

## What is self-realization?

-A Review Article from Bhagavad Gita

Self-realization is a position of liberated stage in which a person sees his identity as an infinitesimal jiva. This begins by understanding that “I am not this body, I am a spirit soul.” A self-realized person understands that his relation with Kṛṣṇa is perpetual and eternal [1]. In the materialistic world a person dreams of sense pleasure, feeling sometimes happiness sometimes distressed. Such happiness which is blind to self-realization which is delusion from beginning to the end is simply ignorance [2] but when we come to our spiritual senses, we realize that we are erroneously engaged in māyā’s service and that our duty is to engage in Kṛṣṇa’s service [3]. When we come to this understanding that “I am no one’s servant but Kṛṣṇa’s”, we immediately attain self-realization. We must come to this understanding not by sentiment but by real knowledge [4].

To get material gains people have to do so many sacrifices right from their childhood. A student sacrifices his play time in order to study well. An earning person sacrifices his luxuries to save money for the future. But if sacrifice of one’s material possessions is not dovetailed for spiritual realization, then such sacrifices are material. Any activity that is not aimed at ultimate self-realization or liberation from the material bodily concept of life is not at all auspicious. This mundane world is “dukhkālayam”. So all such so called sacrifices will beget more dukkha ....more frustrations. Therefore a self-realized person sacrifices with a spiritual objective or in devotional service [5] for the bliss of Supreme Lord (samsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam) [6].

Since a self-realized person recognizes himself as a fragmental portion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead therefore he is neither joyful in achieving something nor does he lament in losing anything which is related to this material body [7]. To achieve this level one requires the mercy of a bonafide spiritual master. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of a guru, one becomes free from material attachment and attains steadiness in self-realization and acquire the taste for hearing about Kṛṣṇa [8]. Lord Caitanaya therefore approved the process of hearing from realized devotees about the past times of the Lord. It does not matter to what mundane category the audience belongs, if one meekly and submissively hears about

the activities of the Lord from a realized soul, he will be able to conquer the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is unconquerable by any other process. Hearing and associating with the devotees are thus the most important elements for self-realization [9].

In this age of quarrel, where people in general are short lived, disturbed by various anxieties, the best means is to chant the Holy Names of the Lord [10]. A person chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa may belong to the lowest family but is situated on the highest platform of self-realization. Constant chanting and attentive hearing of the transcendental vibration Hare Kṛṣṇa is the only process [11].

Devotees of the Lord, who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, offer food to Kṛṣṇa and then eat. This process nourishes the body spiritually. By such action not only past sinful reactions in the body are vanquished, but the body becomes immunized to all contaminations of material nature. Therefore, a person who eats only food offered to Kṛṣṇa can counteract all reactions of material infections, which are impediments to the progress of self-realization [12].

The highest pleasure in terms of matter is sex pleasure. The whole world is moving under its spell. The materialist cannot work without this motivation but a person engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can work with a great vigor without sex pleasure which he avoids. That is the test in spiritual realization. It is said that, “spiritual realization and sex pleasure go ill together” [13]. If one wants to make a steady progress on this path, he must try to control the forces of talk, anger, mind, stomach, genitals and tongue [14]. He should be very careful to accept favorable and reject the unfavorable conditions that affect his realization. And in perfect determination, he should not hanker after unnecessary material things that entangle him by feelings of possessiveness [15].

Simply book knowledge and mental speculation cannot help one to become self-realized. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, quality, and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him (sevonmukhe he jihvādaṁ svayam sphuraty adah)[16]. Self-realization actually comes by “bringing Kṛṣṇa consciousness into action”.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead declares that one who does not accept proper treatment to detach from material engagement can hardly achieve success in self-realization [17]. In this pursuit, one has to follow rules and regulations to control mind and senses and to concentrate the mind on the

self. All these procedures are very difficult, bitter like poison, but if one is successful in following the regulations and comes to the transcendental position, he may begin to drink the nectar, and enjoys the life [18].

Compiled by-

An insignificant dāsa-dāsānudāsa of Srila Prabhupada.

#### References-

1. Teachings of Lord Kapila The son of Devahuti- Pg 122.
2. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport -18.39.
3. Teachings of Lord Kapila The son of Devahuti- Pg 121.
4. Teachings of Lord Kapila The son of Devahuti- Pg 169.
5. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport - 4.42.
6. Srimad Bhagavatam 1.2.13.
7. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport - 5.20.
8. Teachings of Lord Kapila The son of Devahuti- Pg 168.
9. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 4.10.
10. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 6.10.
11. Letter to Jayananda maharaj (29<sup>th</sup> September 1967).
12. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 3.14.
13. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 5.21.
14. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 5.23.
15. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 6.10.
16. Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.234.
17. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 6.30.
18. Bhagavad-gita As it is purport- 18.37

