**Title of Talk:** The Regulative Principles

**Date (of talk):** 03\_02\_2003

**Transcribed by:** Bhakta Teo

**Hours of transcribing:** 1:02

**Transcription level**: 4 (Punctuation, grammar, white space, edited for readability)

**Female Speaker:** Well, also I have a question...I wanted you to discuss the regulative principles in our spiritual practice and spiritual life. Well, the reason I am asking...there are many of us that are involved in this group who have left Krsna consciousness, chosen to break the regulative principles and [still do or don't] at different degrees. And so it comes up...what is the Gaudiya Vaisnava...?

**Swami Tripurari:** What Prahbupad called the regulative principles, which is perhaps unique to him, in one sense, at least the term "regulative principles" is...it has its origin in the [*Srimad*] *Bhagavatam*. The concept in relation to Kali Yuga, [is] there in the first canto, Maharaj Pariksit has an encounter with Kali. Not Kali [Yuga], Kali the personification of the Yuga. Who is...after the departure of Krsna, whose time is coming. He is kind of the conglomerate of bad karma, personified.

He met [this] Kali, and Kali was, as the story goes, dressed like a king. So, this means that at this time, less than qualified persons will misrepresent themselves as leaders. That is kind of a symptom of the age, because he wasn't qualified, but he was dressed like a king. The actual king/emperor, Maharaj Pariksit, came upon him and recognized him for who he was. He chastised him and he wanted to banish him from his kingdom, such that which he was about, would not have an opportunity to proliferate, under the Maharaj's reign (in his regime). So, what happened was that Kali himself surrendered to Maharaj Pariksit and became a sara-nagata, a surrendered soul to the king. But, he still has his nature...so what could he do?

So, he made a petition to the Maharaj that, "Ok, I surrendered to you...", and naturally then, Maharaj Pariksit had to accept him. If a sara-nagata comes, from any background or any condition, then we have to accept that person. So, he (Maharaj Pariksit) did, [along with] with all of his faults. He accepted him, but after that, Kali made [it] clear that "My nature is what [it] is...", and "I appreciate your shelter, but you got to get me some room to breathe...to be". Because, Pariksit Maharaj told him that where ever there is...

**Female Speaker:** The accumulation of...

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah, he said that where ever there are these activities of intoxication, untruth...

**Male Speaker:** Gold...

**Swami Tripurari: ...**that is the 5th one...gambing, himsa, err non-himsa...

**Female Speaker:** Violence...

**Swami Tripurari:** ...violence...lack of mercy. We extend mercy to those who are beneath us. So, if those who are beneath us are abused, then that is not good. And then, [finally], illicit sexual connection.

And so, Kali said "This is more or less what I am about". So, the king said "You can stay in my kingdom where ever these 4 things are taking place". And so, he gave him some space, but [really] he didn't, because there weren't any of those things going on in his kingdom!

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** So, Kali said "Well, you've given me space, but you haven't given me space...so, what to do?". So, he (Maharaj Pariksit) said, "Alright, I will give you a 5th thing. Where ever there is the hoarding of gold, of money, then you can stay there". The implication being that where ever there is the hoarding of money, it will give rise to these things. This is a capitalistic society, and there is a fair amount of money hoarding that goes on, so those things are quite rampant. So, that is the basis, the scriptural basis, for these things.

And, while Prabhupad emphasized the 4, it is good to emphasize the 5th, also. Because, we all have some gold, or some money, and that is our lively hood. And, when we part with it, enough to feel the pinch, then it makes an impression upon us. And, where ever our money goes, we tend to go there too.

So, if we make a sacrifice...for example, for the service of the Vaisnavas and so on; to build a temple, or whatever it may be; to publish a book...and it is likely that we will read that book, or go to that temple...so, that would be very helpful [to us]. And, most of us are in the world and earning money for our lively hood, or in support of our families, and so forth. And so, to make our worldly life...to bring it in connection with spirituality...this a very [effective] way to do that. And, this is not just Gaudiya Vaisnavism, this is quite common in religious tradition. So it gets abused, I suppose, but again, where ever our money goes, we go there too.

So, we shouldn't forget that one (the 5th principle)...that [will] be helpful for us. And, it might be wise, given the circumstances that are the background to your question, as you described, to put some emphasis on that one (the 5th principle)...rather than [only on] the other 4, or 2 out of 4, or something like that...that are more popular.

**Female Speaker:** You were saying that it might be another way to... . I have one question before I say that. Kali, then, is influencing through those activities...like what is the...when someone participates in those activities...

**Swami Tripurari:** Well, the point is that there has to be...the yoga, as I mentioned last night briefly, arises out of a moral and ethical foundation. So, there is a lot of propaganda...for example, about yoga and its benefits for health and so on, but the actual yoga system is based on a particular world view. Yama and Niyama means dos and don'ts really. So, there is some ethical [and] moral foundation out of which the yogic experience arises. And so, the yogic teacher has to establish a yoga foundation...actually, the scriptures have established such a foundation, in a general sense. And of course, it has to be edited, or adjusted, or applied, given the circumstances, but this is the principle behind the regulative principles. There should be a moral and ethical basis [for] our life, out of which the yogic experience, through successive stages of practice, will arise. And, if that is not there as a foundation, then you won't get the full experience. So, ethical [and] moral...

So, some of these things, perhaps, are easier for us [to misunderstand] in our modern society, today, and with all of our faults, shortcomings and new ways of thinking about things. [But], perhaps we didn't think about [them enough], and we made certain commitments to follow those principles, [which] are [now] impacting our capacity to follow their relevance in our minds, and so forth. Let's go through them and try to understand them in a broader context.

So, we talked about gold hoarding, hoarding the money...that is pretty clear. It means that we all have to have some lively hood, and that will be different for different people. Some people have this particular disposition that allows them to live more simply, and other people are higher rollers. And, simple people's standards should not be artificially imposed upon high rollers.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** So, according to their nature and capacity, everyone should give enough to feel the pinch. If we don't feel the pinch, then we are not giving. What did Mother Teresa say? Maybe I cited it one other time!? A fellow asked if he could give something, and she said "Yes, but not from your surplus". Otherwise it is not giving. So, then again, surplus will be different for different people, according to their natures and such. Anyway, the principle is that we should feel that we are making some sacrifice here.

The story of that ?Govinda Bough? (9:41) is a famous story that Prabhupad used to tell. Was it Gopal? It [was] kind of a cartoon character of sorts from the Indian history, and folklore, and whatnot. And he had a field, he was a wealthy agriculturalist. And so, one of his workers complained to him one day, "You know, you have so much money from your vast agricultural undertakings, but you never give anything to God". You probably know the story, he had taken...he took some flowers from the grains in his hand, held them before this fellow, and the wind came and blew the grains, [after which] he said "Govinda Namaha". "I am offering it to Govinda". [Then] he said, "You see, this happens all the time. The wind is blowing...some grains are going...and I am offering those grains always...so many of them".

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** In other words, they are already gone. God has actually already taken them. He is the force of the winds...and then I am...well, you can...[laughter] "Namaha". I offer it to you. So, not like that...this is the principle. But then again, it will be different for different persons. And, the sannyasi's are not to impose their standards, in the general sense, for example, on house holders. "I am living like this, so you should be also"! No, they are house holders, so they have different necessities, requirements, disposition and so on. There was one associate of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who used to just give away his money, and Mahaprabhu appointed another devotee to watch over him and [not] let him give away his money.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** He can't have a family life like that. So, that is one...and the second one is gambling. Gambling is, in this country, still illegal to some extent, and there are places where it's legal. Classy places, like Las Vegas. If you ever been there, it's interesting, because you drive for miles and miles through the desert...there is just nothing, from all directions. And then, there is just one place out there. It's like sin city...you can do it out here where no one is around, and you have to drive many miles through the desert to get there.

So, the basic principle behind gambling, as I think of it, is not earning an honest wage. The tendency to want to make money without having to do anything, or at the cost of others, or something like that. When we, according to our nature and tendency, work in an honest job, whatever it may be, there is some fulfilment in that. In the very basic sense, there is some integrity to that. I mean, I did a good days work. And, the work was also something that contributed, meaningfully, to society.

In times gone by, in so called "Vedic times", business was involved with essentials. It was an agrarian based culture, and so business would involve the trade of commodities that were essential for human society: grains, cloth, minerals, and so on, and so forth. And of course, as we live in a Vaisa society, a capitalist society that is...the whole premise behind it, in one sense, is greed...to foster greed.

So, as good as it is comparatively to many other societies, it has its problems, and they are popping up all the time. Greed, recently, is a huge issue in America, [which is] an example of corruption and exploitation.

So, all this is included in the expanded idea of gambling, in a sense. But, the actual act of gambling itself, is the classic example of trying to make a living without honest effort. Of course, Krsna says "Of cheats, I am the gambler" or "I am gambling". So, it doesn't mean we shouldn't take any risk. Nothing risked, nothing gained [after all].

So, the spiritual aspirant is a bit of a risk taker, in the general sense, because really, we are kind of thrusting ourselves into the invisible. It sounds good, and we are attracted, but if we jump, will there be anything there to land on? We don't know. But, we go forward and we find out that there is, there is firm ground here. And then, the bar is [raised] again and again. We have to jump higher and further. And, it is always like that. Spiritual progress will always be like that, for the most part, to us. What I mean to say, is that it will always be coloured by some degree of uncertainty.

[However], we take courage from the example of great persons who speak so strongly about the futility of material acquisition, which offers [only] the appearance of stability and security. They speak so strongly about how, in reality, material acquisition is the acquiring of things that are here today, but gone tomorrow. They speak strongly about that, and the fact that they can speak so strongly, indicates to us, that they have firm ground to stand on, to be able to turn their back to such [things].

So, it doesn't mean that we shouldn't take any risk. It will appear like this in spiritual life, "Oh, I have to risk everything...and what will I gain"? "Everything will be lost [and] I will be living in some theory...". "I [will] lose my friends, I could lose my job, I could lose so many things"! But, as we proceed...Shridara Maharaj gave a nice explanation...it will appear at first [to be] all risk and no gain. Then, we will start to think [that], nothing risked, nothing gained. Because, what if God is really nothing, or next to nothing? And, in the end it will turn to the realization that nothing risked and all gained, was really what it was about. It will look like all risk, no gain. And then it will look like, nothing risked; so, if I don't risk it, I won't gain anything anyway; so, I might as well do it. And then in the end, it will be as it really is...it was nothing risked and all gained. Whatever we have...do we [really] have it? Can we keep it? No!

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** So, we shouldn't avoid that risk. That is actually a sure thing. That is really not gambling. So, anyway, in general, we should earn an honest wage. That will make us an honest person and give us some personal integrity. Like I said last night, citing Prabhupad, but trying to develop that idea a little bit. This devotional life is for human being; spiritual life is for human beings.

So, we have to sometimes think about everything that it means to be human, and realize, in the best sense of the term, [that] human life affords us the opportunity to be a spiritual aspirant. But to be a good [and] decent human being is also included in that. And, we see so much disparity in this regard amongst devotees, who are [expounding] devotional theology, and philosophy, and all that, but they are less than human in their dealings, even with one another. [Then], what to speak of the greater circle of humanity!? They are not caring people. So, this is not what Prabhupad was talking about.

So, this is part of it...to earn an honest wage. And obviously, we are not just dealing with essentials. I am not saying that you should always trade fruits and vegetables. There are many ways to make a living and many of them may be un-necessary, in one sense, superficial, but there are ways to go about them. They are part of the society [and] the economy we live in. And, there are ways to go about them that are ethical.

I remember that I once bought a car, a Volkswagen, years ago. And, the fellow who sold it to me, at the car dealers, was the best salesman in the company. This was years ago, and car salesman did not have the best reputation in the fifties. To be a car salesman, especially a used car salesman, was not very glorified. [Not] a very nice job to have, or a very nice person to be. So, this fellow, at any rate, was the best salesman in the company, and it was a surprise to everybody, because he was very ethical [and] moral. And, he was told that he would never sell a car with his standards of how to treat people, and deal with people. [Yet], it turned out that he was the most successful salesman in the company. Now, maybe he was just giving me a line...I don't know.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** [Laughter].

**Female Speaker:** So, he is the one that told you?

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah...but no, he was...at least in my estimation. I mean, the way he was dealing with me...

**Female Speaker:** Now...did you buy the car?

**Swami Tripurari:** I bought the car.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** He was successful! So, anyway, there are ways to be involved in whatever enterprise we may be involved in, and be ethical about that. And, there are ways to be involved and to be unethical. And, we have opportunity, probably throughout its [entire] course, to go one way or the other. So, better to be ethical about that, earn an honest wage, and deal with people for what they are; according to the world view that a devotee is living in...the lens through which, he or she, is supposed to be looking at life.

So, gambling, and to be kind to others. We talked about this last night, jiva daya. Generally, showing mercy to others means that you are in a superior position, in some respects, so that you can reach down to them, and help them. So, often it's played out in relation to animals, domestic animals in particular, who come under the care of human society, and haven't got much of a life otherwise. There [aren't] a lot of wild cows and chickens and things like that. So, these domestic animals [that are] under the care of humans...they should [actually] be cared for. And, they produce...the cow for example, abundantly, when cared for...a commodity that is very useful to humans. But, it shouldn't be limited to that example. That one has been magnified...and for good reasons. But, the broader idea is, to be kind to other living beings [and] to show mercy to the innocent. So, that is not hard to relate to.

**Female Speaker:** In relationship to cows, I know Prabhupad said at one time, the ideal life would be for everyone to have an acre of land, a cow, and a garden to grow their food. But, in order to have a cow that produces milk, don't you have to have a calf born every year?

**Swami Tripurari:** Not every year, about every 3 years...maybe.

**Female Speaker:** Well then, what happens to these...if you just have your own little plot of land...?

**Swami Tripurari:** Well, you have to understand that Prabhupad, when he would speak like that, he was advocating an agrarian based society. He was very much Ghandian in his outlook about how to live in the world. And Ghandi, of course, was not so much of an independent thinker, but he'd do a lot of his thinking from basic spiritual concepts or religious [ones]. So, Prabhupad was, in that sense, he was kind of an environmentalist, and he was advocating an agrarian based society in an industrial based society. [However], it would be very difficult to turn back the industrial society to an agrarian based society, but Prabhupad was interested in that.

Now, this is an interesting point; in the meantime, in the last 30 years or so, people in the western world have also become concerned about the downside of an industrial based society. And, they have gone into great depth to investigate the shortcomings of that, and to come up with ideas and concepts of how to alter that...how to adjust that in such a way that the downside of an industrial society would be diminished considerably. Excellent books have been written!

And, people who are immersed in this kind of thinking are, in one sense, applying themselves in a dynamic way; in comparison to the average devotee who goes to the store to buy something and reads the label. "Are there any eggs in here"? "Are there any fish in here"? "No...OK, I'll buy it".

That whole idea of reading the label...what is that about? Why are we reading the label? You don't want to be part of, or implicated in animal slaughter, abuse of chickens, or eat something that you would consider inappropriate for human consumption. The greater idea involved there, is that you don't want to be involved in things that promote exploitation in any way, shape or form. That is the whole principle behind it.

And, while to take something from that and place it here may look a little fanatical, or something..."Oh God, I got to read every label...!?"...but, the principal, is important to consider. And, it would be in the best interest of some devotees to read some books, about people who have really spent a lot of time thinking about how the industrial society is exploiting people and natural resources, and so forth. And, how by changing your life, and thinking [about] the world differently, we can all live in a human society. [We] can have a much better life, a life that would be much more conducive to spiritual culture and so forth...much more sattvic.

So, there is a lot of sattvic type of thinking that a lot of the devotees aren't up to date with. And, Prabhupad would not appear to be up to date with it either (and he wasn't), but he was up to date in his time, from his perspective, in India, and so forth. Prabhupad wasn't up to date in terms of everything that goes on in terms of fossil fuels, and it's a huge issue. I mean, you really have to become an expert in the field. He was an expert in his own field. [So], try to understand what he was advocating.

There are a lot of spiritual traditions, outside of the Gaudiya tradition, that identify more with these types of issues, and seek to be part of that change, or world view, while at the same time, their theology, their ideology, doesn't go as high, in a sense, as Gaudiya Vaishnavism. They are not as developed theologically. If it ends, for example, in Brahman...that is a huge step from where we are, but the Gaudiya's make little of that.

[So], what must be their vantage point, to be able to make little of that? To make little of that, is only appropriate for someone that has standing in a plane that is much higher than that. To be connected with Krsna, leads to that plane, [and] gives you some room to talk about it. However, you should talk a little [more] humbly about it, without implying that our tradition is better than yours. If you are standing on the kind of ground that makes Brahman realization look like a small thing...then that is another thing. [However], even those devotees' standard is trnad api su-nicena, they are very humble. They may speak loudly sometimes...Prabhupad was a bit like that, but under scrutiny, it would be revealed that he was very humble.

So, I am trying to expand the idea of a moral and ethical basis for our life. And, if we are going to read the label, then we should read a lot of labels. For example, in our ashram, we don't drink any milk that doesn't come from cows that haven't been properly taken care of, [which] haven't been injected with hormones; and for the most part, we only take organic milk from cows that have grazed on grasses.

So, we think all these things have value, and to be progressive in our spiritual life, we [also] have to be progressive materially, in a way that corresponds with our spiritual outlook. Therefore, we should be up to date on these things, to some extent, and I expect [that] of at least my younger students. I mean, when I grew up, I saw the fist no littering sings...50 dollars [fine]...so, you can imagine what it was like. People used to just throw things out the window. It was very common in the 50's.

**Male Speaker: [**Unintelligible]...

**Swami Tripurari:** I find that shocking, but there was no stance about it. And, signs started going up about not littering and the 50 dollar fine. Now, it's probably a 500 or 1000 dollar fine. It's quite a difference from the way young people are brought up today, and [taught] about recycling and all these things. So, I like to hear from them, but I haven't got time to go and study all the books about these things. So, I'm a little up to date, and I get help from those that are schooled in such things to a larger extent, [as well]. It is important for us to be progressive materially, while we are advancing spiritually, if we want to represent a tradition in a living way, and make it relevant.

So, in a broader sense, that is what these regulative principles are about...a whole ethical kind of basis for our spiritual life, that leads away from exploitation. So, we came from hoarding of money, to gambling, to showing mercy to others. So [now], we simply say "No meat eating"...but as I said, it is broader than that.

Then we come to intoxication. Intoxication, obviously, if you just take the word...it is not in our interest to be intoxicated..it's clear. To be intoxicated means that you are deluded as to who you are, what your strengths are, what your abilities are, and so forth. So, that is not in our best interest.

At the same time, you have things like...there was a big case in California...I think it has reached a conclusion...it went on for some time. It was about a fellow who was in a our area and supplying marijuana for medical use, for certain people, and it was legal by California state law. [However], the federal law contradicts it...and they came and arrested him...it was a huge case. He was actually doing a good thing for people, but I also see that being abused sometimes. They allow that in Oregon. In fact, we own a house in Oregon, that we moved from, but we are renting it. And, one of the guys that rents it, grows marijuana in the place. He has a licence from the state to grow medical marijuana...he's got some kind of a problem. [So], we are trying to sell the house, and people come in and look at it, and there are these big plants...

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** They think they walked in to some place that is about to be raided, or something. He has to show his licence. Police come out every now and then to check the height of the plants. They can only be so high...

So, I am just kind of broadening this, because I know that some devotees are prone to [it] before joining, and perhaps return to [it] in times of distress. So, I am not advocating that it is good, but I come from that culture too. So, I think that medical application of a drug is one thing, and intoxication is another. So, you [have to] decide whether you are using something in such a way that it has some medicinal effect, or whether you are abusing it. I'd say, probably around 90% of the time, there is a tendency towards abuse.

Prabhupad, of course, was very strict on that, [because] people were very much abusing drugs in those days. [However], [despite] being the broad minded person that I am, and living as we do in society, I haven't thought about this before...I am just thinking about it now, as you bring it up. I know that there were many catholic saints that used to drink a little wine at dinner, for digestion...in Italy...

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** Anyway, the principle is clear. To become intoxicated is not in our interest. It will delude us, and we are already deluded. That's one of our basic problems. So, to further delude ourselves about our abilities, strengths, capacities, and so forth, is definitely not in our best interest. There are many Sadhus in India, so-called Sadhus...in fact, there is a book that came out years ago called Sadhus...you may have seen it? It was largely a picture book, and on the front there was a Sadhu smoking a hookah...that was the front cover.

I've met them before. There is a fellow in Vrindavan, on the outskirts of Vrindavan, who wanted to build a temple...I think even bigger than the Krsna-Balaram temple...and he has long dreadlocks. So, what he did is, he stood on one leg, and he made a vow to stay on one leg until he had a temple. So, there is a big tree there, and he stands by the tree...and he has a swing that he kind of leans on. So, there is a little bit of cheating I guess...

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** Since the days of Hiranyakasipu, you know, they've liberalized the tradition a little bit.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** Anyway, he's there, you know, swinging...and standing on one foot. He uses the swing when he sleeps, you know, to lean on. He is quite austere in a sense...but, he smokes pot all the time! And, that makes him a little dull and numb to the austerity that he is performing. It is fairly common. People still do that in the Himalayas. So, if it is cold, they can numb themselves out...and they can also focus their mind, with the help of that. So...he has a temple now. They've built a temple, and he has a succession of people that stand one leg...you can see them there.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Female Speaker:** How long did he stand on one leg for?

**Swami Tripurari:** Oh, he was there for quite a while.

**Female Speaker:** Like...years?

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah.

**Female Speaker:** He must have had somebody come and...fill his pipe back up?

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Female Speaker:** Does he eat anything?

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah...he eats.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** I went there out of curiosity once, just to check him out...and he offered me a toke...you know.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** I said..."Umm, I don't take that anymore".

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** So, umm...

**Female Speaker:** It is just their culture, you know, they use peyote, and mushrooms, and things...for spiritual journeys. It is possible that some people may not feel like it is a medical reason, but it could be. I mean, I have talked to people who use different kinds of hallucinogens as part of their spiritual path. You know, like a vision quest kind of thing. You know, people do that in the south west a lot.

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah. The term spirituality can be painted with a broad brush. [However], I subscribe to a much more narrow definition of spirituality; the basis of which is the idea that there is a difference between the body and the soul. That is where we cross over from material to spiritual, to the extent that we actually experience that. And, there are a lot of psychic types of experience...and the mind is very subtle compared to the body...and what possibilities lie in the mental realm are extraordinary and overwhelming in comparison to the material realm. [Also], they are very different.

Just like, for example, in this room, if we were to [try] taking everything in the room with us physically when we left, we wouldn't be able to do that. [However], mentally, we could take everything. The mental plane is far more expansive. The possibilities that lie in the mental realm are so great, in comparison to the physical realm, that they seem to be categorically different. [However], they're not categorically different, because the only thing that you can experience in the mental realm is something from the physical realm. [This is due to the fact that] the mental realm is filled with impressions [gathered] via the senses, from the physical realm. But, they can be combined in ways that they aren't combined in the physical plane.

So, because of that, often times, mental and psychic experiences are identified with spirituality. So, I don't know about those Indians that take peyote, and mushrooms, and so forth. [However], there is a place in Pueblo, Mexico...I lived down in that area for a while, so I am familiar with [a group that uses them]. But, I think they're involved in a psychic kind of spirituality, more than the kind of spirituality defined by Gaudiya Vaishnavism. And, I think those things may be helpful to them, in some respect, on a human level. I am not sure, but perhaps it makes them better people in the way they deal with one another or...I don't know.

I was from the 60's and in some ways, the culture and the additives of those times make people think more broadly and more human like. The problem, of course, is [that] while they thought more broadly and more human like, in some respects, they are also kind of unrealistic. And, [this] led to conspiracy theories, and a kind of a self-centeredness that was very inappropriate. And, I live in Mendocino County, California, which is a liberal bastion. When we were kids...when we were younger, and I was living in San Francisco, in 1969...you know...that is where were wanted to go. "Get some land in Mendocino and leave the world"! So, there are people out there that did that, and are still there!

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** Radio stations are extremely liberal, to the point where they just irritate you. It is like... God, they are fanatics...you know? And, [they] have so many conspiracy theories, and everything the government is doing is suspect; it is a bit extreme sometimes. And so, it led to that kind of thing, to extremes. [Still], it had some good sides. I mean, I remember Nsringa Maharaj...my godbrother asked him that "You know, I took LSD and [although] Prabhupad said it was no good, I found that it was helpful in some ways, and to some extent". And Nsringa Maharaj said "You know, I took LSD, and when I saw someone cooking a piece of meat, I could never eat it again! So, it helped me". That is what he said. But, you know...go on from there.

So, we have been given something much more significant as a means for changing our lives, but I don't deny the fact that, on some level, they may be helpful to some people; [even] in ways that might be construed, with broad brushes, as spiritual. I guess it depends what you are taking, but intoxication in of itself, tends to be tamasic in nature. But, it is interesting to note that the tamo guna and the sattva guna have many similarities. To give a classic example...Prabhupad gave the classic example of a sadhu living in the jungle, and a monkey living in the jungle. They are both naked, they both eat only fruits, [and] they both live very simply. But, the monkey has got a lot of other things going on that the sadhu hopefully doesn't.

So, you know, the two ends of the spectrum have similarities. If you look at an avadhut, a mad saint, externally, it may be difficult to distinguish them from a [hobo]. I mean, they are mad! If you met someone like Vamsi Das Babaji, he's mad...he's dishevelled in his appearance, and so forth. So, there are some similarities, but over all there is a difference and there is a down side to intoxication.

And then, with regards to sex life, I think that it is universally accepted that this principle has to be restricted. There is nobody that denies this. It is just a question of where they draw the line. I mean, that is why we wear clothes, in one sense, we are drawing the line. And, there are nudist colonies and people who subscribe to nudist philosophy, that don't believe in that. And, they get together in their places and they hang out, unclothed. It's a whole philosophy, but anywhere [else] in society, this principle is universally accepted. Somewhere, we have to draw the line and make a difference. And, in animal society, there may be a system built into nature for...but, there is not as much conscientious discrimination...for animals to have sexual intercourse with their offspring...it's not a thing. But, in human society, for the most part, the vast majority of people will draw the line. But, some people don't draw the line there. That's also, in fact, becoming more common...but, [even] that person will draw the line somewhere.

So, my point is, that it is universally accepted that this tendency should be regulated. So, the questions are, where to regulate it and how to regulate it, in such a way that it will promote my spiritual growth and development. [So], Prabhupad drew the line in a particular place, and what we have found is that for the most part, his disciples couldn't hold that line. Therefore, I say, with regards to sex, that it should be part of a meaningful and committed relationship that involves more than just the physical experience.

So, that is kind of drawing it a little lower. It is basically, kind of like Catholicism, in marriage, which is a sanctified union where two people come to together and say, "We are going to help one another.", "We are going to live together for a higher purpose.", and so forth.

So, when the whole relationship is one of commitment and self sacrifice, that is a sanctified type of relationship. That is the whole idea of marriage and religious culture. It is a beautiful thing actually. I remember going down the street in Vrindavan once, during the wedding season, and at that time you can get held up in traffic if there is a wedding. The big band is coming, playing these big drums, and trumpets, and all. The bride groom is usually on a horse, he's got a turban, he's all decked out, and there is a palanquin over him, depending on how much money they have. Usually, the bride's father pays for the wedding, and these people will save up for their whole lives for that. How much they can spend on the wedding, and how spectacular it can be, very much determines their social standing, and prestige, and fulfilment in life.

So, here we come driving down in a rickshaw, and the band is coming through, and they take up the whole street. Everything stops, and everybody is noticing. Basically, it is announced that this guy will be with this lady, for the rest of their lives, and we are letting everybody know. You know, these two will be together and that is OK, that is blessed, and we all think that is wonderful. That is kind of neat, actually.

So, anyway, the brahmacari with me is getting frustrated. I mean, he we are, brahmacari and sannyasi, going on a preaching mission, and getting held up by a wedding. I said, "Don't think like this, it is beautiful.", "We are for this, it is a wonderful thing.". I mean, since most people are going to be married, let it be announced everywhere that they are married. Then it will be hard for them to go somewhere else. It will help serve to make them committed to one another. And, when they are committed to one another, they will have the sacrifice, and they will be purified. I mean, in order for them to remain together, life has to ultimately be about something more than just infatuation with one another. So, sex life should be restricted to that type of relationship.

So, we have gone through all five, right? Yes...Carlos?

**Carlos:** Maharaj, yesterday, you know we were talking about performing kindness to...

**Swami Tripurari:** Can I just interrupt you for one second and say just one more thing about this, that has come into mind. I think, you have to understand, that if we are not applying ourselves with regards to these principles, it will be difficult for us to make spiritual advancement. Think of it like that. In that way, it is not good. Rather than thinking in a way that "I am bad." and "This is bad." and...I remember growing up as a Catholic...if we committed a [carnal] sin, it would be like this dot on our soul. Like, if I commit a mortal sin, it would be this big black hole and...you know.

**Audience:** [Laughter].

**Swami Tripurari:** So, that can, in a way, be counter-productive psychologically. It can make us...because we may have shortcomings. And then, if we have shortcomings, and we look at them in that way...that will discourage us from practicing. If you would look at it like "It is not going to help me spiritually.", "I got to get beyond this, or improve on this, to improve spiritually" then it may be easier to progress, without potentially developing a guilt complex that is really counter-productive. You follow?

**Male Speaker:** Just in relation to that... . One of the things that we've seen is, because that initial vow was taken and put forth, like you said, as a life-long expectation...then that tends to create a tremendous amount of difficulty. Because, even in Catholicism, the priest says, "This is it...now you are committed". And, the initial vows, especially for new people...how do you reconcile that? If you are coming and, here is the standard, and here is the vow you are going to take, and then they feel like they can't do this...

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah, I think they should adjust it so that they can do it, and that would be progressive. I mean, it depends where you go. If you go to a planet of...a homosexual planet, let's say. You are going to have to talk about things differently and set the rules in a different way. You know, you can't just say that this is all wrong, or something!

**Audience:** [Laugther].

**Swami Tripurari:** So, wherever you are, according to circumstance and time, you have to adjust things in such a way that there is an ethical and moral base, and people understand it for that. And, that the further, broader ramifications of it, identify with it in a healthy way, and make progress. I may sound extremely liberal in the way I talk about these things sometimes, but there are precedents even from Prabhupad, in this regard. I know disciples of Prabhupad who had problems with certain principles and Prabhupad told them "Ok, then do this...and get on with your service.".

So, knowing that, and knowing just how flexible Prabhupad was, to be able to do what he did, then I take lessons to be flexible as well, at certain times. We are living for the sake of spreading Krsna Consciousness, so in principle I don't disagree with him at all. I think...hopefully I have made that clear.

**Male Speaker:** So, you mentioned relative kindness, and then you mentioned some sort of absolute kindness, and then you mentioned Vaisnava seva, which seemingly are different things. My speculation is that it would depend on the mentality of the person rendering that service, wouldn' it!?

**Swami Tripurari:** Well, it would depend.

**Male Speaker:** I mean, for instance, if Prabhupad is walking the Earth, and he sees someone and does something, like giving a quarter to some guy that claimed he needed food...somebody might construe that as...

**Swami Tripurari:** Relative kindness?

**Male Speaker:** ...relative...charitable...kind of...not so great. But, depending on what he was thinking, is how you decide how great it is, isn't it? Or, is it even important to distinguish?

**Swami Tripurari:** I am not sure I fully understand what you are saying? I think that when Prabhupad would give a rupee to a beggar, he was basically doing it so that beggar could get something to eat. And, he felt sorry that the beggar was hungry. There may be an added benefit to that, because it was given by such a person, whose life is so motivated by love of Krsna. They may get some extra sukrti in that regard, because it came from Prabhupad. But, the fact of the matter is, Prabhupad would be helping them on a relative level. Maybe he is also helping them on an absolute level, but in his consideration, it is not like he is thinking that if he gives this beggar the rupee he will go and spend it on Krsna, thus helping him to get out of Maya. He is most likely thinking, this person is hungry and I've got money...and there you go.

**Male Speaker:** I mean, that was a material activity...

**Swami Tripurari:** Well...I think that...like I [previously] said, there is the shadow of compassion, and then there is compassion itself. Prabhupad said, real compassion is compassion for the soul, right? The plight of the soul! So, to relieve the soul from its plight, is to educate the soul, and engage the soul in spiritual practices based on spiritual knowledge, so they may be extricated from material predicament.

**Male Speaker:** When you mentioned the different things that we understand and this sort of hierarchical way, it seems to become like you are speaking of an objective truth. But, my sense of it would be, that actually, you are talking about a subjective truth. Because, Prabhupad was performing this supposed mundane activity, [but] it wasn't really mundane, and that it is subjective to the mentality or consciousness of the person who does it, and not in some rigid objective hierarchy.

**Swami Tripurari:** Yeah, I suppose you could look at it like that. I mean, ultimately, what is material and what is spiritual, is determined by our motivation behind whatever we may do. I mean, that is obviously a big aspect of bhakti, because we do things that would ordinarily be considered material. Just like in jnana-marga, to be married is mundane, but in the bhakti-marga, it doesn't have to necessarily be that way. Or, to be involved in printing books, and building temples, and driving cars and so forth. The demarcation between matter and spirit becomes a little fuzzy. Ultimately, material energy and spiritual energy are coming from the same source, they are one.

So, it is the motivation behind the activity that determines whether it is spiritual or material, as opposed to the activity itself. So, in that sense, it's more subjective than objective. Regardless, you should do all three...you should chant Hare Krsna, you should show kindness to others, and [you should]serve Vaisnavas.

**Male Speaker:** But, if you don't have access to Vaisnava seva, perhaps the other is practically as good, if you use the right mentality.

**Swami Tripurari:** The only difference is that the Vaisnava has something to give back. [Anyway], if you show kindness to an ordinary person, which you should, you will get something back, there is no doubt about that. But, when serving a Vaisnava, you will [not only] get that back, but there is the potential for you to receive so much more, because he has something more to offer. That is the difference.

**Female Speaker:** Did Prabhupad ever give a beggar...

**Swami Tripurari:** Sure...

**Male Speaker:** ...because he would get all these rupees when he would go to temples and give them...

**Female Speaker:** ...I never heard that. I always heard that there was giving in the mode of ignorance, giving in the mode of passion...and that to give to someone like that was not...was that not true?

**Swami Tripurari:** If a Vaisnava gives, that is an extraordinary event...there is extra benefit!

**Female Speaker:** ...clouded. I mean, in your heart you feel like giving to a beggar, but then you are like "Oh no! That is giving in the mode of ignorance!". I mean, maybe he is just going to go and buy alcohol with it and then that would be a bad thing...

**Swami Tripurari:** You decide, but Prabhupad gave to beggars.

**Male Speaker:** There is a story in bhakti-sidhanta about his disciples. Do you know that story, it is in his biography...

**Swami Tripurari:** Who's biography?

**Male Speaker:** Rupa-vilasa.

**Swami Tripurari:** Ok. A biography of Saraswati Thakur.

**Male Speaker:**...and he...do you remember exactly what he said?

**Other Male Speaker:** I remember reading it. He said, don't think that Vaisnava means that you are above giving the standard everyday charity.

**Female Speaker:** ...it makes the heart hard if you don't do it.

**Swami Tripurari:** If you don't give, it makes the heart hard?

**Female Speaker:** Yeah.

**Swami Tripurari:**  Vaisnava is not above, he said?

**Male Speaker:** ...is not above these things. He should feel for these things.

**Swami Tripurari:** You see, Bhaktivinoda Thakur has also explained in Tattva...Tattva Sutra? It was his last sutra, it may have been Tattva Sutra, where he explained that brotherly love, as he called it, is inside of Vaisnavism. Spiritual love...so, who is a Vaisnava also has that...human love. One is, again, a shadow of the other.

So, if he is inside Vaisnavaism, he can also function in the realm of brotherly love. And, in his giving, he is also giving more. For example, let's say Prabhupad is a great soul, so he gives a rupee to a beggar, and the beggar thinks "Oh, thank you, you are very kind!", "I appreciate you.", "Pranam!". Then, theoretically, while he goes and spends that rupee for whatever, he has also thought favourably about someone who is moving in the world for such a high purpose, that it will bring him sukrti, for bhakti.

So, even the Vaisnava, by doing good for others, on a human level, relative to his stage of advancement, he or she is creating opportunity for sukrti, for people to think favourably about bhakti. It doesn't mean that we should... oh, we want to get people involved in Krishna consciousness, so let's do this over here...and then, open a hospital and help...so, when people see we're helping, they'll be attracted...so, it will bring them in and make them devotees. And, sometimes devotees think like this, and they kind of bifurcate these things...over here we are doing this...but, we don't really care about these people. Or, let's go march in the Aids parade, because people will see us there, and they will think that we care. And then, they will think favourably of us, and then, we'll get them to join us, and then, we will be able to tell them how bad their life style is...or whatever.

**Audience:** [Laughter]

**Swami Tripurari:** So, it's not like that, when Prabhupad would be involved in those kinds of things, to whatever extent he was. Pretty much, he was always absorbed in spreading Krsna consciousness, but there was opportunity for overflow, to help on some other levels. And, when he did that, those people benefited more than, merely by, for example, the rupee that he gave that beggar.

The point is, we should be a whole person, a full human. That is what Krsna is, fully divine and fully human. It is hard to fathom, but that is the whole idea of Krsna. He is fully divine and fully human at the same time. So, we have to become fully human and fully divine. That is Krsna consciousness. So, all that human-ness, the human heart, it is not going to go away.

**Female Speaker:** It is so refreshing to hear that...just to hear you say those words.

**Other Female Speaker:** The temple president here in Baltimore was giving a class one day and somebody asked him "What does advanced mean?", and he said "To be sweet.". And, I thought that was a pretty good...

**Swami Tripurari:** That's nice. That is a big thing. Along these lines, I met a fellow from the Radharamana Goswamis. He's older than me, but he was a young boy when he met Prabhupad. I guess I was too, but he is older than me, and he met Prabhupad in Vrindavan, and his name is Caitanya Goswami, one of the Radharamana Goswami families. And, he told me [about] how he met Prabhupad, and he was fascinated by him, and he wanted to ask him a question, to just kind of see where he was at. Because, Prabhupad was a little different...saffron robes and all...and then, the Gaudiya tradition in Vridavan is not so familiar with that kind of thing. And, his mission had all these western people, and so forth... .

So, he asked Prabhupad a question. He said "How to please Krsna?","What is the best way to please Krsna?". And Prabhupad said, "Oh...by pleasing Radharani". [He told me], "Oh, then I knew he was a devotee, and he was a Gaudiya too...what a nice answer!". Then, we continued talking for a while about Prabhupad and his mission, and he said "Actually, Vivekananda was the first to go to America.", "I believe he was the first to go and to preach in America.". And then, I drew back and I thought about him quoting Prabhupad, but now talking about Vivekananda, and there is such a difference in ideology and what the two did and so forth. And so, I kind of took exception, and I said "But, Vivekananda was not a Vaisnava". I was thinking, "Maybe this guy thinks [Vivekananda] is a Vaisnava, and he's blurred these two conceptions.", "He's not exactly accurate.". So, he said, "No, no, no, he's not a Vaisnavaa, but morally, he was perfect.". And then, I thought, "Wow, that is a big thing, to be morally perfect.". And, this guy was a Radharani Goswami, and he was saying that to be morally perfect was a big thing. I am not saying he wasn't, but a lot of things go on in Gaudiya Vaisnavism that are less than morally perfect. So, I thought that was really nice, that he could appreciate the moral standards of Vivekananda.

So, anyway, what else? We've talked for quite some time eh? So, we'll stop here.

[End of Transcription]