

The Attitude Of A Sadhu

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON SRIMAD-BHAGAVATAM, CANTO 3, CHAPTER 1, QUESTIONS BY VIDURA, TEXT 21, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI ON 3 APRIL 2008 IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA.



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Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
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Srimad Bhagavatam, third Canto, chapter one, text twenty one.

tatratha susrava suhrid-vinashtim
vanam yatha venuja-vahni-samsrayam
samspardhaya dagdham athanusocan
sarasvatim pratyag iyaya tushnim

Synonyms:

tatra — there; atha — thereafter; susrava — heard; suhrit — kinsmen; vinashtim — all dead; vanam — forest; yatha — as much as; venuja-vahni — fire due to the bamboos; samsrayam — friction with one another; samspardhaya — by violent passion; dagdham — burnt; atha — thus; anusocan — thinking; sarasvatim — the River Sarasvati; pratyak — westward; iyaya — went; tushnim — silently.

Translation:

At the place of pilgrimage at Prabhasa, it came to his knowledge that all his relatives had died

due to violent passion, just as an entire forest burns due to fire produced by the friction of bamboos. After this he proceeded west, where the River Sarasvati flows.

Purport:

Both the Kauravas and the Yadavas were relatives of Vidura, and Vidura heard of their extinction due to fratricidal war. The comparison of the friction of forest bamboos to that of passionate human societies is appropriate. The whole world is compared to a forest. At any moment there may be a flare-up of fire in the forest due to friction. No one goes to the forest to set it on fire, but due only to friction between bamboos, fire takes place and burns an entire forest. Similarly, in the greater forest of worldly transaction, the fire of war takes place because of the violent passion of the conditioned souls illusioned by the external energy. Such a worldly fire can be extinguished only by the water of the mercy cloud of saints, just as a forest fire can be extinguished only by rains falling from a cloud.

[End of Purport]

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At the place of pilgrimage at Prabhasa, it came to his knowledge that all his relatives had died due to violent passion, just as an entire forest burns due to fire produced by the friction of bamboos. After this he proceeded west, where the River Sarasvati flows.

Vidura's pilgrimage is being described. The battle of Kurukshetra is now over and probably many years also went by because the battle was practically over when Vidura left home. When Vidura left home the Kurukshetra war began in two days, and in eighteen days the war was over. But Vidura just kept on travelling. He did not have any concern for what happened, and actually that's what happens when a saintly personality leaves home. He doesn't look back. Generally when one leaves home for spiritual purpose, for spiritual life, he just keeps on traveling from one place of pilgrimage to another. Those places of pilgrimage are very exciting, very interesting because those are the places where saintly people reside and when one takes to spiritual life his natural tendency is to become completely absorbed in spiritual life.

Those days, unlike today, there were no mobile phones that from every few hours one could contact home and find out what's happening. The spiritual life has changed considerably since that time. Those days when one left home, he just left home. But now it's different. Those days when one left home that would mean actually that either he became a brahmachari, or generally, when one left home that would mean that he became a sannyasi. Like Caitanya Mahaprabhu left home and the purpose of His leaving home was to take sannyasa. His elder brother Visvarupa left home and took sannyasa. In this way they would leave home and cut off all their links with this material nature. And they would travel from one place of pilgrimage to another. Like Nityananda prabhu, He left home with one sannyasi. He came and took Him away. He was only about twelve years old and with the sannyasi Nityananda prabhu was traveling to different places of pilgrimage. That is how Nityananda prabhu knew all these places when Caitanya Mahaprabhu was going to Jagannatha Puri. He travelled from Shantipura to Jagannatha Puri. They went, Nityananda prabhu knew all these places. And Nityananda prabhu told them the different stories. Like, he told them about Sakshi Gopala story, how Gopala gave Sakshi. Because Nityananda prabhu visited those places and He

knew about those places, the pastimes of the Lord in those places, the pastimes of the Deities of those places.

So one would leave home and cut off all his attachment and keep traveling. And generally, after some time they would take sannyasa when they would come across a proper sannyasa guru and no one would ever meet them. Those days communication was very negligible, but now the world has changed. Not only four, five hundred years, in last forty five, fifty years things have changed so much. The communication has changed so much. I remember, even in the eighties, early eighties especially, to get a connection from one Inc city, Calcutta, to get a line in Calcutta was difficult, the telephone line. Often you would get the thing, that sound which indicated that the telephone is dead. I remember, once in Calcutta they took out a procession. They made a big telephone out of paper and bamboo probably. They made a big telephone and they carried the telephone like one carries a dead body. On a bamboo cot they carried the telephone and it said, 'The Telephone Is Dead.' [Laughter] Those days I was staying a little away, in eighty two I was staying a little away from Calcutta temple, about eight, nine kilometers away on the outskirts of the city in a garden house. And sometimes when I would call it was so difficult to get through to Calcutta temple, and from Mayapura to call Calcutta was another ordeal. There was something called 'fixed time call.' The fixed time call, like you book the call beforehand so there was a possibility of getting the call because it was at a fixed time. At six o'clock we used to call and often we had to wake up the operator to tell them that we had a fixed time call.

So that is how difficult communication used to be even twenty five, twenty six years back. But now, what to speak of calling in Calcutta, calling from Mayapura to Calcutta, calling from one city to another city of India, we can call anywhere. Even while we are driving we can call any part of the world. So communication has become so easy. And along with that, the life changed. And along with that, the spiritual life also changed. It would be so impractical to actually maintain the old style in today's world. One can do that. If one wants to do no one can stop him. Therefore, we can see five hundred years back Caitanya Mahaprabhu revolutionized the spiritual life. Prior to that it was just one would completely cut himself off and go away. Like Vidura. When he went away he had nothing to do with this family, society. But he got the message: the battle destroyed everybody; Yudhisthira Maharaja became the ruler of the entire earth planet and so forth. And he questioned, "Oh, how are these different members? What happened to them?" Naturally he felt sad that so many relatives died but at the same time Vidura knew that it would happen. He warned Duryodhana, he warned Dhrtarashtra that, "Look, if you don't stop this war, this is what's going to happen." And it was so clear. Vyasadeva predicted, "If you don't make peace then the whole family, the whole dynasty will be destroyed."

As I was mentioning yesterday, Maitreya Rishi actually cursed Duryodhana but Duryodhana did not listen to the instruction of Maitreya. Maitreya said, "You will die in that battle. All your accomplices, all your family, all your friends, all will die. You are thinking that you are going to win the war? No chance! If you disregard my words you will die." He cursed him. But just as an evil person doesn't want to take good advice, Duryodhana did not want to take good advice of all these saintly personalities.

And those days going to pilgrimage was different. People used to be in a particular mental frame to do that. Like Vidura, he became disgusted with family life. He left. There are so many personalities; we find that when they leave home they get completely disgusted. Often men would leave home when the wife would die or they would get some shock. Like

Gaurakishora Dasa Babaji Maharaja. He was a householder and he left home. When his wife died he left home. He was in East Bengal; from there he just went to Vrindavana. Or some people would become so keen to know about the spiritual goal that they would become disappointed, they would become aware of the futility of the materialistic way of life and then they would go away. Like Vishvarupa. Sacimata became upset with Advaitacarya. She thought that, "This acharya, my son was associating too much with him and as a result of that he became disgusted with the materialistic way of life, and when they were trying to force him to get married, he just left home."

But in today's world spiritual life has become different. The sadhus have to give advice. The people won't go to the places of pilgrimage to seek for the association of the sadhus. Therefore the sadhus have to come to the cities and give people the right advice. And along with the right advice they also must give them the practical understanding, the practical way to deal with life. They must give them proper spiritual guidance. Nowadays often this 'sadhu sanmela' has become like a business. People make an agreement. Like, I remember, in the early days when I was young, they used to make arrangements with movie stars: you come to our program; we will give so much money. And then they will sell tickets and make profit. And this is how they would organize programs or musical performances. Like, I remember, when I was young there used to be a very famous musical performance in our neighborhood and all the big, big musicians used to come there, the Indian classical musicians, vocalists, sitarists like Ravi Shankar, Vilayat Khan, Amir Khan, Gangubhai Hangal, Hirabhai Barodekar, so they were all famous singers, Badegulamali Khan. They were all big, famous singers and musicians. They would come and there would be three day, three night long program. Those who would organize the program they would make a lot of money, profit. [Laughs] This was their business. They would have one show in a year and the rest of the year they wouldn't do anything. [Laughter]

And nowadays the same thing is happening with the spiritual leaders. They invite, "Oh, we will pay you ten lacs rupees." Or they will say, "No, why ten lac, give me fifteen lacs otherwise I will go." The sadhus are making agreements, and they will say, "Okay, fine." They make calculation: each person paying hundred rupees, twenty thousand people will come, okay, so we will make twenty lacs. Then what happens, it becomes another 'tamasha.' [Meaning: a spectacle] They come, give lectures, a lot of people come, and then they go away. Does their spiritual life improve? No! They continue to eat meat. They continue to drink alcohol. They continue to lead immoral life. The influence of the sadhus should revolutionize the life. If that doesn't happen then there is no use. And the real sadhu will not waste his time. "If you don't want to change your life, don't waste my time," that should be the attitude of a sadhu. "If you want to come to me, your life style must change. You must stop meat eating, you must stop illicit sex, you must stop gambling, you must stop intoxication. If you don't, then don't come to me. Don't waste my time." And a sadhu doesn't care for anybody's money: "You keep your money in your bank. If you can't use it in Krishna's service, then don't waste my time. If you really want to fulfill the human form of life learn to sacrifice everything to Krishna. You give up your bad habits, you give up whatever you have to Krishna's service, and you offer yourself to Krishna's service." Otherwise it is just a matter of socializing.

A sadhu's business is like a doctor's business: a doctor cures the body; a sadhu cures the soul, the disease of the soul. If you don't recognize that you have a disease, just like a person who doesn't think he isn't diseased doesn't go to a doctor or doesn't realize the importance of going to a doctor, when he realizes that he has a disease, "Oh, I have got cancer, so let me go

to a doctor”, he goes and then he is prepared to offer everything to a doctor. “Please, cure me. Please cure me.” Because a doctor knows how to cure somebody. That’s why he is a doctor. Similarly, a sadhu knows how to cure the soul. Just as the body suffers from a disease, the soul is suffering from a disease. Everybody’s soul is suffering from a disease here. Every soul is suffering from a disease. Those who realize that they’re fortunate. Those who think that everything is alright; they will not recognize the importance of going to a sadhu. Rather, they will think that, “What’s the point in going to a sadhu? I am fine. I am more successful. I am such a successful person. Why do I need anybody to cure me?”

So the first sign of intelligence is to realize that we are suffering from a disease. That disease is the disease of material attachment. The attachment should be there but the attachment should be spiritual. When we become materially attached we lose out on the spiritual attachment. And why is it a disease? What is the symptom of a disease? What is a disease? A disease causes suffering. Why don’t we want disease? Because it causes suffering. Take any disease; cancer, cholera, typhoid, jaundice, flue. What is the outcome of the disease? Why don’t we want disease? Because it causes suffering. Now, in a higher sense the soul’s attachment to matter causes him suffering, an intense suffering, millions time more acute than cancer or any most painful disease. But, unfortunately, along with this disease comes madness, and a madman cannot understand that he is suffering. A madman loses his sense of judgment. That’s why he can’t make out that he is suffering. So, although in the material nature, due to the material attachment people are suffering, they don’t realize that they are suffering. They think, “May be there will be enjoyment tomorrow.” And they just run after the prospect of enjoyment. And what is the cure for the disease? The cure for the disease is attachment, spiritual attachment: attachment to Krishna. Material attachment means attachment of things related to the body or senses, and spiritual attachment is attachment to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And when we cure the disease and become properly situated in our spiritual relationship then all the sufferings disappear and we’ll become joyful. Bhava-maha-davagni-nirvapanam. [Sri Siksastakam, verse 1] The forest fire of material existence becomes extinguished, or tapa-trayonmulanam [SB 1.1.2], the threefold miseries of this material nature becomes uprooted.

So, it is a simple cure. It’s a very simple cure. We simply have to apply the right medicine. The disease may be strong but if the doctor is qualified then he can cure the disease by giving the right medicine. The doctor’s business is to give the right medicine and when he gives the right medicine the disease gets cured. The doctor is not a magician. The doctor is a person who knows the symptom of the disease and the cure for the disease. So if you come across the right doctor the disease will be cured. So the spiritual personalities are like the doctors who cure the spirit soul. And when one is cured, who benefits? Does the doctor benefit? Nowadays doctors benefit. [Laughter] They get a big, fat payment. But that’s another thing in the Vedic culture: the doctors did not take money. This was service. A doctor who could cure a patient did not take any money. Similarly, a sadhu will not take money for curing the disease. Rather he will say, “Okay, the payment is that you surrender yourself to Krishna. That’s the only payment.” A sadhu doesn’t care for any other payment. The only payment, that if you really want to pay a payment: just surrender to Krishna. And if you want to engage yourself, then engage everything that you have in service of Krishna. If a patient gives money then his attitude is, “Okay, you do not know how to use that money in Krishna’s service, so I’ll use it in Krishna’s service.”

Everything must be used in Krishna’s service. That’s how the whole diseased condition of this material nature will be cured. If you want to make a payment, make the payment with

your soul, not with anything else. Offer yourself to Krishna. Ready to do that? Ready to make the payment? How many of you are ready to make that payment? [Laughs] Thank you. Lila Purushottama, you are not going to make the payment? [Devotee: I did, Maharaja]

You did, okay. And by doing that, what do you gain? I was telling the other day. Who remembers what I've said the other day? When you make the payment of offering yourself to Krishna then what do you get? [Devotee: Krishna will offer Himself] Right. You offer yourself to Krishna and in exchange you will get Krishna. Isn't it a wonderful condition? A king makes a condition to a beggar: you give everything that you have and I'll give everything to you that I have. [Laughs] What does a beggar have? A beggar probably only has the begging bowl! [Laughter] And that also has a hole in it. Actually, a beggar is attached, even to the begging bowl. That's the material nature. He will think, "If I give away the begging bowl then how will I beg?" So he doesn't want to offer even the begging bowl! The king has come and tells him that, "Give me what you have." And the beggar thinks that, "If I give him the begging bowl then how will I beg? So better I keep it for myself." And in this way he loses the opportunity. But if the beggar is intelligent he will know, "He is a king! If I give him what I have, that's about all I have, a broken begging bowl, and he has the entire kingdom, so by offering this begging bowl I will get the entire kingdom." So that is the condition that Krishna has made with us: you give Me what you have, I'll give you what I have. Is it a good business to offer everything to Krishna? [Laughs] Parashurama, you are a businessman, it's a good business? And Vyasaji, is it legally approved? [Laughter]

Thank you! Hare Krishna.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Yeah, very good. It takes a businessman to understand that. [Laughter]

Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol!

Does anybody have any question?

Devotee: Guru Maharaja, you said how the attitude of a sadhu is that if you are not serious, if you want to take spiritual life seriously then take it otherwise don't waste my time. Also you gave the example of a rotten apple when somebody is not serious about spiritual life then it is just a waste of time. So in that case, but also we see the other side of it that a very advanced sadhu never gives up on anyone. Like Srila Prabhupada never gave up on anyone. So in spite of one's, no matter how much difficulties one has Prabhupada never gave up. So how do we understand this relation with him?

BCS: Is it that Prabhupada never gave up? Prabhupada told somebody, "If you want to go to hell you have all my blessings." [Laughter] You know, like any agreement it is a two way contract. Prabhupada gives the example. The boatman takes you in a boat to take you across the river but in the middle of the river you jump out of the boat, then the boatman may save you or may not save you. The condition is that if you want to go to the other side of the river, sit on the boat. Like, if in order to save that man if the rest of the boat passengers' life is going to be in danger the boatman will not save him. Another condition is that if somebody says, "No, I want to go across the river but I don't want to get into the boat", then the boatman will say, "Okay, you stay there wherever you are." He isn't going out of his way in pulling his hand, "Come to the boat! No, you have to come!" In spiritual life the ultimate consideration is: it's your own choice. Prabhupada used to say that: "The choice is yours. The choice is yours. You will have to decide." And often we find, people just come to Krishna consciousness or join ISKCON without really understanding why they are coming. They join

as a fashion. “Oh, so many people are joining. Let me also join.” So many times we find people joining because they think that it will be a scope to go to America. Well, if they stay in the association of sadhus their mentality may change. But the thing is, everybody has to ultimately understand the purpose of joining ISKCON is not to go to America.

Yes, Aniruddha?

Devotee: Guru Maharaja, we are wearing the [inaudible] and we are seeing in the practical, still why are we forgetting?

BCS: Who is forgetting? [Laughter] So why are you asking me? [Laughter]

Devotee: One comment. I heard he said that Prabhupada never rejected anybody but I heard one lecture, one disciple [inaudible]

Any other question? Okay, thank you. Hare Krishna! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol!