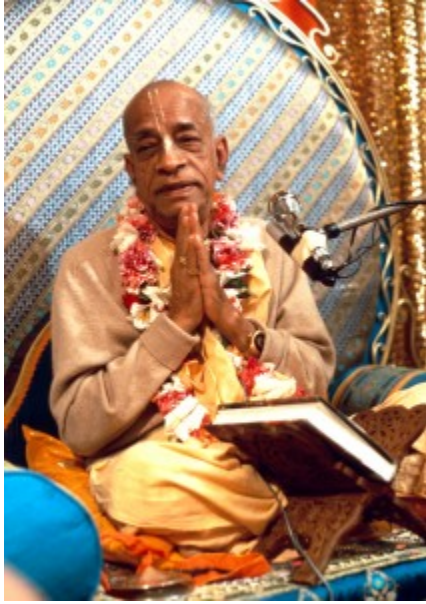


# Achieve Your Immortality

**THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON THE SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM CANTO 3, CHAPTER 9, BRAHMA'S PRAYERS FOR CREATIVE ENERGY, TEXT 15, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA ON 28th JANUARY 2009.**



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**Audio-reference : [click here](#)**



yasyavatara-guna-karma-vidambanani  
namani ye 'su-vigame vivasa grinanti  
te 'naika-janma-samalam sahasaiva hitva  
samyanty apavritamritam tam ajam prapadye

Synonyms:

yasya — whose; avatara — incarnations; guna — transcendental qualities; karma — activities; vidambanani — all mysterious; namani — transcendental names; ye — those; asu-vigame — while quitting this life; vivasah — automatically; grinanti — invoke; te — they; anaika — many; janma — births; samalam — accumulated sins; sahasa — immediately; eva — certainly; hitva — giving up; samyanti — obtain; apavrita — open; amritam — immortality; tam — Him; ajam — the unborn; prapadye — I take shelter.

Translation:

Let me take shelter of the lotus feet of Him whose incarnations, qualities and activities are mysterious imitations of worldly affairs. One who invokes His transcendental names, even unconsciously, at the time he quits this life, is certainly washed immediately of the sins of many, many births and attains Him without fail.

Purport:

The activities of the incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are a kind of imitation of the activities going on in the material world. He is just like an actor on a stage. An actor imitates the activities of a king on stage, although actually he is not the king. Similarly, when the Lord incarnates, He imitates parts with which He has nothing to do. In Bhagavad-gita (4.14), it is said that the Lord has nothing to do with the activities in which He is supposedly engaged: na mam karmani limpanti na me karma-phale spriha. The Lord is omnipotent; simply by His will He can perform anything and everything. When the Lord appeared as Lord Krishna, He played the part of the son of Yasoda and Nanda, and He lifted the Govardhana Hill, although lifting a hill is not His concern. He can lift millions of Govardhana Hills by His simple desire; He does not need to lift it with His hand. But He imitates the ordinary living entity by this lifting, and at the same time He exhibits His supernatural power. Thus His name is chanted as the lifter of Govardhana Hill, or Sri Govardhana-dhari. Therefore, His acts in His incarnations and His partiality to the devotees are all imitations only, just like the stage makeup of an expert dramatical player. His acts in that capacity, however, are all omnipotent, and the remembrance of such activities of the incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is as powerful as the Lord Himself. Ajamila remembered the holy name of the Lord, Narayana, by merely calling the name of his son Narayana, and that gave him a complete opportunity to achieve the highest perfection of life.

[End of Purport]

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So Brahma is praying to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana, and he is pointing out here the advantage of taking shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one with faith accepts Him and surrenders unto Him then he becomes free from all his sinful reactions. Sinful reactions cause us suffering. Actually, nobody wants to suffer, everybody wants to enjoy. So enjoyment is desirable but suffering is undesirable. When we are enjoying then we don't mind. When we are enjoying the material nature appears to be a very nice place but when we suffer then the trouble starts. Then we say, "We don't want this."

So, what is the cause of suffering? The cause of suffering is sinful reactions, reactions of sinful activities. When we act in a sinful way, sinful way means when we act in an inappropriate way, in a wrong way, then we commit sin and as a result of the sin we are subjected to punishments. We are punished. All these difficulties or distresses, pain, that come to us is actually a kind of punishment. These punishments are inflicted on us in three ways: adhyatmika, adhidaivika and adhibhautika. Adhyatmika: the sufferings that are caused by body and mind. We receive suffering, we receive pain. How? Through this body and mind. Like somebody comes and hits us with a rod, hits us with a stick. What is the cause of this pain, receiving this pain? The body, adhyatmika. The body got afflicted. Okay, somebody came and hit with a stick. Okay, we are climbing down the stairs and we fell, and the body feels pain, suffering. Somebody, his mind is in difficulty, in distress. In his mind he is thinking, "Why this happened to me?" The body is alright but his mind is in distress. He has been removed from his exalted position and his mind is in distress. "Why this happened? Why this happened to me?" And he is so much in distress that he can't sleep at night, he can't eat his food. His mind is troubling him. These are kinds of adhyatmika sufferings. As we just mentioned earlier, somebody comes and hits us with a stick. Somebody else came and inflicted the pain on us. Actually, all the pains are received through the body and mind. The body is actually the machine through which we receive pain. Somebody comes and hits us with the stick, we feel pain. A mosquito comes and bites us and we get malaria. So these are all adhibhautika: other living entities are giving pain. And sometimes there is an earthquake or a flood, or a famine, epidemic. These are actually caused by daivas, the demigods. The demigods are causing these pains.

So these are the three types of sufferings.

Can anyone be free from these sufferings? We may think that, “Oh, If I have a lot of money then I won’t have any suffering.” But we can see that even the richest person goes through these threefold miseries. These miseries we cannot take control of.

These miseries are bound to be there. But to some people there are more miseries, to some people there are less miseries. So when the miseries come, what do we have to understand? When the miseries come then we have to understand that these miseries are due to our past karma, either individual karma or collective karma. Like, generally daiva is a collective karma. When there is a flood or when there is a famine, when there is an earthquake many people go through the suffering at the same time. So this is a result of collective karma. Or war, there is a war, so rich and poor, everyone will go through the suffering. So individually or collectively we are subjected to different types of punishments, different types of sufferings.

Now, these sufferings are caused by our condition in the material nature, our situation in the material nature. In the material nature everyone must suffer. No matter how much you try to remove our suffering, we won’t be able to. Therefore, it is important to find out, how can we solve these problems? Does anybody want to suffer? No. Nobody wants to suffer. So what to do? I don’t want to suffer but suffering comes. So what to do? So the solution has been given here, through this prayer by Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma is saying that even if somebody remembers Your name at the time of quitting his body unconsciously, vivasa grinanti, vivasa means unconsciously, without knowing why he is chanting, even if he does it unconsciously, then what happens? Apavritamritam tam ajam, apavrita-amrtam, the gate of immortality opens to him. Apavritam means opening, open up. He is certainly washed immediately of the sins of many, many and he achieves apavrita-amritam, amritam means immortality. He becomes free from sinful reactions and he achieves immortality.

What is the meaning of the word immortality? Less intelligent people think that immortality means that this body will never die. But does it happen? No, this body will die. Maybe we can keep this body for a long time. Maybe if the body can be elevated to the heavenly planet, there the body will live for a long time. In the heavenly planet there is no death. So people think, “If I can go to the heavenly planet then I will not die.” But there also there are two conditions. One goes to the heavenly planet due to his pious activities and when the pious activities are finished then he has to come down again. He falls from the heavenly planet. If we fall on the ground it hurts. Can you imagine if we fall from that height what will happen? So the living entities want to go to the heavenly planet thinking that they will not die there, but there also the situation is not really immortal because if our piety is finished then we will fall from the heavenly planet. Or when the heavenly planet is also destroyed then we will also die. So there is no place where there is immortality in this material

nature.

These points have been very clearly established by many, many incidences in the scriptures. Like, for example Hiranyakasipu is a classic example. Hiranyakasipu performed so many austerities because he wanted to become immortal, and he performed his austerities and he received Brahma's favor and he thought by Brahma's mercy he will become immortal. But when Brahma came Brahma said, "Look, you cannot become immortal. Even I am not immortal so how can I make you immortal? When I myself am not immortal how can I make you immortal?" Then Hiranyakasipu thought that he will trick Brahma and attain immortality. Practically he tried to seal all the possibilities of death. I will not die in this condition; I will not die in this condition and so forth. But the Supreme Personality of Godhead can come and trick the biggest trickers like Hiranyakasipu.

So, then what does immortality mean? In one hand we can see, like Brahma told Hiranyakasipu, "There is no way that you can achieve immortality." But here he is saying that if one just remembers the name of the Lord unconsciously at the time of death he becomes immortal. So what is then the mystery of immortality, the secret of immortality? The secret of immortality is that one becomes situated in his spiritual identity and that spirit soul is immortal. There are two considerations: make this body immortal or become situated in your soul and achieve immortality because the soul is immortal. Those who are foolish they try to make this body immortal but those who are intelligent, what they do? They simply want to become situated in the spiritual identity and become immortal.

Now the question is: what is the way to become situated in spiritual identity? The process of becoming situated in spiritual identity is surrender unto Krishna and become His servant. Just surrender unto Krishna. As you surrender unto Krishna you become situated in your spiritual identity. So this is how easy it is to become immortal. In order to become immortal we won't have to perform austerities and penances like Hiranyakasipu and Ravana and all these people did. They performed severe austerities, inconceivably severe austerities. But there is no need to perform these austerities and penances to become immortal. What is the easiest way to become immortal? Just become situated in your immortal self. You are immortal. Therefore one of the instructions at the beginning of the Vedas is amrtasya putrah. Amrta means immortality and putrah means children. All the living entities are children of immortality. By nature living entities are immortal. But when the living entity forgets about his identity then he becomes mortal. He forgets his spiritual identity and identifies himself with the body, and the body is mortal, the body is perishable. So what is the intelligent thing to do? What is the most intelligent thing to do? Just become situated in your spiritual identity. How to become situated in the spiritual identity? Just surrender unto Krishna. And when you surrender unto Krishna then

what will happen? Surrendering unto Krishna means becoming a servant of Krishna. Surrender means accepting His supremacy and becoming subordinate to Him. And when one is engaged in serving Krishna he is situated in his spiritual identity. So what is needed is to become situated in the spiritual identity. What is needed is to surrender unto Krishna and become His servant. The process is as simple as that. To be surrendered to Krishna means just giving up our false ego, giving up our false identity and accepting a humble position. Therefore Mahaprabhu is saying *trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna*. Become more humble than a blade of grass, become more tolerant than a tree, as simple as that.

Sometimes devotees ask, “Oh, I am practicing devotional service for so long, but why am I not making advancement?” Or in spite of serving for so many years why do we see that devotees go away? They fall down from the spiritual path. Why is that? We have to understand that they didn’t surrender. They came to devotional service, they were practicing devotional service but they didn’t surrender. They wanted to become the big controller. They wanted to become the proprietor. They wanted to become the lord and master. So that’s why they could not make spiritual advancement. In course of time they just left, they fell down. One doesn’t fall down just by chance or accident. If one is properly surrendered to Krishna then Krishna will give him protection. Taking shelter of Krishna means Krishna is taking control of us. When one sincerely surrenders to Krishna, Krishna takes control of him. Krishna will protect him. Even if there is a possibility of fall down Krishna will save him. But when one is not surrendered to Krishna then all these problems start. Therefore, we should always remember that we have come to the platform of spiritual service, spiritual platform of devotional service. So the process is very simple: surrender. Surrender! Surrender to Krishna means surrender to the representatives of Krishna. Surrender to Krishna means surrender to those who are representing Krishna to you. That means surrender to your authority. Not only that I will surrender to my guru and I won’t surrender to anybody else. No, that is not surrender. Surrender means surrendering to the authority. The authority structure is there by Krishna’s arrangement. You have your departmental heads. You have your temple president. You have your GBC. You have your senior devotees. They all are representing Krishna. So surrender to them. It is a neophyte mentality to think that I will surrender only to my guru and not to anybody else. It’s a neophyte, like not a very advanced devotee. But it is good that he is surrendering. That is good, but it is not a very advanced situation.

Another consideration is, sometimes we notice: I will surrender only as long as I get MY desires fulfilled. My wish, as long as it is fulfilled, I am surrendering. When everybody is flattering me, when everybody is giving me big position, when everyone is giving me a nice plate of mahaprasada, then I am surrendering. But the moment it is stopped then no surrender. “Ah, why did they do this to me?!” That is not surrender. That is a conditional surrender, neophyte surrender. Surrender means I have surrendered to Krishna, I have taken shelter of Krishna. He knows what to do with

me. I have taken shelter of Him. Krishna is omnipotent, Krishna is omnipresent, Krishna is omniscient. Krishna is seeing everything, Krishna knows everything and Krishna can do anything. So if I am truly surrendered to Krishna then Krishna will do whatever is necessary. Therefore, the first consideration is faith. We have to have this faith that Krishna is God. Krishna is seeing everything, Krishna knows everything and Krishna can do everything, whatever is necessary. So when I am surrendered to Krishna I just can relax. I am surrendered to Krishna, now all I want to do, all I need to do is serve Krishna. Just serve Krishna under the guidance of Krishna's devotees. Again, surrendered means to be surrendered to Krishna's devotees.

So the process is very simple, but the question is how we are going to practice this process, how we are going to follow this process. And here Brahma is saying, through his prayer to the Lord, that when one surrenders unto You, when one remembers You being sheltered by You, being submissive to You, then he becomes delivered. Brahma is making another point here, that in order to make everybody understand that, You perform all these wonderful activities and pastimes. You perform these wonderful pastimes so that people will become inspired to surrender to You. Your avatara guna-karma-vidambanani, they are mysterious, Your avatara, Your incarnation, mysterious. You appeared like a half-lion half-man. You appeared like a boar. You appeared like a fish. You appeared like a dwarf. So these are mysterious: why do You appear like that? But You appear with a purpose. And those activities that You perform through Your incarnations they are like the acts of a play, a play on a stage, a drama on a stage. You are playing the role of somebody. You don't need to do that. You don't need to do that. Just like a drama. Somebody is playing the role of someone. The person may be a poor person, doesn't even have the money to have his food, now he is playing the role of a king on a stage. Is he a king? No, he is not a king. He is just a poor actor but when he plays the role of a king on a stage, if he is a good actor what does it look like? It looks like he is a real king.

Similarly Krishna, although He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He plays like a human child. He plays like an ordinary human being. Krishna is not an ordinary human being. Krishna is not a cowherd boy in that sense. He is not ordinary; He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But what is happening? He is stealing butter. Does Krishna need to steal butter? He can flood the whole universe with butter! [laughs] And He is stealing butter as if He is hungry to eat something. Then mother Yashoda is chasing Him and He is running away. Does Krishna need to run away out of fear? When mother Yashoda catches Krishna He starts to cry. Does Krishna need to be afraid and start crying? Then what is this? It is acting. It is acting, very good acting, and very expert acting. He acts so well that you can't make out that He is acting. Now why He is doing that? He is doing that to give pleasure to His devotees. Itidrk sva-lilabhir anandakunde sva ghosam nimajjantam, sva ghosam means His devotees. [Sri

Damodarastakam, verse 3] To submerge His devotees in an ocean of ecstasy Krishna is acting like that.

So these are His activities simply to attract the living entities towards Him, simply to have a loving exchange with His devotees and simply to inspire everybody to surrender unto Him. When we hear the activities of Krishna then we understand that how wonderful it is to surrender to Krishna. It is so wonderful to surrender to Krishna. What happens? We surrender to Krishna, we get to see through these pastimes. There was a fire all of a sudden in the middle of the forest. They were tending the cows and the fire was a blazing fire that came from all four directions. There was no way to run away. They saw the fire, they wanted to run this way then they saw the fire this way. They wanted to run this way they saw the fire that way, so everywhere there is fire. If you are in a situation like that, what's going to happen? Won't you become extremely afraid? So that is how the cowherd boys felt, and what did they do? They started to cry out, "Krishna! Krishna! Please save us from this situation! Krishna, please tell me what are You going to do?!" Then Krishna said, "Don't worry, just close your eyes." They closed their eyes. "Okay, now you can open your eyes." The fire was gone! Krishna just swallowed the fire up.

Now, does Krishna have to be present in order to do that? Yes, Krishna has to be present and Krishna is present everywhere. If this happens to you in a situation like this, you don't have to be in Vrindavana with Krishna to be saved like that. You can be anywhere and you are in that situation, call out to Krishna, ask for His help. Krishna will come and save you. He may not swallow the fire, but He has His way of saving you. He has His way of saving. Therefore it is important to always remember that if I take shelter of Krishna, Krishna will give me protection. Avasya rakshibe Krishna visvasa palana. [song by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, Saranagati section five] Avasya means positively, definitely, rakshibe Krishna, Krishna will protect. If I take shelter of Krishna, Krishna will protect me. There is no doubt about that. So that faith we have to have and with that faith we must surrender. A classic example is Draupadi is calling out to Krishna. Draupadi is calling out to Krishna when Dushasana is trying to disrobe her. She is calling out to Krishna with one hand holding on to her sari, the other hand raised up. Krishna didn't come. When she gave up both the arms and she raised up both the arms in calling out to Krishna, yes, Krishna started to supply endless amount of sari. So that is how Krishna protects.

So when we are surrendering we should have total surrender, not hold on to something. Maybe Krishna will protect, if He doesn't then let's have some money in the bank so that I can take some action if necessary. Krishna will do that even then. Krishna will protect but it is better to be fully surrendered, unconditional surrender. And unconditional surrender means whether He will keep me or whether He will kill me, it's up to Him. If You kill me that's also fine but if I am surrendered to You, that



would mean that when somebody comes to kill me I won't see that person, I will see You. You have come to kill me. It can be possible. You killed Hiranyakasipu, so if I am a demon like Hiranyakasipu please come and kill me. Because by being killed by You I will be delivered. So that is the advantage of being killed by Krishna. Not that Krishna will always protect us. Krishna can even kill us, but if Krishna kills that's the most wonderful achievement. So we have to see Krishna as our Supreme Shelter: even if You kill me, I am taking shelter of You. But then what will happen? When one takes shelter of Krishna can he be killed? He cannot be killed.

This surrender is something like, the teeth of a cat is like death personified to a rat. To a rat the jaws of a cat is death. And you know where a cat bites when he catches a rat? Right here, at the back of [the neck]. The cat and tiger, lions, when they kill an animal they grab the animals at the back of the neck and they give a twist and that's how they kill. At first what they do is drink the blood. Tigers, lions, they all do the same, even the rats. Cats kill rats and tigers and lions kill bigger animals. Now when the cat carries the baby cat to safety, how does the cat carry the baby cat? Does the baby cat jump on to the cat's back and ride? Or does the cat carry the baby cat on her arms and carry it? How does the cat carry a kitten? Grabs on the back of the neck and carries it. Although it may seem like the cat is going to kill that baby cat, but does the baby cat become afraid? No, the baby cat thinks, "My mother is carrying me. I don't have to worry about anything." He is perfectly alright. So similarly a devotee, even though it may seem that Krishna is killing him but the devotee's attitude is that He is my Supreme Lord, He is carrying me to safety. And that's what the cat does to the baby cat and that's what Krishna does to His devotees. Others may think, "Oh, the devotee has been killed by Krishna." No! The devotee has been carried by Krishna to ultimate safety.

So this is how Krishna actually protects His devotees, Krishna takes care of His devotees and these are His pastimes. The pastimes are all transcendental and wonderful. His incarnation is wonderful, His activities are wonderful and His qualities are wonderful.

Hare Krishna! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol! Srila Prabhupada ki jaya!  
Does anybody have any question? Yes, Krishnarchana?

Devotee: I have a couple of questions.

BCS: A couple of questions!

Devotee: The first question is, in the purport Prabhupada explains that Krishna's activities are like an actor on the stage. He gives the example of the king, but the actor is actually not the king. The example can be interpreted in a totally different way [inaudible]

BCS: You see, the examples are simply to give a direction, an indication. The

example itself is not the full statement. Like for example, it may be said that look at that tree and in between those two branches the moon is there. So you are indicating the moon but it doesn't mean the moon is existing between the two branches of the tree. Does the moon exist between the two branches of the tree? But it is a way to point out to give some idea, to give some understanding. So when such examples are given of an actor, therefore Krishna is acting it is not real. But the real point is that Krishna is so real that whatever He does becomes the Absolute Truth, not only truth, it becomes the Absolute Truth. Whatever is in connection with Him is Absolute Truth. That is Krishna. Param satyam param, satyam param, He is not only satya, He is param satya, so much so that whatever comes in contact with Him also becomes satyam.

Devotee: And the other question is regarding surrender. You said that the service attitude should be total and unconditionally. When one finds himself in a situation where he is not yet able to fully surrender in a particular situation, then should he express that or should he, you know, I mean keep praying [unclear]

BCS: Yes, the question is if somebody is surrendering but he is not able to surrender in a particular condition, what should he do? Should he continue or should he give up? Practice means whether you like it or not, you should carry on. That is the meaning of practice. Practice, keep on doing it and then the result will be there. So, fine, you can't surrender in a certain condition, in a certain situation. You can do two things. Either you can carry on doing it, even though it is difficult. But if it is not possible to continue in that way then change the situation in consultation with your higher authorities. But the main point is not to give up. Like, in India in summer it is very hot. You can't render your service; you can't really surrender because it is becoming too hot. Fine, go to London, like Priyavrata does. [laughter]

Devotee: Sometimes we see that pure devotees, while they are taking shelter of the Holy Name, they also perform severe austerities. Like Dhruva Maharaja, when he was taking shelter of the Holy Name he was also performing severe austerities and penances. What is the use of such austerities?

BCS: Okay, so I am repeating the question so that those who are watching through the broadcast can also understand what the question is. The question is you said that for a devotee there is no need to perform austerities and penances, just to surrender, but we still we find that personalities like Dhruva Maharaja perform so much austerities. Yes, you see, Dhruva Maharaja was in Satya Yuga and in Satya Yuga the people were so exalted that they could naturally perform such austerities without difficulty. For Dhruva Maharaja to go to the forest and perform these austerities was not at all difficult because he was so exalted. But in the age of Kali it is not possible. Therefore Krishna made the process very simple. No performance of austerities. The austerities in this age are no meat eating, no intoxication, no illicit sex, no gambling. This is the

austerity for this age. And eat as much mahaprasada as you want! [laughter] Chant as many rounds as you want, become intoxicated by the Holy Name. So all the spiritual alternatives are there. So that's why there is no need to separately perform austerities. Yeah, another austerity is perform Ekadasi. But you can see in ISKCON Ekadasi is not an austerity, Ekadasi is a feast. The only austerity is no grain, no grains, no beans, but have all kinds of sabudana khichari. Nowadays they have this one kind of rice also. The other day I was in Bombay. Nowadays because I have to take medicines I can't observe Ekadasi so strictly. Last Ekadasi I was in Bombay and I was staying in somebody's house and they served me puris, not puri, like parathas. And I said, "Today is Ekadasi." They said, "Yes, it is Ekadasi paratha." [laughter] The parathas are made of water chestnut flour. So this is how we are performing our austerities in this age. [laughter] Just chant the Holy Name, becoming surrendered to the lotus feet of the Lord and He will take care.

Any other question? Yes, Raghava Pandita?

Devotee: My question is on surrendering. You said we have to surrender to the authorities and devotees, but surrender does it come spontaneously? By seeing the authorities, or by vaidhi bhakti, we have to study?

BCS: Initially it is vaidhi bhakti practice, but after practice it will become spontaneous. It becomes spontaneous. The main thing is that we have to surrender.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Not 'maar maar ke' [meaning by beating up], if you want to beat up, beat up yourself. But yes, surrender has to be there. Initially our mind is rebellious so then you have to beat the mind sometimes because surrender you have to. This surrender should not be conditional, it should be unconditional. And then you can see how others are being surrendered. That's the advantage of being in the association of devotees. You can see others are being surrendered. Others are being happily engaged in their service. Then you can question: what's wrong with me? What's wrong with me? Others are doing fine. This is how you have to control your mind. The mind is actually rebellious. The mind doesn't want to surrender. The mind will say, "Why surrender?! You are a bigger boss. He is a big devotee but you are an even bigger devotee! So they should recognize you as the biggest personality so everybody should surrender to you." That's what the mind will say. But what is the devotional or spiritual attitude? Become more humble than a blade of grass. I am not big, I am small. I haven't come to ISKCON to become big. I have come to ISKCON to become more humble than a blade of grass. So if you maintain that attitude then everything will become easy but if we allow the mind to play tricks then the mind will say so many things. The mind will say [in Hindi], "Dekho, maar maar ke tumhe musalman bana raha hai," jaise tum bol rahe the.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: [translation from Hindi] If you can just surrender that's the most important. For that you don't need to practice. The difficulty comes when you are not able to surrender. That's why you need to practice.

Yes, Soni?

[audio recording discontinued]