if one goes to small villages in India, one will find the influence of sense gratification to be very prominent. This is shocking. Because of the influence of cable television, even in small villages in India, one can watch the TV programs from Hong Kong, England, America and other parts of the world and can hence see all the nonsense on the television. People watch television the whole night. The householders cannot sleep even for a moment as they keep watching different movies and different programs. This *mantra*, this understanding of sense enjoyment is common everywhere. Everyone wants sense enjoyment.

Therefore, the devotees have the thankless task of destroying this illusion. They have to preach enthusiastically and make people aware of their higher consciousness, “*Kāma* cannot give you happiness, it will give you only frustration. On the other hand, *prema* will give you satisfaction.” In the material world, everybody uses the word love but actually that is lust. People do not know what the real difference between *prema* and *kāma* is. *Prema* is pleasure derived by serving the Lord and it can satisfy man’s search for happiness. We are all thirsty for satisfaction. People do not know where they would be able to get this real happiness.

YAMARĀJA WITHDRAWS THE LOTTERY TICKET

Why is Mahārāja Ṛṣabhadeva emphasizing on this so much? Only for one reason — repetition is necessary to drive the point home. Just like in *Bhagavad-gītā*,

Lord Kṛṣṇa uses twenty verses to describe the position of the soul. He could have done that in one verse. He could have said that the soul is eternal but He explains the same point from many different angles. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments that repetition is necessary for the people in Kali-yuga. Therefore Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam repeats the same theme from different angles. The same philosophy, which Lord Rāshabadeva is giving, will be found a little further in the presentation of Jada Bharata to King Rahūgaṇa, but in a slightly different way. The same philosophy is also being presented in the second canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is mentioned there, “What is the use of your life if it is not engaged in the service of the Lord?” The trees also live. Some trees have been living for five hundred years. There is a tree in Vṛndāvana whose life span is calculated to be nearly five thousand years — that is a special tree. Anyway, trees also live, so what is the big deal?

If someone thinks that science has manipulated the results given by God and can help one live longer then frankly this claim of the scientists, for one to have a (possibly) longer life span, is totally wrong. Why, because there is no one who can live even one minute beyond his destined quota. Just like sometimes we see that there is an accident. Some people survive, while others die. How does this happen? Because the lottery ticket was withdrawn, Yamarāja keeps on withdrawing the lottery tickets. Every human being has a number and when the lottery comes out, that man dies. According to our past *karmas*, we are all getting our quotas of distress and happiness.

DO NOT WASTE LIFE LIKE A LUSTY GOAT

Prahlāda Mahārāja asked his friends not to endeavor unnecessarily, for, just like distress comes on its own accord, happiness will also come. We must understand that there is no point in over-endeavoring for material happiness. Rather, we should mould our lives in such a way that we can use it for developing love of God. The important point to understand is that sense enjoyment can never give happiness.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there is the story of King Yayāti, who was a very powerful king. He had a very beautiful wife and many maidservants. For ten thousand years, he engaged in unrestricted sense enjoyment. Ten thousand years, not eighty years! After engaging in sense enjoyment for ten thousand years, he said that he still had no satisfaction. He compared himself to a fool and said that he was just like a lusty goat that has wasted its valuable life.

Therefore, the great sages are warning us not to waste this valuable human form of life. The real path of happiness is the all-auspicious path of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Just like the great sages have told us, Lord Rṣabhadeva is also reminding us that we must engage in performing austerities for the pleasure of the Lord. In exchange for these austerities, we will experience spiritual bliss. Just like if one is staying in a two-room apartment, he will give it up for a bigger one if offered. Similarly, one can give up material pleasure when one experiences a higher pleasure. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.59)

*viṣayā vinivartante
nirāhārasya dehinah
rasa-varjam raso ‘py asya
param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.59)

“The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness.”

When a devotee is hungry, he goes to take *prasāda*. The first *capātī* gives him 100% pleasure, the second gives 80%, the fourth gives 20% and finally he says, “No more, it’s enough.” Spiritual pleasure, however, is always increasing. We can mark this verse by just considering those devotees who have been chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* for a long, long time — *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*. Chanting “Hare Kṛṣṇa”, eating *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, studying the scriptures and associating with the devotees, all this is very important for us. We should not doubt the value of transcendental knowledge. Materially, everybody is blind. If some blind leads another blind, what will happen? They will all end up in a ditch.

TOLERATING THE AGITATION OF THE SENSES

The sages have told us to be tolerant. What are the qualities of the devotees? This is being explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam
kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca*

*jñānam vijñānam āstikyam
brahma-karma svabhāva-jam*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.42)

“Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and religiousness — these are the natural qualities by which the *brāhmaṇas* work.”

One must also become equipoised. This is what Lord Kṛṣṇa has mentioned again and again. He has used this word *titikṣasva* again and again in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. One must be tolerant externally as well as internally. Internally, one should tolerate the agitation of the senses. The senses are always trying to trouble us. It is not that every time the sense says something, and the devotee will accept it as a loyal servant. Similarly, externally, there are dualities of honor and dishonor, etc. And the strength to practice tolerance comes from the execution of devotional service, just like one can kill one’s disease by taking medicine.

KINDNESS OF SAGES

Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva is reminding us again and again on the importance of not wasting this valuable human life. We can see how kind the sages are. Five thousand years ago, sixty-four thousand sages assembled together in Naimisāraṇya. Why did they assemble there? Did they want anything for themselves? No! They were discussing how people in Kali-yuga could save themselves. Has anyone heard of such an assembly nowadays? These sages were like spiritual astrologers, they could see the symptoms of Kali-yuga, and how people in Kali-yuga would be misguided, unfortunate and lazy. They could see

that very few would be interested in self realization. It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*prāyenālpāyusah sabhya
kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo
manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.10)

“O learned one; in this iron age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed.”

They were discussing on how these people could be saved, and that is why, they selected Sūta Gosvāmī as their leader. They asked Sūta Gosvāmī to please instruct them, and what did the great sage do? He repeated the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, exactly as he had heard it from Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, while the recitation was going on between Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Parīkṣit Mahārāja.

PUTTING THE MIND IN ONE’S FIST

Therefore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that the principles of religion are left behind by the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the scriptures. Lord Kṛṣṇa went back to the spiritual abode but He left behind His teachings. The more we associate with His teachings, the faster the desires for sense enjoyment will diminish in our hearts. Due to material desires in our hearts, we do not come to spiritual life and when we commit offences, our spiritual lives get ruined.

There are different types of offences, offences towards the Vaiṣṇavas; offences towards the holy names; offences

towards the Deities; offences towards the scriptures; offences towards the holy *dhāma* and so on. We should be extremely careful not to commit these offences, if we want to engage in devotional service. By avoiding these offences, our spiritual life will be more secure. The more we study these books, the sharper our intelligence will become, and when the intelligence becomes sharp, it will help us to control the mind. If we can control the mind then the senses will also be controlled. Control the mind and put it in your fist. Is everyone's mind in one's fist now? No, we have to get the mind in our fist, which means, to have full control over it and then our spiritual life will not be ruined.

Lord R̄ṣabhadeva has given another example. He says that just like when a married woman who has a lover sometimes she kills her husband, similarly, Lord R̄ṣabhadeva is saying that the transcendentalist who is endeavoring for perfection, if he cannot control his mind then the unbridled mind will kill his spiritual life. How? It will distract him from the spiritual path, it will pull him towards *kāma*, lust; it will pull him towards *krodha*, anger; it will pull him towards *lobha*, greed; it will pull him towards illusion, envy, pride, etc. On the other hand, a controlled mind will bring one towards humility, tolerance, a desire to serve, determination to reject anything unfavorable for spiritual advancement, determination to serve Kṛṣṇa as one's only guardian and protector, determination to understand that every moment must be used in the service of the Lord, and so on.

One must understand the difference between a controlled mind and an uncontrolled one. And Kṛṣṇa consciousness

is the best process to bring the mind under control. If one wants to bring one's mind under control then one should chant one's rounds very attentively, follow the morning program, study the scriptures, meditate on what one has read, meditate on the instructions of the spiritual master, *ācāryas* and Lord Kṛṣṇa, and hence be strict in following the process of *sādhana-bhakti*.

This will help one in controlling one's mind. One should also distribute this knowledge to others. A devotee should not waste even a minute. He should never think that sense enjoyment will make him happy and should always understand that a leaf is dried up, if it is separated from the tree. When we are separated from the devotional service and association of the Vaiṣṇavas, our spiritual life will be ruined for sure. All are requested to take to the path of devotional service sincerely and enthusiastically. Thus, everyone can enjoy a blissful life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

8

GETTING EYES TO SEE THE REAL GOAL OF LIFE

*lokah svayam śreyasi naṣṭa-drṣṭih
o ‘rthān samīheta nikāma-kāmāḥ
anyonya-vairah sukha-leśa-hetor
ananta-duḥkham ca na veda mūḍhah*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.16)

“Due to ignorance, the materialistic person does not know anything about his real self-interest, the auspicious path in life. He is simply bound to material enjoyment by lusty desires, and all his plans are made for this purpose. For temporary sense gratification, such a person creates a society of envy, and due to this mentality, he plunges into the ocean of suffering. Such a foolish person does not even know about this.”

The word *naṣṭa-drṣṭih*, meaning “one who has no eyes to see the future,” is very significant in this verse. Life goes on from one body to another, and the activities performed in this life are enjoyed or suffered in the next life, if not later in this life. One who is unintelligent, who has no eyes to see the future, simply creates enmity and fights with

others for sense gratification. As a result, one suffers in the next life, but due to being like a blind man, he continues to act in such a way that he suffers unlimitedly. Such a person is a *mūḍha*, one who simply wastes his time and does not understand the Lord's devotional service. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*nāham prakāśah sarvasya
yogamāyā-samāvṛtaḥ
mūḍho 'yaṁ nābhijānāti
loko mām ajam avyayam*

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.25)

“I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My eternal creative potency [yogamāyā]; and so the deluded world knows Me not, who am unborn and infallible.”

In the *Katha Upaniṣad* it is also said: *avidyāyāṁ antare vartamānāḥ svayam dhīrāḥ pāṇḍitāḥ manyamānāḥ*. Although ignorant, people still go to other blind men for leadership. As a result, both are subjected to miserable conditions. The blind lead the blind into the ditch.

DO NOT WASTE THIS HUMAN LIFE

Lord R̄ṣabhadeva clearly establishes that one must not become a father or mother or spiritual master if one cannot deliver one's dependants from the cycle of birth and death. If one does wish to become father or mother then one must also understand one's spiritual responsibility in terms of delivering one's dependants and not just produce children like cats and dogs. The Lord also places a responsibility upon the spiritual master, which is to instruct the disciples exactly as He has done.

In almost every statement of Lord R̄ṣabhadeva, there is one central theme, which is emphasized again and again, and that is, not to waste the valuable human life. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has eighteen thousand verses in total and in many of these verses, there is glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and a description of His pastimes. Also, a lot of verses, at least half, are focused on only one theme, i.e., not to waste the valuable human life. The amazing thing is that this theme is common, whether it is Lord R̄ṣabhadeva or the great sage Nārada.

Even after compiling the vast Vedic literatures, which consist of the *Vedās*, *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, and summarizing them in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, Vyāsadeva was still feeling unhappy with what he had contributed. Ultimately, he went to his spiritual master, Nārada Muni, and inquired from him the cause of his unhappiness. The great sage Nārada informed him that the cause of his unhappiness was that he had not exclusively presented the process of pure devotional service, which does not take into account fruitive activities of any kind. This in fact is the reason why there is no reference to any type of *karma-kāṇḍa* at all in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE

Lord R̄ṣabhadeva explains the reason why one loses sight of the real goal of life. The word *śreyas* is very significant and is also repeated in the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. *Śreyas* means that which is beneficial in the long run and *preyas* means that which gives instant pleasure. Lord R̄ṣabhadeva says that due to ignorance, one does not understand where one's real

self-interest lies. We are all born in ignorance and no one can deny this. To take an example, a child cannot learn to write and read if he does not approach a teacher. This is why we all went to school.

One is in two types of ignorance when born — material ignorance and spiritual ignorance. While one is not literate, this material ignorance can be dispelled by going to schools, colleges and institutions. Similarly, one's spiritual ignorance — not knowing one's constitutional position — can be dispelled by approaching a *bonafide* spiritual master.

Unfortunately, in modern civilization, nobody tries to take care of spiritual ignorance. And because of this spiritual ignorance, one does not understand what is ultimately beneficial for one's spiritual life and auspicious for oneself. Just like when we are in darkness, we cannot see things clearly, but when we come to light then everything becomes clearly visible. We should not try to understand the goal of life under the influence of ignorance, because by doing that, we would falsely conclude that sense enjoyment is the goal of life.

CAVES LEADING TO HELL

Lord Rsabhadeva explains that we are under the influence of lust when we are under the influence of ignorance. *Kāma* and *prema* are different. While *kāma* is directed at sense gratification, *prema* is directed at the pleasure of the Lord. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains lust from different angles. *Bhagavad-gītā* explains lust, anger, and greed as three paths leading to hell. Anyone who is intelligent must free himself from the influence of lust, anger, and greed.

Lord R̄ṣabhadeva says that due to the power and influence of *kāma*, all plans are made just to make sense enjoyment the goal of our life. Whether it is technology or science, the whole society is focused on, “How can I satisfy lust, anger, and greed? How can I further enhance the facilities for satisfying my lusty desires?” Lust and then anger and finally greed!

Lord R̄ṣabhadeva says that the living entities are bound by different desires and hence they make all sorts of plans just to realize these desires. Such persons create envy, which is one of the six *anarthas* or enemies of spiritual life, for temporary sense gratification. This envy starts when we become envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the Supreme enjoyer. This is the beginning of envy, which continuously influences our actions. A is envious of B, B of C, and C of D, and this envy becomes the cause of the living entities’ sufferings in the material world.

Human beings are envious of animals and think, “If we do not kill the animals then they are going to pop all over and eat us up.” Many times, when asked the reason for eating animals, people reply, “If we do not kill and eat these animals then they are going to walk everywhere and they will start eating us, therefore it is better for us to eat them.” These people do not understand the strictness of the laws of nature; they will have to suffer for this. Once a Muni (sage), was brought in front of Yamarāja for punishment. Yamarāja ordered that a needle be penetrated through his rectum. Immediately the Muni inquired about the reason for which he was going to be punished. Yamarāja informed him that when he was a young boy, he had pierced an ant with a needle and now, he had to face punishment for

that crime. This is the law of *karma*. One cannot escape the reactions of one's actions as every action has an equal and opposite reaction. People nowadays think that there is no such thing as the laws of *karma*, and hence they can engage in all types of sinful activities.

SPIRITUAL ENVY

Everyone, except for the devotees, is influenced by envy and is envious of one's neighbors. Devotees however are under the influence of spiritual envy, not material envy. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that material envy is motivated by self-interest. Just like *kāma* is motivated by self-interest, spiritual envy is motivated by the desire to serve the Lord more and more. This type of envy is present in even very advanced devotees of the Lord.

Just like there is so much competition among the *gopīs*. There are the *gopīs*, the *sakhīs*, and the *mañjarīs*! There are thousands and thousands of *gopīs* out of whom, 16108 are more prominent. Out of these, 108 are more prominent, and out of the 108, 8 are more prominent. Out of these 8, there are 4 who are more prominent and out of them there are 2 who are more prominent, Rādhārāṇī and Candrāvalī! And out of these two, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the most prominent. Even amongst Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Candrāvalī, there is spiritual envy but this envy is in terms of pleasing Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as to who can please Kṛṣṇa more. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī always emerges victorious.

Apart from the *gopīs*, there are the *sakhīs* who are the assistants of the *gopīs*. The *gopīs* have a direct relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but the *sakhīs* help Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to serve Kṛṣṇa and help Kṛṣṇa to serve Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Out of many *sakhīs*, 8 are most prominent and are called “*aṣṭa sakḥīs*”. The Māyāpur temple has the Deities of the “*aṣṭa sakḥīs*” on the altar. Among these “*aṣṭa sakḥīs*,” two, Lalitā and Viśākhā are most prominent and have spiritual envy among themselves.

Then there are the *mañjarīs*. The Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana are considered as incarnations of the *mañjarīs*, who are very exalted devotees but do not directly serve Kṛṣṇa like the *gopīs* and *sakhīs* do. The *mañjarīs* are happy to meditate on how much Kṛṣṇa cares for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and how much He loves Her.

Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged spiritual competition. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was on this planet, he would write such strong letters encouraging devotees for book distribution. There were two devotees who were always in competition with each other in terms of top book distribution in ISKCON. Śrīla Prabhupāda met one of the leaders and said, “If you defeat the other leader’s zone then he will have a heart attack.” But the point is that spiritual envy must not be in terms of personal benefit of the devotees but on how Lord Kṛṣṇa can be pleased.

SENSE GRATIFICATION PROMOTES ENVY

When one has sense gratification in one’s heart then one is instigated and motivated by material envy. This sense gratification, *kāma*, has to be eliminated from the heart. In the fifth canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there is a thorough explanation of how the living entity has to transmigrate from one body to another for every type of sinful activity he may engage in. We see that in the society, one nation is envious of another, one community is envious of another

and one businessman is envious of another businessman. Nowadays, everyone realizes that the world is running out of natural resources. But what is everyone doing — just trying to arm oneself because without these resources, they will have to give up their sense gratification to the population in general.

It is not at all difficult to understand what happens when one's actions are motivated by envy. When we see drunkards, which is a part of everyday life in the Russian culture, we go up to these drunkards and ask them, "Are you drunk?" Their reply is, "No, I am not drunk." This shows that a drunken person will never admit that he has taken alcohol. Similarly, a foolish living entity continues to suffer but cannot understand that he is suffering. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to give the example of a foolish hog that eats stool but does not know that stool is unpleasant to eat. If one goes up to the foolish hog and tells it, "Here are some nice *rasagullās* for your consumption," it will reject that and stick to the eating of stool. In the same way, when we go to people and request them to please take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, their answer is, "No, No, No, I am just happy eating stool."

The same point is explained by Lord R̄ṣabhadeva and also by Prahlāda Mahārāja. Prahlāda Mahārāja says that the living entities are suffering ceaselessly but they do not realize where their self-interest lies. Spiritual life means to understand and recognize the difference between *śreyas* and *preyas*. One who cannot see the difference between these two is unfit for spiritual life. Prahlāda Mahārāja explains that sense gratification is also available in lower forms of life, hence, that must not be our goal of life. In

lower forms of life, the facility for sex pleasure is the focal point. Human life should not be misused by imitating the activities of the animals; rather one should go for something which is beyond that.

ANARTHAS—THE ROOT CAUSE OF OFFENCES

There are six *anarthas* — lust, anger, greed, envy, illusion, and hatred. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains that due to the influence of these *anarthas*, different types of waves of lamentation, hunger, thirst, illusion, and pride are created.

When one gets what one wants, one becomes happy, and when one loses something very dear, one becomes sad. The story of King Citraketu is well known. He was very happy when his son was born and when his son died, he started lamenting. His son's name was *Harṣa-śokah*, which means happiness and lamentation. We are all *harṣa-śokahs*. Today we become the cause of happiness and tomorrow we become the cause of lamentation. When one is in material life, one becomes the cause of happiness for one's parents and when one comes to the spiritual life then one becomes the cause of pain to one's parents. This is material life.

Due to the presence of these *anarthas* in one's heart, one commits different types of offences against the holy name.

- To blaspheme the devotees who have dedicated their lives for propagating the holy names of the Lord.
- To consider the names of the demigods such as Lord Śiva or Lord Brahmā to be equal to or independent of the names of Lord Viṣṇu.

- To disobey the orders of the spiritual master and to consider him an ordinary human being.
- To blaspheme the Vedic literatures or any other literature in pursuance of the Vedic version.
- To consider the glories of chanting ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’ to be imagination.
- To give some mundane interpretation on the holy names of the Lord.
- To commit sinful activities on the strength of the holy names of the Lord.
- To consider the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to be one of the auspicious ritualistic activities mentioned in the *Vedas* as fruitive activities, *karma-kāṇḍa*.
- To instruct a faithless person about the glories of the holy names of the Lord.
- To not have complete faith in the chanting of the holy names and to maintain material attachments even after understanding so many instructions on this matter. It is also an offence to chant inattentively.
- One must be very careful to avoid these offences against the holy name of the Lord.

SEEKING OUT GURU, SĀDHU AND SĀSTRA

While explaining the process of devotional service to Rūpa Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya pointed out how the devotional creeper can be uprooted by committing the Vaiṣṇava offence. He compares this to the mad elephant offence. Lord Caitanya said that offences against the Vaiṣṇavas should be avoided. One has to be very careful towards the Vaiṣṇavas. Truth must be spoken but it should be spoken in a palatable way. Vaiṣṇavas do not compromise the truth but they speak in a palatable way. Similarly, when we

are dealing with the Vaiṣṇavas, we should not distort the truth. A Vaiṣṇava does not even know how to give pain to an ant. When Jāḍa Bharata was carrying King Rahūgaṇa, he was placing his feet on the ground very cautiously. He was making sure that up to the next three feet, there was no living entity on the ground. One should be careful of the Vaiṣṇava offence because it is very disastrous.

We all know that there are ten offences against the holy name. Every day we chant our sixteen rounds but we also commit these offences. The important question is how attentively we are chanting. Sometimes we see materialists doing different activities at the same time, for example, they are watching the television and at the same time smoking, reading newspaper, taking tea or coffee, or answering phones. They do many activities at the same time. Chanting, however should not be done like this.

There are also offences towards the scriptures, the Deities, *dhāma*, etc. How can one become offensive towards spiritual life — by becoming doubtful of one's own spiritual identity! The scriptures say that we are eternal spiritual soul. Sometimes a doubt comes, "Oh! I may be this body. May be that, there is no such thing as the soul. After all, who has seen the soul? It is just the propaganda of these Svāmīs." Most of the people do not believe in the presence of the soul. Then we start doubting the value of the scriptures and start feeling, "These scriptures may have been spoken by some powerful sage, but these are not definitely the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What black and white evidence is there?" So, we commit these offences. We start doubting the eternal value of the scriptures, which are giving us *sanātana-dharma*,

eternal knowledge for the living entities. By doubting the scriptures, we become doubtful about the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. One who has taken to the spiritual path should be very cautious in avoiding these offences and should seek the help of guru, śāstras, and sādhus.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO PRACTICE

Anyone who uses his eyes can see that there is nothing but miseries in the material world. That is why, five thousand years ago when Yudhiṣṭhīra Mahārāja, who is respected as a great devotee, was asked by Yamarāja about the most amazing thing in the world. He replied, “Everyone can see thousands of living entities rushing towards death, still everyone thinks that he is not going to die.” When animals go to the slaughterhouse, they follow each other without questioning on what exactly is happening.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says that the *Vedās* tell us about our relationship with God. *Sambandha* means our relationship with God, *abhidheya* means to understand what is right and what is wrong, and *prayojana* means to apply that knowledge into practice to attain the ultimate goal. So here both *abhidheya* and *prayojana* are important. One may have *abhidheya* but without *prayojana*, there is no value of this knowledge. We must put this knowledge into practice. Every day we hear the glories of devotional service, but if we do not act and do not take advantage of this knowledge then we will not have *prayojana*.

FROM ŚRADDHĀ TO BHAJANA-KRIYĀ

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that the topmost interest of the living entities or the topmost wealth that one can accumulate is this wealth of love of God.

golokera prema-dhana, hari-nama-saṅkīrtana,

(*Prarthana by Srila Narottam Das Thakur*)

“The treasure of divine love from Goloka Vṛndāvana has descended as the congregational chanting of Lord Hari’s holy names.”

The wealth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the real wealth and is the real solution. Spiritual life means coming from darkness to light. In a diseased condition, one can never really enjoy, and material life means living in a diseased condition. So, we have to take to this process of devotional service, especially the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* — *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.*

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that by *bhajana-kriyā*, these *anarthas* are destroyed. *Bhajana-kriyā* means devotional service in practice, chanting minimum sixteen rounds, reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*, and engaging in devotional service. These are all aspects of *bhajana-kriyā*. But, to get to the stage of *bhajana-kriyā*, first there must be *śraddhā* — desire in the heart, and the real desire is not to waste this valuable human life, but to look for God. God is in everyone’s heart. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*īśvaraḥ 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.”

God knows the nature of our desires, what desires are in our heart. If the desire is for real religion then Lord Kṛṣṇa brings one to a ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’ devotee or one gets a book of Śrīla Prabhupāda. This is known as *sādhu-saṅga*. Reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books means to directly associate with him. When one comes to *sādhu-saṅga*, association of devotees, one learns that one must chant ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’. Then one begins to chant, and little by little one becomes more regular. Just like when one comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one does not reach the stage of chanting sixteen rounds instantly. Someone starts with one round, with one regulative principle, that of no meat eating, which is always the easiest of all, and then one works one’s way to four regulative principles and then to sixteen rounds. Initially one is not very attentive while chanting, but then one starts getting more attentive.

THE POWER OF BHAJANA-KRIYĀ

The power of *bhajana-kriyā* is that it weakens the *anarthas* discussed earlier. As the *anarthas* get weakened, the person develops *niṣṭhā*, which means firm faith that God is the Supreme and that one wants to serve Him and not one’s own senses. One becomes determined to stay on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Many times devotees join the

temple and afterwards they leave, they get initiated and then leave. In this connection, Lord Kṛṣṇa advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā
dharmasyāsyā parantapa
aprāpya mām nivartante
mr̥tyu-saṁsāra-vartmani*

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.3)

“Those who are not faithful in this devotional service cannot attain Me, O conqueror of enemies. Therefore, they return to the path of birth and death in this material world.”

So, somebody else gets bewildered thinking why one's friend left, and starts thinking that maybe he is himself making a mistake where he is. These doubts come in even in devotees' minds. But the reason that somebody leaves is that he had not developed *niṣṭhā*, he did not have firm faith, which was because he did not take the medicine properly, which is *bhajana-kriyā*. As a result of this, one's faith becomes weak. Sometimes, devotees want to pack their bags as soon as they experience something, which they did not want. This is the result of not having strong faith. Therefore, we have to develop and come to the stage of *niṣṭhā*, and there is no alternative to *bhajana-kriyā* to make one's faith strong. When one comes to the stage of *niṣṭhā*, one gradually advances and then manifests *bhāva*, after which comes *prema*.

There is no short-cut in spiritual life. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is itself a short-cut but within Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no short-cut. One cannot really bargain and water down the process. Śrila Rūpa Gosvāmī has advised that whatever

price one may have to pay, one should pay it but become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Kṛṣṇa IS THE SUPREME PURE

Coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness means operating in sunlight. Sometimes at night, there is lightning, as a result of which light is produced. But the light of a bright sunny day is more than this light. Śrīla Prabhupāda compared sense gratification to lightning and the happiness produced by Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the light during the day. This is the power of devotional service. As soon as we engage in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, there is immediate reciprocation. This manifests eternal happiness and a distaste for sense enjoyment.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme enjoyer and we being His part and parcel are also entitled to that happiness. For instance, the son of a very rich man is also entitled to the comfort and wealth of his father. However, if we engage in material activities, we will not find real sweetness. But if we are fortunate enough to come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we will be eternally happy. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness process is *pavitraṁ*, which means that it is the purest of all the processes. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme pure, so this process is also pure. Arjuna confirms this in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*Arjuna uvāca
param brahma param dhāma
pavitraṁ paramam bhavān
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam
ādi-devam ajam vibhum
āhus tvām ṛṣayāḥ sarve*

*devarśir nāradāś tathā
asito devalo vyāsaḥ
svayāṁ caiva bravīṣi me*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.12-13)

Arjuna said: “You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest, the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn, and the greatest. All the great sages such as Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyāsa confirm this truth about you, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me.”

Devotional service is greatly purifying. By its execution, by engaging in *bhajana-kriyā*, the *anarthas* are removed and hence we feel the bliss. That is why it is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyaṁ
pavitraṁ idam uttamam
pratyakṣāvagamam dharmyam
su-sukhaṁ 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.”

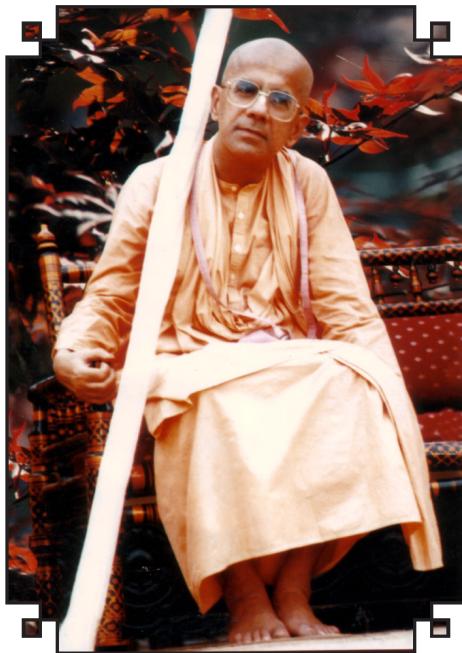
KṛṣṇA IS INEXHAUSTIBLE

Kṛṣṇa wants our service but it should be with love. Kṛṣṇa is inexhaustible, which means that one can never reach the saturation point in serving Kṛṣṇa. One can never say that one has served Kṛṣṇa enough. The materialists always ask, “How can you chant the names of God again and again?”

They can never understand that devotional service is inexhaustible. Even if a devotee has distributed thousands of books, still he thinks that he has done nothing at all. No one can do more service than Śrīla Prabhupāda has done; yet when Śrīla Prabhupāda was leaving this planet, I was standing next to him and he said, “I have done nothing at all.”

If we try to follow the spiritual master’s instructions then whatever success is achieved, it goes to his credit. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his entire credit to his most beloved spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. We can see from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s example that even if a devotee has done a lot of service, he considers that he has done nothing, as devotional service is inexhaustible. The more we hear, the more we perform devotional service, and the more we are inspired to serve. In material life, we remark that the more we have something, the less we want it, but in spiritual life it is exactly the opposite, the more we read and chant, the more we feel like reading and chanting. So, we should be intelligent in understanding the desire of the Lord and the spiritual master. If we take to this process with determination and full faith then we will always be happy. The instruction given by Lord Rṣabhadeva is very clear that we should not become foolish and blind, we should know what is ultimately beneficial is *śreyas* and we should have no attraction for *preyas*, instantly beneficial. And whatever price we may have to pay, we must pay but become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

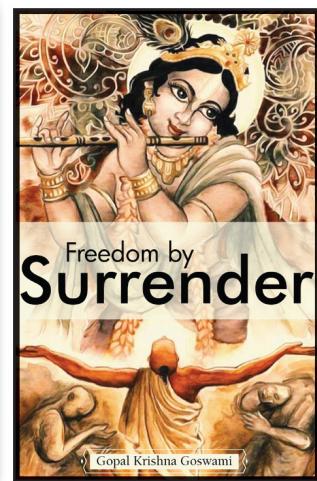
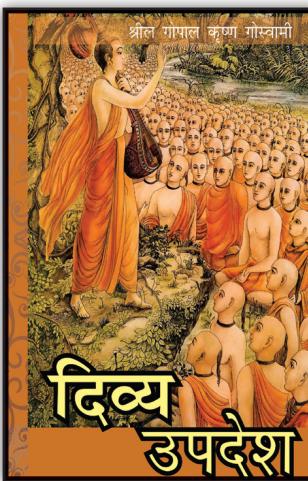
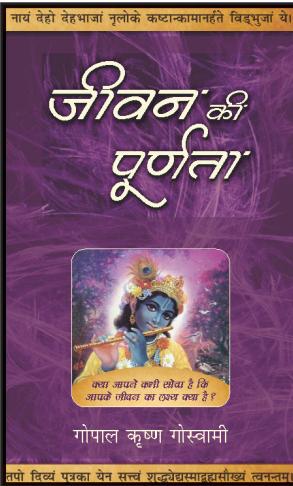
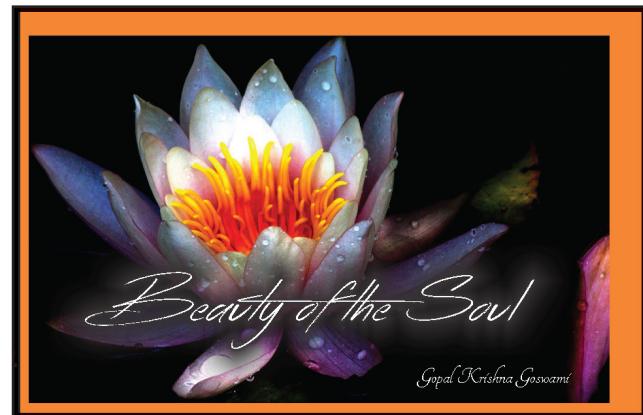
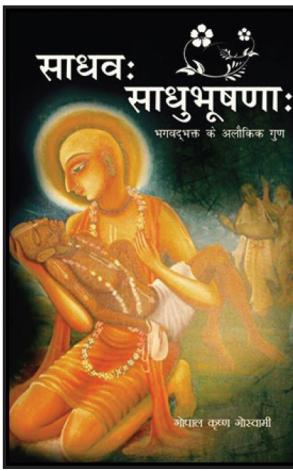
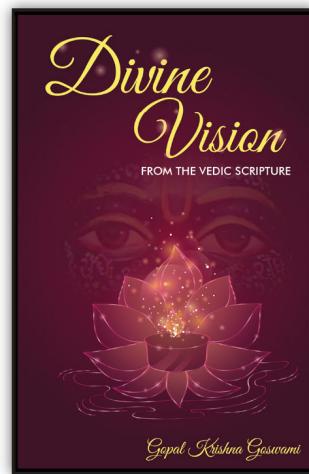
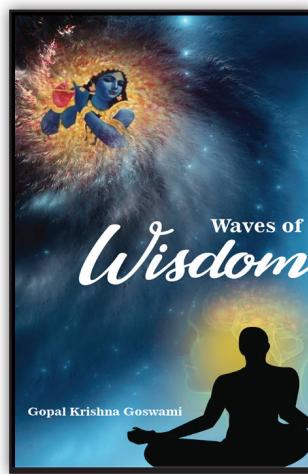
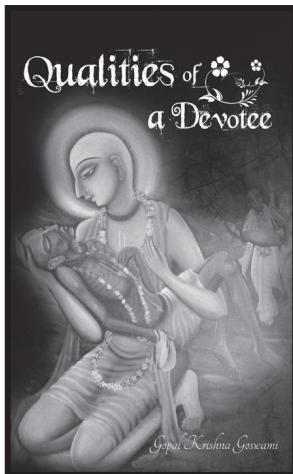
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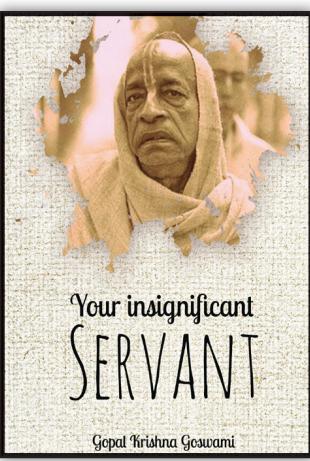
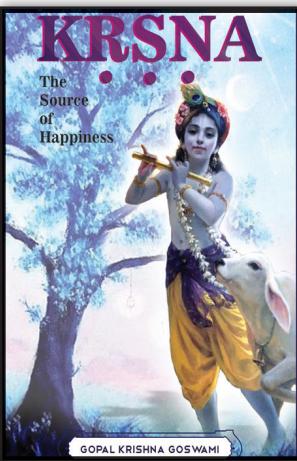
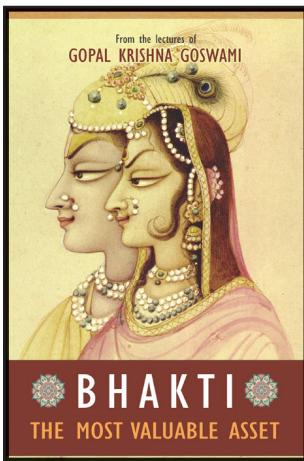
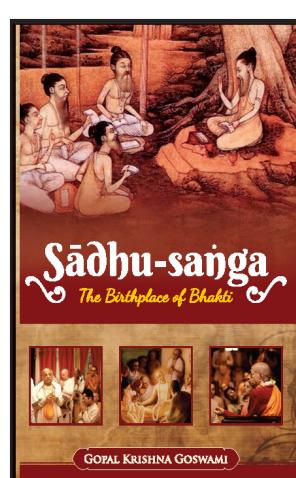
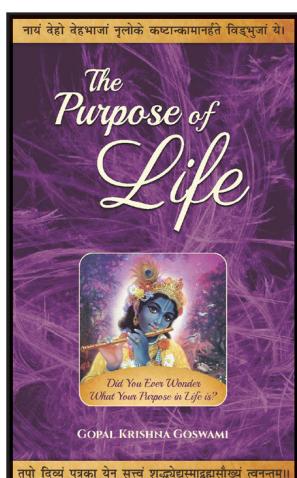
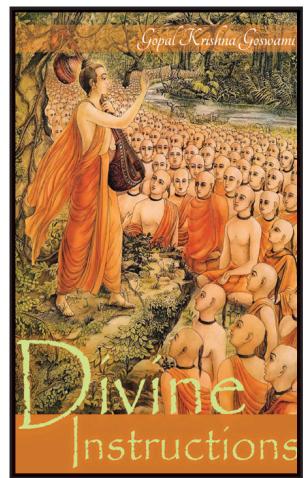
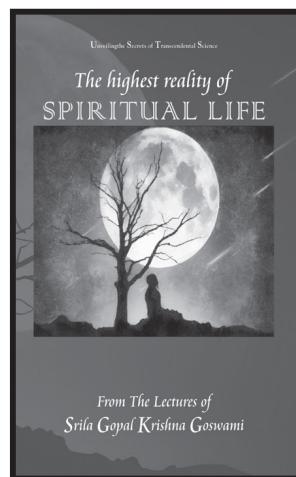
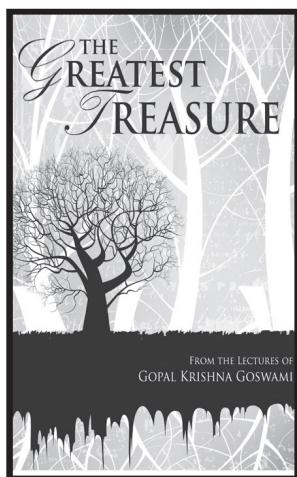
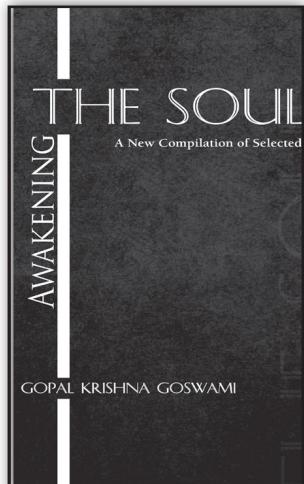


Śrīla Gopāl Krishna Goswāmi was born in Delhi on Aug 14, 1944. He became an initiated disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in 1969 and accepted the renounced order of life, Sannyās in 1982.

Currently he is GBC of ISKCON around the world. He successfully opened the Sri Sri Rādhā-Pārthsārathi temple in New Delhi, amongst many throughout the world.

Following in the footsteps of his spiritual master, He is spreading Krishna Consciousness all over the world by giving people, transcendental knowledge, and guidance resulting in solace, happiness and love of God.





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