



Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmi Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

**Nṛsimha-caturdaśī
Special**

Lessons on DEVOTION & COMPASSION

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FROM THE DESK OF
THE FOUNDER ĀCĀRYA

The Supreme Welfare Activity

What is the SUPREME Welfare Activity?

There are different kinds of welfare activities in this material world, but the supreme welfare activity is the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Other welfare activities cannot be effective, for the laws of nature and the results of karma cannot be checked. It is by destiny, or the laws of karma, that one must suffer or enjoy.

Why?

1] Relieves the Suffering of People

The conditioned souls are suffering only for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Performing welfare work relieves the people of the suffering.

2] Kṛṣṇa comes for that purpose only!

The Lord Himself also comes to mitigate the suffering of humanity.

Benefits of Spreading Kṛṣṇa Consciousness:

1] Gives Immense Pleasure to the Lord: If one tries to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, the Lord is automatically very pleased with him. If the Lord is pleased with him, what is left for him to achieve?

2] Quick Recognition by the Lord: Because of the ultimate benefit this bestows upon people in general, the Lord very quickly recognizes such service performed by a devotee.

3] Lord supplies everything to such a devotee: If one has been recognized by the Lord, even if he does not ask the Lord for anything, the Lord, who is within everyone, supplies him whatever he wants. This is also confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā ([teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham](#) [Bg. 9.22]). SB 8.7.44 P

Lessons on DEVOTION & COMPASSION

Hari Bhakti Das



One of the famous stories in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the epic of Prahāda Mahārāja. Generally, people shine in some particular tiny phase of their life only to dwindle later. Prahāda Mahārāja shone effulgently his whole life. Yet there was a particular time in his life when he shone the brightest. That was when this toddler was of five years. Nārada Muni spoke with great enthusiasm the narrative of his own disciple Prahāda to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja in a discussion which spans through the seventh canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Prahāda taught the world how to love Kṛṣṇa and how to love all the parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa. Prahāda's life gives us a glimpse of his devotion and compassion.

Proficiency in Devotion

Prahāda's devotion was matchless. Right from his childhood, he was uninterested in material things and childish play. He was always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. In his ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, he would sometimes dance, sometimes loudly call the Lord in great ecstasy, sometimes he would laugh and sometimes cry. He was always embraced by Kṛṣṇa. For him, the so-called punishments meted out by his harsh father Hiraṇyakaśipu were impetuses for remembering his beloved Lord. *He didn't complain about his difficulties, nor did he question the authority of the Supreme Lord.* Most surprisingly, his love for Kṛṣṇa didn't make him indifferent toward other living entities. Nor did he demean others for their lack of devotion. Prahāda Mahārāja demonstrated how to love the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Devotional service doesn't only mean loving Kṛṣṇa. It also includes surrender

toward the spiritual master. While praying to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, Prahlāda fondly remembered his spiritual master and desired to serve him.

*evam janam nipatitam prabhavāhi-kūpe
kāmābhikāmam anu yaḥ prapatan prasāṅgāt
kṛtvātmasāt surarṣiṇā bhagavan gṛhītaḥ
so 'ham katham nu viṣṛje tava bhṛtya-sevām*

"My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But Your servant Nārada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I leave his service?" SB 7.9.28

A few lessons that we can learn from Prahlāda Mahārāja's exemplary devotion:

- 1] Age is not a bar in understanding and applying the subject matter of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.
- 2] Devotees do not blame the Lord for the difficulties they undergo in their lives. Rather, they convert the difficulties into opportunities for remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- 3] Devotee is internally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, yet externally he or she is aware of the predicaments of people in general. Also, a devotee's absorption in Kṛṣṇa is not an excuse to be indifferent to other devotees and people in general.
- 4] Real devotion is tested when one is put in challenging circumstances. Prahlāda's devotional tests went through the hard knocks of rigorous physical, verbal, mental and emotional challenges. Prahlāda was tortured physically, he was chastised and humiliated verbally, he was subjected to mental and emotional anguish by his so-called teachers and father. Prahlāda surpassed them all by his innocent faith and deep-rooted determination in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.
- 5] Love is expressed towards superiors through surrender. Prahlāda was surrendered to his spiritual master and his well-wishers. When asked by his friends whom he got the knowledge from, he quickly remembered his guru Nārada Muni. He was absorbed in always carrying out the will of his spiritual master.

The Magnitude of Compassion

Along with being proficient in devotion, Prahlāda had extra-ordinary compassion. One of the most precious ornament of a devotee is the quality of compassion. Compassion is an integral part of bhakti. When one loves Kṛṣṇa, it is called prema. When that love for Kṛṣṇa is exhibited for His part and parcel living entities, it is known as daya, or karuna. This quality of karuna is selfless, without any ulterior motives and with a pure desire to serve. It is neither intermittent, nor does it wane with the disobedience or degradation of the object of compassion. Prahlāda's compassion extended to all kinds of people. Prahlāda was compassionate to his class friends who were all sons of demons. He explained to them the futility of material life, including the calculation of how one's life gets wasted without being able to serve Kṛṣṇa. He emphasized on their minds the need and importance of practicing bhakti right from the very beginning of their lives. He even engaged them in chanting the Holy Names of the Lord.

If anyone in the world loved Hiraṇyakaśipu, it was Prahlāda. Prahlāda repeatedly encouraged his father to take to the devotional service of the Lord. His father was a tough nut to crack. He only got increasingly agitated every time Prahlāda tried to reveal his heart. At the culmination of Hiraṇyakaśipu's terror, Nṛsimhadeva appeared. He killed Hiraṇyakaśipu and all the rakshasas. When asked for benediction, Prahlāda simply requested the Lord to deliver his demoniac father. Nṛsimhadeva was pleased by Prahlāda's generosity. The same person whose only business in life was to torture and kill Prahlāda, what was Prahlāda praying for him? Being pleased, Nṛsimhadeva blessed Prahlāda saying not to speak of his father, his twenty-one generations had already been delivered by Prahlāda's birth in that dynasty.

Was Prahlāda compassionate only toward his friends and his father? Absolutely not. He was concerned for all those who were trying to falsely enjoy this material world. He explained his decision to Lord Nṛsimhadeva.

*naivodvije para duratyaya-vaitaraṇyās
tvad-vīrya-gāyana-mahāmṛta-magna-cittah
śoce tato vimukha-cetasa indriyārtha-
māyā-sukhāya bharam udvahato vimūdhān*

"O best of the great personalities, I am not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever I stay I am fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. My concern is only for the fools and rascals who are making elaborate plans for material happiness and maintaining their families, societies and countries. I am simply concerned with love for them." (SB 7.9.43) Prahlāda was ready to wait and suffer for those people in return of their deliverance. He exhibited such great compassion for all the suffering souls in this world.



Prahlāda's Compassion reveals to us the finer intricate aspects of devotional service:

1] Prahlāda didn't love only those whom he saw or those who were connected to him in some way. He loved all the living entities. Compassion is not just a feeling that develops in the mind by seeing someone, it is a state of consciousness. It resides constantly in the devotee's heart.

2] Prahlāda had compassion for his friends who were his equals, his father who was by age superior to him, and towards people who were lower than him as regards to spiritual status. Compassion means to be well-wishers of everyone.

3] One aspect of compassion is prayer which Prahlāda Maharaj thoroughly excelled in. He prayed for all the living entities in the entire universe, and he also taught us what to pray for. By the grace of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Śrīla Prabhupāda, we also have access to the prayers of Prahlāda Mahārāja and we can have a glimpse of his elevated devotional mood. We also have a chance to pray in the footsteps of Prahlāda and continue his legacy.

4] Compassion doesn't mean simply praying, rather one actively pursues and makes sacrifices for suffering souls. Prahlāda was ready to give up everything to make people happy.

5] Only a compassionate person can forgive and forget. Prahlāda forgot all the wrong done to him. He not only forgave, rather he prayed for the deliverance of one who tortured him the most.

Prahlāda's example and his teachings are foundational for one's progressive march in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. If we follow in the footsteps of Prahlāda's teachings, we too can aspire to become accomplished in devotion and compassion by Prahlāda's grace. The result of growth in devotion is a proportionate increase in compassion. These two qualities are inseparable from each other. Although a compassionate person may internally suffer seeing the plight of unfortunate living entities, because this quality is so dear to Kṛṣṇa and because it is such an integral part of bhakti, this suffering is the greatest source of pleasure for the devotee in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. This is the inconceivable potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

VERSE OF THE MONTH



False Remedies & The Only Real Remedy

SB 7.9.17

*yasmāt priyāpriya-viyoga-sayoga-janma-
śokāgninā sakala-yoniṣu dahyamānaḥ
duḥkhaṣadham tad api duḥkham atad-dhiyāham
bhūman bhramāmi vada me tava dāsya-yogam*

O great one, O Supreme Lord, because of contact with displeasing circumstances and separation from pleasing circumstances, one is placed in a most regrettable position, on heavenly or hellish planets, as if burning in a fire of lamentation. Although there are many remedies by which to get out of miserable life, any such remedies in the material world are more miserable than the miseries themselves. Therefore I think that the only remedy is to engage in Your service. Kindly instruct me in such service. (Prahāda Mahārāja to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva)

THEMATIC STUDY

Prayers of residents of Hari-varṣa to Lord Nṛsimhadeva

A Prayer to Vanquish Fear and Ignorance

*om namo bhagavate narasimhāya
namas tejas-tejase
āvīr-āvīrbhava vajra-nakha vajra-
damṣṭra*

*karmāśayān randhaya randhaya
tamo grasa grasa om svāhā;
abhayam abhayam ātmani bhūyīṣṭhā om
kṣraum*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Nṛsimhadeva, the source of all power. O my Lord who possess nails and teeth just like thunderbolts, kindly vanquish our demonlike desires for fruitive activity in this material world. Please appear in our hearts and drive away our ignorance so that by Your mercy we may become fearless in the struggle for existence in this material world. SB 5.18.8

A Prayer for having the Right Attachments

My dear Lord, we pray that we may never feel attraction for the prison of family life, consisting of home, wife, children, friends, bank balance, relatives and so on. If we do have some attachment, let it be for devotees, whose only dear friend is Kṛṣṇa. SB 5.18.10



A Prayer of Utmost Compassion

*svasty astu viśvasya khalah prasīdatām
dhyāyantu bhūtāni śivam mitho dhiyā
manaś ca bhadraṁ bhajatād adhokṣaje
āveśyatām no matir apy ahaituki*

May there be good fortune throughout the universe, and may all envious persons be pacified. May all living entities become calm by practicing bhakti-yoga, for by accepting devotional service they will think of each other's welfare. SB 5.18.9

Only Devotees can Possess Good Qualities

All the demigods and their exalted qualities become manifest in the body of one who has developed unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. On the other hand, a person devoid of devotional service and engaged in material activities has no good qualities. He is driven by his own mental speculations and engaged in the service of the Lord's external energy. SB 5.18.12

ANALOGY ARENA



My dear Lord, You alone create the universes. O Personality of Godhead, desiring to create these universes, You create them, maintain them and again wind them up by Your own energies, which are under the control of Your second energy, called yogamāyā, just as a spider creates a cobweb by its own energy and again winds it up. SB 3.21.19 T

The Lord is always present in some universe, just as the sun is present in either the Eastern or the Western Hemisphere. The sun is always present either in India or in America. SB 3.2.7 P



Just as there are different stages in the growth of a flower—the bud stage, the blooming stage and the full-fledged, grown-up stage of aroma and beauty—similarly, there are 8,400,000 species of bodies in gradual evolution, and there is systematic progress from the lower species of life to the higher. SB 3.31.19 P



Even the Supreme Lord begs Forgiveness

When Jaya and Vijaya apparently offended the four Kumāras by not letting them enter Vaikuṅṭha, the four Kumāras cursed Jaya and Vijaya. Lord Viṣṇu Himself appeared on the scene to beg forgiveness for His servants' offenses. The Lord says, "To Me, the brāhmaṇa is the highest and most beloved personality. The disrespect shown by My attendants has actually been displayed by Me because the doormen are My servitors. I take this to be an offense by Myself; therefore I seek your forgiveness for the incident that has arisen." SB 3.16.4

BHĀGAVATA DARŚANA



Jewels of
Vaiṣṇava Character



JEWEL EIGHTEEN FORGIVENESS

Part-1: Seeking Forgiveness



Devotees begging Forgiveness for their Mistakes

A devotee not only forgives, he also seeks Forgiveness

1] Yamarāja asking forgiveness from the Supreme Lord – After his messengers the yamadutas wrongly tried to capture Ajāmila, Yamarāja sought forgiveness from the Supreme Lord.

2] Brahma and other demigods asking forgiveness from Siva – In Dakṣa yajna, Sati goes and sees that her husband is being disrespected by her father. She wishes to give up connection with her father by burning herself and ending her life. Siva gets angry at the death of Sati, creates a huge fierce personality to kill Dakṣa. After killing of Dakṣa, demigods go and plead Siva who forgives Dakṣa and grants him a goat's body.

3] Indra begging the Supreme Lord – Indra offended Kṛṣṇa and the Vrajavāsīs by continuously showering rains on Vṛndāvana for seven full days. When all his attempts failed, he came to his senses and realised his folly. Along with surabhi cow, Indra begged pardon for his great folly. SB 10.27.8 mentions,

sa tvam mamaśvarya-mada-plutasya
kṛtāgasas te 'viduṣaḥ prabhāvam
kṣantum prabho 'tārhasi mūḍha-cetaso
maivam punar bhūn matir īśa me 'satī

Engrossed in pride over my ruling power, ignorant of Your majesty, I offended You. O Lord, may You forgive me. My intelligence was bewildered, but let my consciousness never again be so impure.

Bhagavad Gita

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NOMENCLATURE

SB: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
CC: Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
BG: Bhagavad-gītā
BS: Brahma-saṁhitā
1.1.1: Canto 1, Chapter 1, Verse 1
1.1.1 P: From Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to SB 1.1.1

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