

The Indicator Of Devotion.

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON SRIMAD-BHAGAVATAM, CANTO 3, CHAPTER 1, QUESTIONS BY VIDURA, TEXT 25, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI ON 6 APRIL 2008 IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA.



Transcription : Her Grace Ranga Radhika Dasi

Editing : Ramananda Raya Dasa

Audio reference: [click here](#)

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya

Srimad Bhagavatam, third Canto, chapter one ‘Questions By Vidura’, text twenty five.
sa vasudevanucaram prasantam
brihaspateh prak tanayam pratitam
alingya gadham pranayena bhadram
svanam apricchad bhagavat-prajanam

Synonyms:

sah — he, Vidura; vasudeva — Lord Krishna; anucaram — constant companion; prasantam — very sober and gentle; brihaspateh — of Brihaspati, the learned spiritual master of the demigods; prak — formerly; tanayam — son or disciple; pratitam — acknowledged; alingya — embracing; gadham — very feelingly; pranayena — in love; bhadram — auspicious; svanam — his own; apricchad — asked; bhagavat — of the Personality of Godhead; prajanam — family.

Translation:

Then, due to his great love and feeling, Vidura embraced him [Uddhava], who was a constant companion of Lord Krishna and formerly a great student of Brihaspati’s. Vidura then asked him for news of the family of Lord Krishna, the Personality of Godhead.

Purport:

Vidura was older than Uddhava, like a father, and therefore when the two met, Uddhava bowed down before Vidura, and Vidura embraced him because Uddhava was younger, like a son. Vidura's brother Pandu was Lord Krishna's uncle, and Uddhava was a cousin to Lord Krishna. According to social custom, therefore, Vidura was to be respected by Uddhava on the level of his father. Uddhava was a great scholar in logic, and he was known to be a son or disciple of Brihaspati, the greatly learned priest and spiritual master of the demigods. Vidura asked Uddhava about the welfare of his relatives, although he already knew that they were no longer in the world. This inquiry appears to be very queer, but Srila Jiva Gosvami states that the news was shocking to Vidura, who therefore inquired again due to great curiosity. Thus his inquiry was psychological and not practical.

[End of Purport]

sa vasudevanucaram prasantam
brihaspateh prak tanayam pratitam
alingya gadham pranayena bhadram
svanam apricchad bhagavat-prajanam

Then, due to his great love and feeling, Vidura embraced him [Uddhava], who was a constant companion of Lord Krishna and formerly a great student of Brihaspati's. Vidura then asked him for news of the family of Lord Krishna, the Personality of Godhead. Vidura, in his travel came near the Yamuna. So we have to understand that he met Uddhava in the region of Mathura or Vrindavana, while Vidura was travelling. It has been described that how he travelled all over, all the holy places and then he came to Western India and he travelled through Saurashtra which is known as Surat now, and Sauvira, Matsya and Kurujangala. This province, Kurujangala, is the western side of Hastinapura. And in this way while travelling he arrived on the bank of the Yamuna where he met Uddhava, a great devotee of Lord Sri Krishna.

In Brihad Bhagavatamrta, when Narada Muni was searching for the greatest devotee, the best of the devotees of the Lord, at some point he concluded that Uddhava was the greatest devotee. His search was a very gradual search. He first met a brahmana who was worshipping the Shaligrama Shila with great love. Narada thought that he was the greatest devotee, but when he approached that brahmana and addressed him as the greatest devotee of the Lord the brahmana felt very embarrassed and he said, "No, no, I am not a great devotee. Actually the greatest devotee of the Lord is the king." And he told where this personality was, the king in South India. He told Narada Muni why the king was the greatest devotee of the Lord and he described him, his qualities, as opposed to his [qualities]. His point was that, "I am a brahmana. My occupation is to worship the Lord, so that's what I am doing. But this king who is actually a ruler, who is so busy but he is so committed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore his devotion is greater than mine. Although he is not supposed to worship the Lord, he is actually meant to do it as an occupation, his occupation is a warrior. He is a ruler, he is an administrator, but he is so devoted that he does everything, he rules his kingdom as a servant of the Lord, knowing that his kingdom belongs to the Lord. And in this way he has completely dedicated himself to the Lord."

So Narada Muni immediately went to the king and when Narada Muni started to, he saw this king was great devotee of the Lord. He had such a beautiful temple of the Lord and with such grandeur he is worshipping the Lord with so much devotion, and he is ruling his kingdom in total Krishna consciousness, making everybody Krishna conscious in his kingdom. But when Narada Muni approached him and identified him as the greatest devotee of the Lord the king felt very, very embarrassed. He said, "Why are you calling me the greatest devotee of the Lord? Who am I? I am just trying to serve the Lord in some insignificant way. And what is

my lifespan? At the most a hundred years. And what is my domain? Just a small, little kingdom. But actually the greatest devotee is Indra, the king of the demigods.” And he started to glorify Indra, why he was the greatest devotee.

So then Narada Muni immediately went to Indra and started to glorify him as the greatest devotee. Then Indra felt very embarrassed, and he said, “No, no, I am not a great devotee. Who am I?” And he started to speak about his defects. So many times he offended the Lord and the Lord chastised him. Like the distress that he caused to the Lord and His devotees when he tried to flood Vrindavana, when the Lord instructed His devotees in Vrindavana to worship Govardhana instead of him. He became so envious. So Indra started to speak about his defects and then he said, “Actually, Lord Brahma is the greatest devotee.”

Immediately Narada Muni went to Brahma and started to glorify. And immediately when Brahma heard this glorification of himself as the greatest devotee Brahma immediately covered his eight ears with his eight hands, and said, “Narada, so many times I told you, don’t speak like that! You think that I am the greatest, and now you are thinking that I am the greatest devotee?” Brahma also started to speak of his defects as a devotee and then he pointed out to Lord Shiva as the greatest devotee. So Narada immediately went to Lord Shiva and started to glorify him as the greatest devotee. And Lord Shiva became very upset. He said, “Narada, what’s happening with you? What are you doing? You are calling ME the greatest devotee? Don’t you know so many times I offended the Lord? I even fought with Him without recognizing His identity. I caused Him so much distress! And I caused Him so much distress by giving all these boons to these demons who actually harass His devotees, and then He has to come Himself and rectify my mistakes by killing those demons, and you are calling me the greatest devotee of the Lord?! Actually the greatest devotees are the residents of Vaikuntha.” And then Parvati started to describe that of all the residents of Vaikuntha Lakshmi is the greatest devotee. So Narada Muni was just about to go to Vaikuntha, then Lord Shiva said, “Look Narada, actually even greater is the devotion of Prahlada Maharaja.” And he started to describe why Prahlada Maharaja is the greatest devotee.

So he immediately went to Sataloka to meet Prahlada Maharaja. When Narada Muni started to glorify Prahlada Maharaja as the greatest devotee then Prahlada Maharaja told him, “Narada Muni, my devotion is like a child’s innocent attachment. That devotion is not really well founded with proper understanding and love.” And in this way Prahlada Maharaja started to point out his failing as a great devotee and he pointed out that, “Actually Hanumana is a great devotee. See the amount of service he rendered to the Lord and how much the Lord loved him.” So immediately Narada Muni went to Kimpurusha Varsha and met Hanumana. And he started to describe him as the greatest devotee, glorify him as the greatest devotee of the Lord. And Hanumana started to cry. He said, “Narada Muni, already my heart is afflicted due to separation from the Lord, and why are you causing even more distress to that afflicted heart by this kind of sarcastic remark? You call me a great devotee of the Lord? If I was a devotee of the Lord then why the Lord rejected me? He is not giving me His darshana. He is away.” In this way Hanumana started to speak about his shortcomings and then he pointed out that, “Actually, the Pandavas are the greatest devotees, and we see the Lord is with the Pandavas all the time.”

And then so Narada Muni went to the Pandavas in Hastinapura and started to glorify them as the greatest devotees. The Pandavas pointed out that no, they were not the greatest devotees. The greatest devotees are the residents of Dwaraka. Yudhisthira Maharaja started to explain why they are the greatest devotees. So Narada Muni then went to Dwaraka. He went to the Sudharma assembly and started to glorify the residents of Dwaraka as the greatest devotees. Then king Ugrasena pointed out that of all the residents of Dwaraka, Uddhava is the greatest devotee. And he started to describe why Uddhava is the greatest devotee; “Uddhava is so

attached, so fond of the Lord that he is always with the Lord. He doesn't know anything but Krishna. His whole life is centered around Krishna. He is with Krishna all the time. Only at night, after Krishna falls asleep, he goes home. And then in the morning, even before Krishna gets up, he comes to the palace in Dwaraka and starts to make arrangements for Krishna to wake up. In this way he is always with Krishna. He doesn't have any other concern for anything. He doesn't have any concern for his family. He doesn't have concern for anything besides Krishna. And that was not just now, that has been the case with Uddhava even when he was a little boy. Just from his childhood he developed this attachment to Krishna. All he knew is about Krishna. And he eats only after Krishna eats, whatever is left over he takes a handful of that. The dresses that are rejected by Krishna, after Krishna throws it away after wearing His dresses, then Uddhava wears those dresses. And not only he is a friend of Krishna, he is an advisor of Krishna. He is so wise that Krishna asks him for counsel! "Uddhava, tell Me, what should I do now?" Before every action Krishna asks Uddhava for his advice. So that is how fond Krishna is of Uddhava."

But when Narada Muni went to Uddhava, he found out something else. He found out that Uddhava also was not the greatest devotee according to that calculation, according to Uddhava's assessment, according to Krishna's attachment. Anyway, in this way Narada Muni actually got to know that even greater are the devotees of Vrindavana, the residents of Vrindavana. And of all the residents of Vrindavana the gopis are the greatest devotees, and among the gopis Srimati Radharani is the greatest devotee. And there Narada Muni's search ended. Who is the greatest of all devotees? [audience: Srimati Radharani] Srimati Radharani.

But in that search we can find that Uddhava is one of the topmost category of devotees, the greatest of the devotees. And it has been pointed out here that Uddhava was a disciple of Brihaspati. Who is Brihaspati? Brihaspati is 'deva-guru', the spiritual master of the demigods, the devas. He was personally taught by Brihaspati. He went to Brihaspati's gurukula when he was a little boy and he studied under Brihaspati. Brihaspati was so fond of him that Brihaspati treated him like his own son. Therefore, here he has been identified as 'tanaya', tanaya means a son. But he is not a tanaya, a son, in that sense, but he was a son as his very dear disciple.

So that is how Brihaspati [Uddhava] has been described and there are more descriptions of Brihaspati. Brihaspati's appearance was exactly like Krishna's, he looked like Krishna. And because he used to wear the clothes that have been worn by Krishna, Krishna's prasada, he looked like Krishna in all respect. The only thing that was different was the peacock feather. It is only Krishna who wears a peacock feather, no one else. So when Krishna sent Uddhava to Vrindavana to pacify the gopis, the cowherd damsels, at first they thought that it was Krishna who came back. They were so excited: Krishna came back! Krishna came back! But when they came close or when he came close in the chariot they found that it was not Krishna. It was somebody else. And what was their condition like? Their condition was like a person who acquired a lot of wealth all of a sudden. A person in need of wealth, a poor man, all of a sudden wins a lottery. He gets the news that he won the lottery. He got ten crores of rupees. But then, when he is dancing in excitement, making all the plans what he is going to do with his ten crores, then comes another news that it was actually a mistake. He didn't really win the lottery. Then what would be his condition like? When he was a poor man he was alright, he was not so bad, but when he got the news of the lottery and then when he got the news that he didn't actually win the lottery, what happens? He gets completely devastated. Sometimes people die of heart attack when one gets a news like that. So that was the condition of the gopis when they realized that it was not Krishna, it was somebody else. They didn't know who was Uddhava. But then when Uddhava started to give them advice,

but when Uddhava saw their reaction how deep their love for Krishna was then what did Uddhava want? Uddhava simply desired that he could become a creeper or a blade of grass in Vrindavana.

So, in this way there are different grades of devotion but of all the devotees the gopis are the greatest. What is the indicator of devotion? What is the indicator of devotion? The indicator of devotion is love. The greater the love we have for Krishna, the greater is the degree or depth of our devotion. We all want to be very big devotees. We all want to be great devotees of Krishna, big devotees of Krishna. Don't we? Everybody wants, at least in ISKCON everybody wants, after getting to know about Krishna consciousness we all want to become devotees of Krishna, great devotees of Krishna. But then where we are failing? We are failing when we deeply see, analyze, we see we are failing in our love for Krishna. Now this love we cannot artificially develop; it's going to happen, it's going to happen. If we keep on practicing the process it will happen. But the reality is, in most cases we will find that our love for Krishna did not really develop deep enough. So the ultimate consideration is the depth of our love for Krishna. And this love will develop. As we become more and more exposed to Krishna, or as we develop our love for Krishna, the mercy of Krishna, our love will develop. We cannot artificially cultivate it.

An example can be given in that respect, like two little children. One is six years old, a boy, and a four year old girl. They are together, they play. They're friends, but do they really develop their love at the age of six and four? But when they become sixteen and fourteen, then all of a sudden the boy feels that, "Wow, she is causing something to my heart!" [laughter] And the girl also feels, "What is happening? I am feeling some attraction to him, feeling some sort of feelings towards him that I never felt for anybody." Now this love that develops between two grown up boys and girls, that happens in due course of time. At the age of four and five, if they want to develop that love, that won't happen. They may read about it, they may watch movies of love story but it won't happen until they reach a certain height of maturity. Similarly, just as the physical body has to come to a certain level in order to appreciate this love between boy and girl, similarly spiritually we have to reach a certain height, or a certain maturity, spiritual maturity to develop this love for Krishna. And when that maturity develops then it will happen automatically. Just as a young boy doesn't have to be told that now he should feel attraction to this young girl. Nobody tells him. He himself feels that attraction.

So spiritual life also is a natural development but what we have to do? We have to practice the process and wait for the right time. And what is that process? The process is called *vaidhi bhakti*; devotional service in practice. We have to continue to practice, then it will happen. But if we don't practice then it will not happen. Therefore *vaidhi bhakti* or devotional service in practice is so important. That's why it is so important that we follow the four regulative principles, we chant Hare Krishna Mahamantra. Actually, the first would be to chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra, follow the four regulative principles, read Srila Prabhupada's books, associate with the devotees, come to the temple, render service. These are the processes that will enable us, help us develop our love for Krishna. And when that love develops then what will happen? Then I don't have to tell you what will happen. You will feel yourself. You will faint. [laughs] That's what will happen. You'll fall head over heels in love with Krishna. It will happen but our business is to wait for it to happen and see what is actually happening. We have to assess, we have to judge, we have to take account. Did I develop my love for Krishna? And I can tell you a very simple indicator for that. A very simple indicator or, what do you call it? A barometer, a measuring instrument for that. That measuring instrument is, at the end of the month you just consider how much money you spent for Krishna and how much money you spent for your family. That's a very nice indicator. [laughs] Who are you holding the bank balance for? That's the indicator. Where my real attachment is, if my real

attachment is for Krishna then I would give everything to Krishna. Why am I not giving it? Because my real attachment so far is not to Krishna, my real attachment is somewhere else. Like, my real attachment is not to my girl friend. My real attachment is to my toys. Because I didn't grow up, I am still fond of my toys. To me the toys are the biggest things. Like a child. So similarly we have to see whether our real attachment is for our boyfriend, Krishna, or for our toys. The toys are all these attractions of this material nature, temporarily, we are playing with them for the time being. Then they will wear out and we will forget about them. Today they appear to be very important. Like a child, when a child gets a toy, the toy is the most important thing in his life, in the entire world. Try to get the toy out of the child, you will see what happens. You think Kurukshetra, Kurukshetra becomes a secondary thing. [laughs] Kurukshetra has become a child's play. But that is the reality. What to do? When we are children we are attached to our toys. When we are spiritually childlike we are attached to all kinds of material attachments, but when we grow up then our attachment will develop for Krishna. So, won't it be nice to grow up? Or should we remain children all our lives? [audience: No!] Very good.

Thank you. Hare Krishna. All glories to Srila Prabhupada! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol! Does anybody have any question?

Yes, Krishnarcana?

Devotee: Guru Maharaja, you just mentioned the indicator of devotion. What is the indicator if you are a brahmachari and don't have any money?

BCS: How attached we are to sleeping. How attached we are to eating. Are we attached to serving, or we are attached to eating? That is the indicator for brahmacaris. What to speak of some attractive, young girl comes to the temple and the brahmachari starts thinking that, "Maybe she is the one for me." [laughter] So we have to understand that these are all some toys. We should grow up. No more childish play and become serious, become committed. This one life, how many times I told you before that just let's offer this one life to Krishna. It doesn't matter whether you are a brahmachari or a grihastha, or a vanaprastha or sannyasi. We all have one business: to offer this life to Krishna. And there are certain responsibilities, certain duties, but we should not become diverted by those allurements of Maya. The duties we must execute. Like, householders must take care of their household. The householder shouldn't become like brahmacaris, or shouldn't behave like brahmacaris and brahmacaris shouldn't behave like householders. Then that will be varnashankara. That will be ashramashankara.

Yes?

Devotee: [translation from Hindi by transcriber] Guru Maharaja, when we offer our prayers we say 'ananta koti vaishnava vrinda ki jaya' and 'samaveta bhakta vrinda ki jaya', what is the meaning of these two expressions?

BCS: [translation from Hindi] Ananta koti means I offer my humble obeisances to all the devotees of the Lord, all the innumerable devotees of the Lord, regardless of whether we can see them or not, all of them. And samaveta means all the devotees who are assembled here, I offer my humble obeisances to them.

Yes, Radharani?

Devotee: A pure devotee resides in Goloka Vrindavana serving Krishna, but here when you gave the description of Narada Muni discovering the greatest devotee, Prahlada Maharaja is in one of the lower planetary systems. How to understand that?

BCS: Yeah. Where is Vrindavana?

Devotee: In the spiritual sky.

BCS: Vrindavana is the place where Krishna is, right? So wherever there is Krishna there is Vrindavana. And where does Krishna live? Where is Krishna?

Devotee: He resides in the heart of the devotee.

BCS: Right. Wherever there are devotees, wherever there is devotional service, Krishna is there. So it is not a geographical consideration. This is material. That is spiritual. The main consideration is where Krishna is, where Krishna consciousness is, where service to Krishna is, where remembrance to Krishna is, that is Vrindavana.

Okay, yes?

Devotee: [paraphrased] In the scriptures we find descriptions of different places related to the Lord but it is most of all in India, but we read that Parikshit Maharaja was emperor of the whole world. [inaudible]

BCS: Yeah. You see, originally in Satya Yuga the entire planet was Bharatavarsha, not in Dvapara Yuga. That was also the end of Dvapara Yuga when Yudhishthira Maharaja was ruling. So at that time, I mean Bharatavarsha was not the entire planet. Bharatavarsha shrank also considerably. There were other countries also. This particular tract of land is very special, what is identified as India today, not India, Bharatavarsa. That tract is very special because the Lord particularly comes to this place to perform His pastimes, this particular land and the particular places. In different Yugas He incarnates in different forms to enact different pastimes with His devotees.

Devotee: When Parikshit Maharaja was the king he was ruling over all the land bordering the sea.

BCS: Yeah. Not bordering the sea, including the oceans.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Oh, I see. Okay. The title of Parikshit Maharaja was that he was the ruler of the earth planet, including the oceans. Sa-sagara dharitri or prithvi; earth planet including the oceans. And you can see, generally he ruled the land part of it which is bordering the ocean. So that means that there is nothing that is interrupting besides the oceans.

Hare Krishna.

Devotee: Guru Maharaja, in the pastime that due to the curse of Gandhari the whole Yadu dynasty was destroyed, then in present time the Yadavas that are present, they are real or? [laughter]

BCS: That particular family of Krishna, the Yadu dynasty, that family came with Krishna. I mean the members of that family at that time came with Krishna and they went back. Krishna actually made the arrangement, to take them back. Gandhari's curse was just a 'bahana', excuse.

Devotee: Guru Maharaja, you mentioned that how devotional service or love for Krishna cannot be done artificially. So the consciousness of an advanced devotee is that he sees [inaudible], we cannot imitate that consciousness but should we also try to think in that way, at least to a certain level, in the sense that we see that how others are nice devotees and I am not able to be such a devotee. How can I make sure that [inaudible]

BCS: Even to think that way, even to come to the stage of appreciating the good qualities of other devotees requires a certain degree of advancement. A neophyte devotee won't be able to do that. It's good, but still, it will require a certain degree of advancement. That means to come to that stage you have to be considerably elevated. And then even sometimes you'll find, you may resolve that from now on you will see the good qualities of the devotees and never see any bad qualities in them and so forth, but then after half an hour your resolution is

forgotten. If you start taking notes you will see how many good qualities you detected as opposed to how many bad qualities you registered.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Ultimately everything is a natural thing. It's natural. There is no room for artificiality. Therefore the answer is: become yourself. BE YOURSELF. Become yourself and start working on that. Our mood should be, "Well, if I am a demon, let me be a demon. Let me recognize that I am a demon and let me try to become a devotee now." But if I am a demon and if I think I am a pure devotee then there will be a problem. It's alright for a pure devotee to think that he is a demon, but for a demon to think that he is a pure devotee, it's a problem. That means, if you realize that you have to work on yourself to correct yourself, that is good. But if you think that you have already perfected and there is no need for correction, that's a problem. So for a devotee to think that, "I am a demon", is alright. But for a demon to think that I have become a pure devotee is a problem. So now we just have to work on our heart. What is the real state of our hearts? Let us see. How much I want for myself, how much I want for Krishna. That is the ultimate consideration. And the devotee's mood is: everything is for Krishna. Idam Krishnaya na mamaha: everything is for Krishna, nothing for me. And whatever comes, it's Krishna's mercy, Krishna's prasada. That doesn't mean that now that I have become a devotee I should stop eating, I should stop acting, I should stop sleeping. No. Yes, there is plenty to eat but it is Krishna's mercy. It's not that now that I have become a devotee I won't breathe. No, Krishna has given the air. Krishna has provided everything so let me take it, but use myself in Krishna's service. That is devotional service. Okay, thank you! Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol!