

Human Life Begins With Spiritual Culture

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON SRIMAD-BHAGAVATAM, CANTO 3, CHAPTER 1, QUESTIONS BY VIDURA, TEXT 23, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI ON 4 APRIL 2008 IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA.



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Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
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Srimad Bhagavatam, third Canto, chapter one 'Questions By Vidura', text three.

anyani ceha dvija-deva-devaih
kritani nanayatanani vishnoh
pratyanga-mukhyankita-mandirani
yad-darsanat krishnam anusmaranti

Synonyms:

anyani — others; ca — also; iha — here; dvija-deva — by the great sages; devaih — and the demigods; kritani — established by; nana — various; ayatanani — various forms; vishnoh — of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; prati — each and every; anga — part; mukhya — the chief; ankita — marked; mandirani — temples; yat — which; darsanat — by seeing from a distance; krishnam — the original Personality of Godhead; anusmaranti — constantly remembers.

Translation:

There were also many other temples of various forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Vishnu, established by great sages and demigods. These temples were marked with the chief emblems of the Lord, and they reminded one always of the original Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna.

Purport:

Human society is divided into four social orders of life and four spiritual divisions, applying to each and every individual person. This system is called varnasrama-dharma and has already been discussed in many places in this great literature. The sages, or persons who completely devoted themselves to the spiritual upliftment of the entire human society, were known as dvija-deva, the best amongst the twice-born. The denizens of superior planets, from the moon planet and upwards, were known as devas. Both the dvija-devas and the devas always establish temples of Lord Vishnu in His various forms, such as Govinda, Madhusudana, Nrisimha, Madhava, Kesava, Narayana, Padmanabha, Partha-sarathi and many others. The Lord expands Himself in innumerable forms, but all of them are non-different from one another. Lord Vishnu has four hands, and each hand holds a particular item — either a conchshell, wheel, club or lotus flower. Of these four emblems, the cakra, or wheel, is the chief. Lord Krishna, being the original Vishnu form, has only one emblem, namely the wheel, and therefore He is sometimes called the Cakri. The Lord's cakra is the symbol of the power by which the Lord controls the whole manifestation. The tops of Vishnu temples are marked with the symbol of the wheel so that people may have the chance to see the symbol from a very long distance and at once remember Lord Krishna. The purpose of building very high temples is to give people a chance to see them from a distant place. This system is carried on in India whenever a new temple is constructed, and it appears that it is coming down from a time before recorded history. The foolish propaganda by atheists that temples were constructed only in later days is refuted here because Vidura visited these temples at least five thousand years ago, and the temples of Vishnu were in existence long, long before Vidura visited them. The great sages and demigods never established statues of men or demigods, but they established temples of Vishnu for the benefit of common men, to raise them to the platform of God consciousness.

[End of Purport]

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There were also many other temples of various forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Vishnu, established by great sages and demigods. These temples were marked with the chief emblems of the Lord, and they reminded one always of the original Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna.

So Vidura's pilgrimage is being described. Vidura left the palace of the Kuru dynasty and he was travelling. He left home and he was travelling to places of pilgrimage. So here we can see, what is the purpose of going out on pilgrimage? The purpose of going out on pilgrimage is to visit the places where the temples of the Lord are located. When one visits those temples of the Lord one is 'yad-darsanat krishnam anusmaranti': when one sees Krishna in the temple, Krishna's form, then krishnam anusmaranti, one remembers Krishna, one's Krishna consciousness is awakened. And it has been pointed out that those temples have been established by dvija-devas and devas. There are two categories: dvija-deva, dvija means twice

born and deva, the demigod among the twice born, AND the demigods. Those who are twice born they are known as the brahmanas, and among the brahmanas he becomes even more exalted when he becomes a Vaishnava or he becomes a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

And in this respect Prabhupada reminded, Prabhupada pointed out that it is important for the civilized human being to become situated in the varnashrama structure. The varnashrama structure is the structure that divides the human society in four classes of people: brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya and sudra. These are the general divisions. Those who are in the mode of goodness they are brahmanas. Those who are in the mixed mode of goodness and passion they are kshatriyas. I am sorry, those who are in mode of passion they are kshatriyas. There can also be some mixture because no mode in this material nature is pure. In the material nature none of these three modes are pure. There is always some mixture. No one is completely in the mode of goodness. He has some tinge of passion and ignorance when he is in the material nature. When one is in the pure mode of goodness then he is not in the material nature anymore. He is in the spiritual nature. Only when one transcends the material nature and comes to the spiritual platform, spiritual nature, then only he becomes situated in pure goodness. Otherwise there is no pure goodness in this material nature. It is only mixed goodness, mishra sattva, not suddha sattva or visuddha satva.

Now, the mode of passion is also mixed. Some may be predominantly dominated by the mode of passion but there will be some tinge of the mode of goodness or the mode of ignorance. And then there are some, those who are very prominently in the mixed mode of passion and ignorance. They are the vaishyas and those who are in ignorance they're sudras. But then again, in the material nature we don't find pure ignorance also. The pure ignorance is again andhanta mishra, one who is completely in the mode of ignorance he is unconscious. So when one is conscious, generally they are affected by these three modes and the influence of some mode is more prominent than the other modes, and accordingly his varna is decided. And accordingly the society has been divided into four classes: brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya and sudra.

And unfortunately that understanding is completely gone. In India this varnashrama system had become degenerated into caste system. Originally this varnashrama is decided according to one's modes. Guna-karma-vibhagasah. [Bg 4.13] But in India, what has become now? It has become a caste system. That is, if somebody is born in a brahmana family then he is considered to be a brahmana. Somebody is born in a kshatriya family, he is considered to be a kshatriya. He doesn't have any quality of a kshatriya, he looks like a skeleton. [laughter] And he is more coward than the worst coward in the world but he says, "I am a kshatriya." But when one is affected by the modes then his nature has naturally developed. What is a kshatriya? A kshatriya's stature will be like that. He'll be tall. He'll be very big. His shoulder will be very broad. His stomach will be lean, thin waist, broad chest. And his movement will be regal, and his nature will be like a lion, because among the animals lion is the animal that is affected by the mode of passion. And the quality will be, he is not afraid of death. He would love to fight and he would be very noble. And he will not be afraid of death. Rather, he will consider that, "If I die in a fight that's the ultimate goal of my life. That's the ultimate perfection of my existence." The kshatriya's family would be very proud, "Yes, my father died in the battlefield." A kshatriya would hate to die on bed in ripe, old age. And if he would die in a bed then he would die in a bed of arrows, like Bhishma. That is a kshatriya. Not only his physical features but his mentality also will be depicting the influence of the mode.

Like the animals, we notice, there are some animals those who are affected by the mode of goodness. Who are those animals that are affected by the mode of goodness? [audience: cows] The cow, and look at the nature of a cow. Do you find a cow jumping around? No, the cow is very peaceful. And it hardly takes anything and it benefits everybody. That's the brahmana. That's the person in the mode of goodness. He would not eat anything, I mean he would not take anything. A cow, what does the cow take? It takes only a little grass. And what does the cow give? It gives milk, the most valuable food. But then there are other animals, those who are in the mode of passion, and among them the most noticeable, the most well known is the lion. But there are other animals also, those who are in the mode of passion. Another animal in the mode of passion is a horse. And there are some animals, those who are in the mixed mode of passion and ignorance, like a jackal, a wolf. And there are some animals that are in the mode of ignorance, like a dog.

So, now that we see that so many people are becoming so fond of dogs means that they have become in the mode of ignorance. That's an indication. Therefore they appreciate what is in the mode of ignorance. They are fond of the dogs. But we can see what a kshatriya will be fond of. What a kshatriya is fond of generally? He is fond of his horse. He is fond of his horse and he would like to fight with a lion. And the brahmanas keep the cows. They would be fond of the cows. Of course, it is the vaishyas who for the sake of the brahmanas would take care of the cows. That's the natural tendency. When the vaishyas are affected by the mode of goodness then they'll take care of the cows. When the vaishyas are affected by the mode of ignorance, or the sudras, what they will do? Or the candalas who are actually the classic example of the mode of ignorance. Not just the sudras. The sudras have some goodness in them. The candalas, and what is their occupation? Their occupation is to burn dead bodies, a very dirty occupation. From morning till night to burn dead bodies, can you imagine what kind of consciousness they must be in? And they are the ones who would normally keep dogs.

But now we see people living in big houses, dressed up very nicely and going out on a morning walk with a dog. And not only that, what do they do? You know in America and Europe what is the rule? If the dog passes stool then you have to clean it up. And they do that. They carry a bag and they carry a scoop. And when the master passes stool the servant cleans it up. [laughs] So that is what is happening to today's human civilization. It is not a civilization anymore. It is an inhuman civilization. Rather, instead of calling it an inhuman civilization, I would rather say the animalistic culture. The human beings are not really human beings anymore. They are becoming like animals. It may not sound very nice but the thing is, that's the reality. Human beings won't behave like this. Human beings don't behave like this. Human life has an objective: athato brahma-jijnasa. [Vedanta Sutra 1.1.1] The human life begins with the spiritual culture. In the Vedic culture it has been pointed out that one may look like a human being but unless and until this brahma-jijnasa begins, he is not to be considered as a human being. That's why athato brahma-jijnasa; now that you got the human form of life, come to the human standard. Brahma-jijnasa, inquire about the spiritual reality. Who are you? Who am I? That's the beginning. Otherwise they may be riding on big cars, dressed up in a very nice way, living in big houses but what is the standard of their life? The standard of their life is ahara-nidra-bhaya-maithunam ca samanyam etat pasubhir naranam. These are the characteristics of an animal. Let's consider that. What's the goal of an animal life? What does an animal want? The Vedic culture, the Vedic scriptures are very clearly indicating that: ahara-nidra-bhaya-maithun (eating, sleeping, mating, defending). Now just consider what is the goal of human beings of today? Let's take a neutral observation. What's the goal of today's human being? If we ask a man from the road, he may look very

nice, but if we ask him, “Sir, what is the goal of your life? What do you want out of your existence?”, I don’t know whether he will be able to understand or reply, but if we make an observation then what do we find? That man, whatever he is doing is just to eat, just to make arrangements for his food, or the food for his family, ahara, nidra (sleep), make some arrangement. A nice house, but what is the purpose of that nice house? Come and fall asleep. Like most of the people, those who are working, [to a devotee:] Vyasa, how many hours you stay at home?

[In Hindi, translation by the transcriber:] How many hours you stay at home? Eight hours. From what time till what time? [Devotee: I come home in the evening] You come home in the evening, and when you come how many hours do you spend awake and at what time do you go to sleep? At ten. What I mean to say is, what I mean to point out is why people stay at home. [devotee: to eat and sleep] To eat and sleep. [laughter] Not even eating, you can get food most of the time at Govinda’s. [laughs] They come to Govinda’s and when they go home they go to sleep. So they take great effort to build a house and for what? To sleep. So eating, sleeping, ahara, nidra, bhaya, meaning defending yourself. Like, with the money people earn they make a life insurance, so that in case anything happens there is some money to create a sense of security. They will get medical treatment. And if they die the family members will be left with some money. Or thieves may come at night and break in. In some countries they make a really solid security system. They make a very nice arrangement for the security system, otherwise thieves will come and rob everything. In some countries even the police keep such security with them. There is a system for protecting even the police. Like in South Africa, the police there is protected by a security system, not employed by the government but financed by the people themselves. They call it a security agency. The government has the police and the military. The military is not normally used in ordinary circumstances, but there are a lot of security agencies. There the whole area is surrounded by security agencies, from morning till evening, from morning till morning, twenty four hours a day. They guard the area with cars and [unclear]. Why? Fear. To protect themselves from fear. Ahara-nidra-bhaya-maithuna, and the rest of the time maithuna, sex life. [End of Hindi] That is the most important thing for their existence. For today’s world they are thinking that sex life is everything. The question is, is this human form of life? Is this human existence?

Now, let’s look at an animal. Let’s go to a forest and let’s look at a rabbit, or a squirrel. What is a squirrel doing? Running around everywhere. Why? Just in search of a little food. And then when his stomach is full he looks for a place to sleep, to lie down. He goes to his hole, falls asleep. Mister Mickey Mouse. And then he hears some sound. He just jumps up, “What happened?! What happened?!” Is anyone attacking? No. Nothing to fear, okay, falls asleep again. One thing nice about the animals: their sex life is controlled by nature. Only at some time of the year they develop this attraction for sex life, and that is also for procreation. An animal never goes to a nightclub to see a naked dance. But a human being does make this arrangement. Although in one hand human life has the biggest opportunity to transcend the material platform and come to the spiritual platform, the human life also has the biggest temptation. These two things are existing side by side. In one hand there is opportunity to fulfill the human existence but at the same time there is the big temptation, the temptation of sex life. And that’s why in order to make spiritual progress one has to conquer this temptation. And that’s why there is so much importance on celibacy, so much importance on brahmacharya, so much importance on conquering sex desire.

So this is the purpose of human life and the Vedic culture is giving us the direction, the understanding why we must pursue this culture. When we read the Vedic culture that’s what

we understand. When we study the Vedic scriptures that's what we understand. Let's take full advantage of this opportunity. Now that we got this human form of life let's transcend the animal platform. I am not an animal anymore, I am a human being. Let's conquer these animal propensities. Let's overcome these animal propensities because if we don't, then we run the risk of going down to the animal platform again. In spite of getting the human form if we don't take advantage and continue to behave like an animal, then next life what nature will say? Okay, since you are so fond of leading the life of an animal, living like an animal, get an animal body. Get an animal body. Nature is not inert, nature is conscious. Nature is controlling us. Nature is directing us and nature is rewarding us according to our mentality. If your mind is that of an animal you get the body of an animal also. And one will get a body of an animal, a nice, fat body of a pig to behave like a pig, have unlimited sex life, have sex with your mother, sex with your sister. That's the pig. Why people think of pigs to be such a dirty animal? Those who indiscriminately indulge in sex life, what generally they call? I don't know in India what they call, but in the West it is a very common term. What's the expression? [Audience member: you are a pig] You are a pig! Why? Because a pig will have sex with anybody. A pig will have sex with mother, sister, anybody. The pig doesn't have any discrimination. Now, the question is: is this the purpose of human of life? Did you get this human form just to lead the life of an animal? But unfortunately that's what has happened to this world. They all have a very, very sophisticated façade. The front looks very sophisticated, very attractive, but underneath the mentality is that of an animal.

It may sound like why Guru Maharaja is speaking like that, but I am speaking like this for you. At least you all take advantage. Now that you have come to Krishna consciousness take full advantage of it and make your life successful. Don't become allured by the way the world is going; the world is going down! But at least you all have been saved by Srila Prabhupada's teachings. So remain saved, because the danger is there. We are standing on the cliff. You know what is a cliff? A cliff is where the mountain, where there is a sharp fall, that is called a cliff. And if you go out of that, when you are near the cliff there is a possibility of just going down. You take one step there and you'll go down. And we are standing on the edge of a cliff, and Srila Prabhupada's teachings have saved us. At least he gave us the understanding that we are standing on the edge of a cliff. And let's try to save ourselves. Turn around from that civilization. It's not a civilization. I don't know why I am using the expression civilization. It's a dangerous situation, it's not a civilization. Turn around from there and move in the opposite direction, the direction that the Vedas are guiding us. It's not Prabhupada's concoction. Prabhupada has given us the eternal wisdom, the age old wisdom that has saved millions of people since time immemorial. Those who have accepted this path their life has been successful. Their life has been completely fulfilled. And if we do that, then our life also will be successful. So let's take full advantage of that.

Today I was thinking of reading a part of Mahabharata but it is already forty past. So, I'll stop now. If anybody has any question you can ask. Yes?

Devotee: Guru Maharaja, Vrindavana Dhama is an expansion of Goloka Vrindavana Dhama. I want to know what is the expansion of this materialistic body.

BCS: What's that?

Devotee: What is the expansion of this materialistic body?

BCS: Expansion of this materialistic body. Hindi mein bolo. [meaning: Say it in Hindi]
[The following is a Hindi conversation, translation by the transcriber]

Devotee: What is the expansion of this materialistic body?BCS: From whose point of view?
Devotee: Vrindavana Dhama is an expansion of Goloka Vrindavana. Like, if you want to see the US embassy you can go to Delhi and see it. It is an expansion of the US.

BCS: So your question is that if there is an American embassy in Delhi, that is an expansion of America. Right?

Devotee: Yes.

BCS: So this material body made of the five elements, to whom is it related? Is it related to Goloka?

Devotee: No.

BCS: So to whom is it related?

Devotee: That is the question, to whom it is related.

BCS: Then I don't understand what your question is. To whom it is related? Goloka is related to Vrindavana. America is connected to the embassy.

Devotee: Mahakaleshwara is connected to Mahesha Dhama, it is an expansion of Mahesha Dhama.

BCS: Okay.

Devotee: Then what is the expansion of this body?

BCS: The body is connected to your situation in this material world. You are a soul. After falling into this material nature you have achieved this body. And this material body is also of two kinds: one is subtle body and the other is the gross body. The subtle body consists of the mind, intelligence and false ego, and the gross body is made up of the five elements. It is not connected to Goloka.

Devotee: I want to understand by example.

BCS: You want to understand by example. For example, the expansion of Goloka is Vrindavana, and the expansion of Maya is this material world. Because you got entangled into Maya you have gotten this body. And what is the meaning of Maya? In Maya you will think that you will achieve happiness, but instead what are you getting? You are getting distress. But if you use this body in the service of the Lord then this body will be relieved of Maya. If you engage this body in the service of the Lord, then you can transcend to the spiritual platform. We should see it like this: okay, the expansion of Goloka is Vrindavana Dhama. Now consider Vrindavana Dhama and the city of Calcutta. You don't know Calcutta, take the city of Indore. Now, is there any difference between Vrindavana and Indore?

Devotee: A lot.

BCS: A lot. What is the difference between Vrindavana and Indore? In Vrindavana you will find Krishna, and Indore what do you find?

Devotee: Maya.

BCS: Maya. So the expansion of Maya is a city like that. Okay, what is the meaning of Maya? Where there is no Krishna, that's Maya. Similarly, you are a spiritual soul. When you are in the association of the Lord then you're in Vrindavana. When you are in Maya then you will be in Indore. [laughs] Your situation is because of this, because of the state of your mind, Krishna and Maya. When you're in Maya, when you are affected by Maya, then you are in this material world, in Indore. But when you take shelter of the Lord then you will not be in Maya anymore. You will be in Vrindavana. So this is the state of the material body. Through this body we can act in two ways: we can either enjoy ourselves, or try to please the Lord. So

the effort to please the Lord, what is it called? That is called service. And the name of this service is bhakti. When we serve the Lord, when we try to please the Lord, when we perform devotional service to the Lord then we stay in the association of the Lord. The impact of Maya is destroyed and we reside in our spiritual forms in Goloka Vrindavana. Alright?
[End of Hindi conversation]

Devotee: Maharaja, I have two questions. According to Bhagavatam of Prabhupadaji, in third Canto, there are two descriptions of explanation of Varaha avatara, that in Svayambhu kalpa for [inaudible] earth prophecy and in Caksusa kalpa for the killing of Hiranyaksa. [inaudible] BCS: How many kalpas are there? Who remembers? In a day of Brahma there are seventy two kalpas. Seventy one or seventy two. Seventy one. [Translation from Hindi] In a day of Brahma there are a thousand catur yugas. In one such day fourteen Manus appear. And during the reign of each Manu there are seventy one kalpas. Okay?

Devotee: And the second question is that Krishna told us in Bhagavad Gita that ya nisa sarva-bhutanama tasyam jagarti samyami [Bg 2.69] Can you please explain this verse?

BCS: [Translation from Hindi:] Meaning that the state of mind of a sadhu and a material person are completely opposites. Their characters are totally different. That's why it is described that what is night for a sadhu is daytime of the material person, and what is day for the sadhu is night for the materialistic person. Do you understand? For example, the devotees of the Lord, do they want their own happiness? What do the materialistic people desire?

Devotee: The materialists want their own happiness.

BCS: [Translation from Hindi:] They only want their own happiness. The devotees of the Lord don't desire their own happiness. The materialists want their own happiness. The devotees of the Lord just want to serve others and please the Lord, and the materialists just want to please themselves. They are completely opposites.

In a practical sense you can also see, the materialists what do they do? I used to have a friend living abroad. That was before I came to the spiritual path. At night he used to stay up and went from one pub to another, throughout the whole night. And the whole day he slept. He was a student but that was how he lived. And when the bar closed, some close at midnight, some at one o'clock, and some at two o'clock and at four o'clock all the bars closed. In England you have the same kind of system? And they used to call it 'pub hopping', from one pub to another. That was their life style. And the whole day he slept. So this is how they live. And what do the devotees do? He goes to sleep at four o'clock and for us at that time our day begins. His day begins in the evening at nine o'clock and we go to sleep at nine o'clock. So in this way we can see that their mental state is completely different. It's the opposite.

Okay, Hare Krishna! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol!