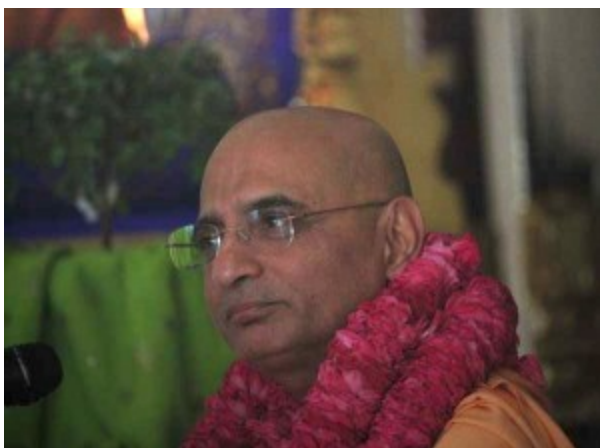


Vaishnavas Are The Greatest Benefactors Of Mankind

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON THE SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM CANTO 4, CHAPTER 3, TALKS BETWEEN LORD SHIVA AND SATI, TEXT 12, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI IN ISKCON HILLSBOROUGH, US, ON 12th MAY 2009.



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pasya prayantir abhavanya-yoshito
'py alankritah kanta-sakha varuthasah
yasam vrajadbhiih siti-kantha manditam
nabho vimanaih kala-hamsa-pandubhiih

Synonyms:

pasya — just see; prayantih — going; abhava — O never-born; anya-yoshitah — other women; api — certainly; alankritah — ornamented; kanta-sakhah — with their husbands and friends; varuthasah — in large numbers; yasam — of them; vrajadbhiih — flying; siti-kantha — O blue-throated one; manditam — decorated; nabhah — the sky; vimanaih — with airplanes; kala-hamsa — swans; pandubhiih — white.

Translation:

O never-born, O blue-throated one, not only my relatives but also other women, dressed in nice clothes and decorated with ornaments, are going there with their husbands and friends. Just see how their flocks of white airplanes have made the entire sky very beautiful.

Purport:

Here Lord Shiva is addressed as abhava, which means “one who is never born,” although generally he is known as bhava, “one who is born.” Rudra, Lord Shiva, is actually born from between the eyes of Brahma, who is called Svayambhu because he is not born of any human being or material creature but is born directly from the lotus flower which grows from the abdomen of Vishnu. When Lord Shiva is addressed here as abhava, this may be taken to mean “one who has never felt material miseries.” Sati wanted to impress upon her husband that even those who were not related to her father were also going, to say nothing of herself, who was intimately related with him. Lord Shiva is addressed here as blue throated. Lord Shiva drank an ocean of poison and kept it in his throat, not swallowing it or allowing it to go down to his stomach, and thus his throat became blue. Since then he has been known as nilakantha, or blue throated. The reason that Lord Shiva drank an ocean of poison was for others' benefit. When the ocean was churned by the demigods and the demons, the churning at first produced poison, so because the poisonous ocean might have affected others who were not so advanced, Lord Shiva drank all the ocean water. In other words, he could drink such a great amount of poison for others' benefit, and now, since his wife was personally requesting him to go to her father's house, even if he did not wish to give that permission, he should do so out of his great kindness.

[End of Purport]

So Daksha, Sati's father, was going to perform a great sacrifice and others were, everybody was going but unfortunately Lord Shiva was not invited, although Lord Shiva was Daksha's son-in-law. So here we can see the attitude of a materialistic person, no matter how exalted they may be. Daksha is undoubtedly a very exalted personality and his name is Daksha, that means he is very expert in every respect.

He's an inconceivably powerful and inconceivably talented personality, but because of his pride, or we can see because of his material attachments or because of his materialistic attitude, all those good qualities became practically null and void.

He's a Prajapati. Prajapati means the progenitors. At the beginning of creation, at the time of creation, there was a need for the universe to be filled up. Brahma needed assistants, there were all kinds of organization necessary. Because the universe at the beginning of creation was empty, Brahma was the first one, and he had the assignment to fill up the universe with necessary paraphernalia and living entities. So Brahma got this Prajapati, his children. First group of children came from his mind, the four Kumaras, who didn't want to get into materialistic activities. Then came out Lord Shiva, Rudra, between his eyebrows. And then came these ten sons from his mind again and they were the Prajapatis, nine Prajapatis and the youngest one was Narada, who was not involved in materialistic activities. So he was a personality who was very, very exalted and he became inclined towards devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whereas the other nine, they got involved in helping Brahma, in assisting him with materialistic affairs and Daksha was one of the leading... Daksha had a few daughters and one of them was Sati. According to Brahma's instruction Daksha got her married to Lord Shiva, but he was not very impressed or happy with Lord Shiva. Because he was materially inclined he could not understand Lord Shiva, who was actually completely unconcerned about all the affairs of the material nature. That stage is generally called the avadhuta stage. Avadhuta means one who is completely unconcerned, completely detached, completely unaffected by all the affairs of the material nature. Nothing actually perturbs these personalities. So Lord Shiva is one of the greatest avadhutas in that way, and another avadhuta is Nityananda Prabhu. Another avadhuta is Rishabhadeva. They are so, so absorbed in their Krishna consciousness, that they do not have any material consciousness, they do not have any external consciousness. Our consciousness can either be projected externally or towards Krishna: externally towards material nature or it can be projected internally to Krishna.

So these avadhutas are so absorbed in their Krishna consciousness that they do not have any external consciousness and as a result of that, they do not have any concern or any attachment to these material affairs or material things. Like, often they wander about naked, like for example the four Kumaras. And they are so innocent and so absorbed in Krishna consciousness that their form looks just like some five-year-old boys. When a five-year-old boy wanders around naked, no one actually minds that. Similarly, Sukadeva Gosvami, he is of course a little grown-up, he was about fifteen, sixteen, but he also didn't have any external consciousness. Therefore he was not concerned whether he was wearing anything, he was not concerned how people were looking at him and whether people were laughing at him or teasing him – no concern for that. Same thing with Rishabhadeva, he was wandering around just like a naked

man, but his activities were so wonderful that thousands of people were following him.

So Lord Shiva is one such person. Because he is so absorbed in Krishna consciousness, he doesn't have any external consciousness. And Daksha was in an assembly, everyone stood up when Daksha entered, a very respectable person, everyone stood up, but Lord Shiva did not and Daksha took great insult. He thought, "He is so arrogant. I am so great, so exalted personality. Everyone offers me respect and look at this upstart. He doesn't get up to offer me respect. After all, he is junior to me, he is my son-in-law." So he became very, very upset due to feeling he was insulted. But actually Lord Shiva did not have any concern what was happening. He was not aware of the affairs in that atmosphere surrounding at that time. But Daksha took great insult and as a result of that, when he was performing the celebration in the form of a sacrifice, he didn't invite Lord Shiva and his daughter Sati. But Sati, as an innocent little girl, an innocent young woman, who has a natural inclination towards having some fun, reciprocation with relatives... We also have to understand that Sati is not an ordinary personality, she is Mahamaya. She is the controller of the entirety of the whole creation. But when they perform their pastimes they display these kinds of frailties at times. But actually these are just some arrangements to enhance the pastimes. So Sati wanted to go. Behaving like an ordinary young girl, she wanted to have some fun and reciprocation with her relatives and so she's appealing to Lord Shiva: "Please let me go, please let me go." Shiva instructed her not to because he knew what could happen and, anyway, that will be described afterwards.

To go back to the point in the purport, Srila Prabhupada is pointing out, dealing with a few points. One is why Lord Shiva here has been addressed as Abhava. Actually a name of Lord Shiva, one of the names of Lord Shiva is Bhava. Bhava means one who is born in the material nature. He has such a name because actually he is beyond this material nature. But he has taken birth in the material nature, therefore he is Bhava. Therefore, Parvati is known as Bhavani, Bhava's wife, known as Bhavani.

Probably you remember, when Keshava Kashmiri composed poetry, composed a glorification of the Ganges at Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's request, then Chaitanya Mahaprabhu pointed out six mistakes in one verse. Keshava Kashmiri was very proud that he was the greatest scholar and he came to Navadvipa to defeat the scholars of Navadvipa and then he would be recognized as the undefeated champion scholar of the entire India. So he defeated all the scholars throughout India and he came to Navadvipa, the last place to conquer. And Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a fourteen-year-old boy, defeated him. By doing that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu established His supremacy as the greatest scholar of India at that time, at the age of fourteen. Keshava Kashmiri defeated everybody, and then He defeated Keshava Kashmiri, so without travelling around the world, he now had been recognized as the greatest scholar. So Keshava Kashmiri was waiting for, and hearing that Keshava Kashmiri was coming, all the scholars of Navadvipa ran away under various pretexts. So Keshava Kashmiri was

waiting for them to return and then one day he saw Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a young boy teaching something on the bank of the Ganges to a group of students, and so he asked who He was and he heard about Nimai Pandit, the great scholar. “But a fourteen-year-old boy, why should I waste my time?” So he said, “Oh you are Nimai Pandit, I heard about you so I heard that you are a great scholar.”

Nimai Pandit was very humble and said, “No I am not a scholar, I just teach grammar to a few students.”

And so Keshava Kashmiri said, “Look, come let’s have an exchange.”

And Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “You are such an exalted personality, your fame is known all over the world, who am I to accept your challenge? Rather let me take advantage of your association. So please glorify the Ganges that is flowing here.”

So Keshava Kashmiri, with speed and reason with which Ganges was flowing, he composed one hundred verses in glorification of Ganges. Everyone was spellbound hearing that. So Keshava Kashmiri proudly asked Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, “So, what do you think?”

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “Fine, fine, wonderful – except for a few mistakes here and there!”

Keshava Kashmiri was furious. He said, “Nobody ever finds a fault or mistake in my composition, who are You to judge my composition?” And then he said, “Tell me, what is the mistake?”

So Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took one verse, the 64th verse and in this one verse He pointed out six mistakes. And one of the mistakes was he addressed Lord Shiva, describing that Ganges is coming from the head of Lord Shiva, he addressed Lord Shiva as Bhavani-bharta. Bhavani is a name of Sati or Parvati. Bhavani means Bhava’s wife. So Bhava is Lord Shiva and Lord Shiva’s wife is Bhavani. And he is saying, “Bhavani’s husband.” So it means that Lord Shiva’s wife’s husband, as if Lord Shiva’s wife has a third person as a husband! So He pointed out that as a mistake, Bhavani-bharta.

So Bhava is a name of Lord Shiva which means “one who is born.” But here he is described as Abhava. It is unusual, he is known as Bhava but why is he being addressed as Abhava? And Prabhupada is pointing out that Abhava means “one who is not affected by material miseries, miseries of the material nature.” Lord Shiva is not affected by the miseries of the material nature. Why? Because he is beyond this material nature, he is not of this material nature. Bhava, this material nature, and he is actually Abhava, who is beyond this material nature; the affairs of the material nature do not affect him. That’s why there is a consideration of Shiva means ‘completely peaceful’. The word Shiva actually means absolutely peaceful. Why absolutely peaceful? Because he is beyond material nature. So that is the situation, that is the position of Lord Shiva.

Another thing Prabhupada is pointing out, another expression here is, he is ‘Nilakantha’, his throat is blue. One who’s throat is bluish. And Prabhupada is

elaborating that point in the purport, describing Lord Shiva as an extraordinary character. He is so merciful, so generous, so compassionate that he undergoes various distresses and difficulties for the benefit of the living entities. Like when the milk ocean was being churned for the sake of churning nectar, and at that time the first poison to come out... What came out first? The poison. And that poison could have destroyed the whole creation. So Lord Vishnu asked Lord Shiva, "So you do something about it. Otherwise the whole creation will be destroyed." So Lord Shiva just drank that ocean of poison. And the poison would have had its effect, of course Lord Shiva would not be affected by anything, he can swallow any amount of poison, but again, since he is executing some pastimes for the benefit of others, he didn't swallow it but he held it on his neck. And the effect of the poison turned his neck into blue. So Lord Shiva's neck is bluish, because of drinking poison and that's why he is known as 'Nilakantha'. And here the expression has been used as 'Sitakantha'. Sitakantha means also blue, dark. His neck is dark bluish or dark bluish color. Now why he assumed this dark bluish color? How his neck got the color of dark blue? Because he drank the poison. And why did he do that? Just to save the creation, just for the benefit of the other living entities. That is the very extraordinary character of Lord Shiva. And this is the characteristic of a great personality. A great personality does not care for his own benefit but he always tries to benefit others. There are so many such examples.

Another such example is a sage called Dadhichi. Vritrasura had to be killed and the only way that Vritra could be killed is Vajra, thunder, was made from the bones of Dadhichi. And so they instructed about that possibility, approached Dadhichi and told him that, "This is what we need. We need your bones." "Need your bones" means, "We want you to die! And give your bones to us." And Dadhichi, he reasoned that, "Fine, if this body can be of some use, sure. The demigods were in distress and if this body can be of some use for their benefit, let us do that." And he gave up his body. And from his bones, Vishvakarma created Vajra, the thunder. In this way, in the Vedic culture, in the Vedic society, since time immemorial we find how so many great personalities have made such wonderful sacrifices. So sacrifice is actually the sign of a great personality. Sacrifice meaning give up something for the benefit of others. Sacrifice something for the benefit of others. And that is the instruction Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave: janma sarthaka kari' kara para-upakara, [CC Adi 9.41] He's instructing that His followers, in order to make their lives successful should do benefit for others, para- upakara.

So there are two possibilities, two opposite considerations. One is selfishness, materialistic way of life is selfish life, whereas the spiritual life is a selfless life. Selfless means a person who is not interested about his personal interest but concerned with the benefit of others. And for the sake of benefit of others he is prepared to make any sacrifice or undergo any kind of trials and tribulations, and that is the sign of a real exalted personality. And of all these personalities, Lord Shiva's

position is extremely exalted, extremely exalted. And at the same time we can see, what is Lord Shiva's situation? Vaishnavanam yatha shambhuh, of all the Vaishnavas, Lord Shiva's position is extremely exalted as a devotee of Krishna. He is a Vaishnava and it is a Vaishnava who can actually be completely selfless. Krishna-bhakta nishkama, a devotee of Krishna doesn't have any personal interest. Krishna-bhakta nishkama, ataeva shanta [CC Madhya 19.149], "Therefore he is completely peaceful." But bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kami sakali ashanta; those who are desiring for material enjoyment, those who are desiring for liberation, those who are desiring for yogic perfection – they all are perturbed, they all are disturbed. Only a devotee of Krishna is completely peaceful.

So that is a Vaishnava. And why Vaishnavas can be completely peaceful? Because he doesn't have any personal interest. He doesn't have any desire for sense gratification. His only desire is how to serve Krishna. His only desire is how to please Krishna. And therefore he sees everybody in the light of Krishna consciousness. He sees everybody and everything in relation to Krishna. And therefore he is genuinely concerned for the benefit of others. He doesn't care for his personal interest but he's concerned about benefit of others, because he knows, he sees that everyone is a part and parcel of Krishna. Therefore he sees that everyone's benefit is desirable because that's what Krishna wants. Krishna wants to benefit everybody else. And you know while he's trying to serve Krishna, he is prepared to serve everybody else. Of course, he doesn't do it...on the other hand, instead of serving everybody else, he actually serves Krishna. And by doing that everybody else becomes served and satisfied.

In this respect, Prabhupada gives the definition of watering the root of the tree. When the root is watered, then the whole tree is watered. By serving Krishna, he benefits everybody. And at the same time he sees that everybody else is Krishna's part and parcel. And that's why Prabhupada used to also say that, he used to make the point how the best way to please Krishna is by serving His devotees. Those who are dear to Krishna, if they are served, then Krishna is served, Krishna is pleased. And Prabhupada used the expression that, "Love me, love my dog!" If you love me, then you also love what I love, whom I love. I love my dog, so he loves me; you love my dog. And in this way, when the master feels that somebody is very favorably disposed to his dog, then he also becomes favorable. And of course, this was just an expression, but the real point is that the father becomes pleased when he sees that somebody is doing something to his son, he is serving his son or doing something in favor to his son. So when he sees that his dear son is so favorably treated by this person, he also becomes favorably disposed to him.

Similarly, when Krishna's devotees are served, who are very dear to Krishna, then Krishna becomes pleased. Now is it only that we serve Krishna's devotees? No, even those who are not devotees of Krishna, we should serve them. But there is a different way to serve them. Those who are not devotees of Krishna, those who are forgetful of Krishna, those who have drifted away from Krishna, we serve them by bringing them

close to Krishna. And that is what a devotee considers to be his most important business. As a devotee we try to please Krishna by serving, expressing our friendship towards His devotees and compassion to the innocent. Those who are forgetful of Krishna (and that's why they have drifted away from Krishna), try to bring them closer to Krishna. And Krishna has pointed out that in Bhagavad-gita, that that service actually pleases Him the most, because He is like a father who lost His children. How does a father feel when his child has left him? He feels extremely heartbroken and he waits for his son to come back. He cries for his son to come back, to get his son back. Now if somebody brings the son back to him, how does the father feel towards him? So that's why those who are spreading Krishna consciousness, those who are preaching, those who are bringing the lost souls back to Krishna, Krishna becomes extremely pleased with them. Therefore the best service to render is to preach. Go out and remind people of their lost relationship with Krishna and the benefit that will derive by developing their connection with Krishna and relationship with Krishna. In this respect, Prabhupada once gave an example. Actually Prabhupada was invited by a very wealthy man in India and this man is related to the wealthiest family in India. They are actually all related to each other, a very, very wealthy family. So this person was very closely connected, related to the richest family in India, called the Birla family. So this man was asking Prabhupada, Prabhupada was actually a guest in his house, so he was asking Prabhupada, "Why do you just ask everybody to chant Hare Krishna and dance? Why don't you do something that would really benefit people, benefit the society?" His point was that, "Why don't you open hospitals, and do some social work, and to upliftment? And then that is the real beneficial activity, benevolent activity." In response Prabhupada said, "Look, you are so closely related to the Birla Family. Now, if one of the sons of Birla becomes mad and runs away from the home. As a mad person, he wouldn't know who he is, where his house is, he'd become completely lost. And when he just goes out like that he'll be completely lost without any understanding of who he is and what he is. And as a madman he'll undergo so many difficulties and trials and tribulations. He won't even get food. In order to get food he'll have to beg. People will humiliate him, they will torture him, they will insult him. Now if you see him in that condition, will you just give him five rupees and tell him go and have a meal? Or will you just tell him, remind him of who his father is and bring him back to his father? By bringing him back you will solve all his problems because he is the son of a rich man, very, very rich man, one of the richest men in India. So similarly, all these people, all these living entities are actually children of Krishna. They are the children of the richest personality, but because they have forgotten who their father is, they are undergoing so many difficulties and sufferings in this world. Now if you see them in that condition, will you just give them five rupees and say go and have a good meal or will you bring them back to his father? So giving them some material benefit, some temporary benefit is not really important. All their problems will be solved just by one action: by being connected by

being re-linked with their father once again, by reviving their relationship with their father once again. So that is why we are doing what we are doing. We are reminding everybody of their relationship with Krishna.”

Hare Krishna Maha Mantra – Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare – is actually the means to reawaken our relationship with Krishna, revive our relationship with Krishna, reawaken our memories of Krishna, who Krishna is and what is our relationship with Him. Just by chanting, that’s what’s happening. And not only chanting, while we are chanting, we are associating with the devotees. By associating with the devotees we are being reminded about who Krishna is and what our relationship with Him is. And the expression of our willingness to reestablish that relationship is the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra, a prayer: “Krishna please allow me to become free from this miserable material condition and become engaged in your loving devotional service.”

So that is why, that is the purpose, the reason why Srila Prabhupada established this International Society for Krishna Consciousness and that’s why we all are here and our only business is to remind everybody about their lost relationship with Krishna and by reestablishing their relationship with Krishna, they can become free from all miseries, all sufferings and they can solve all the problems that they are facing in this material nature.

Hare Krishna! Gaura Premanande Hari Hari Bol!

Does anyone have any question? Yes, Chandrashekhara?

Devotee: We understand that by rendering menial service to the devotees we make spiritual advancement, whereas we also understand that by rendering the same menial service to...

BCS: Service is service. Service means whatever is necessary, do that. It is not that when we are preaching we don’t do any menial service or when you are doing menial service you don’t preach, we do whatever is necessary.

Devotee: Just by ironing the clothes, cleaning the house of another devotee...If Krishna loves everyone why is it that not everyone gets the same devotional service?

BCS: Krishna loves everyone equally, but for your own benefit certain service is more conducive to your spiritual advancement. Say for example, you are doing some service for a sannyasi or senior devotee. By doing that, you are actually developing respect and you are getting that feeling that is enabling you to become advanced, whereas if you do it for others you may not feel the same way, right? That is the consideration, how you are disposed and how you are actually feeling by rendering that service and also another thing is that by serving senior devotees you’ll develop those...being exposed, you develop those qualities. But then again, in Bhagavad-gita, Krishna is pointing out that the most important service is actually to bring back the lost souls to Him, that meaning preaching is the most important service. So while you are ironing clothes, whenever the opportunity arises, go out and preach. And isn’t that practical? And by doing that, don’t you feel great? So we have to understand what is

the main purpose, what is the main objective.

And sometimes Prabhupada would tell us, Prabhupada would actually discourage us from rendering his personal service and go out and preach. Prabhupada often used to do that, "So why are you wasting your time just doing it, you can see that I don't need that service. Then do something that is more important." Sometimes Prabhupada used to send his servants off, away to different remote places to preach. The servants came back saying, "Prabhupada, I'm so attached to serving Srila Prabhupada." They came back. But instead Prabhupada would say, "I don't want you to do that, I want you to do this." Prabhupada said, "No, I want you to do that." Then again they would make excuses, even to the extent of saying that, "Prabhupada, there is nothing to eat, you don't get any vegetables, all you get is meat." Then Prabhupada said, "Then go ahead and go and eat meat and preach." To that extent, Prabhupada went. So from that you can see the mood of a devotee, a pure devotee. So I think we had a fifteen minute grace today. So any other questions?

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Yeah, I get your point. The actual thing is that everybody, the reality is that everyone is concerned about his own self, right? But you have to understand that who is actually our self and how to benefit that self, right? People in general, in the material nature, are selfish in a sense that they are concerned only about their sense gratification because they are identifying themselves with the body, so that self is being gratified, so that consideration. But when you transcend that platform then you come to the real self, the spirit soul and then we consider what would be the most beneficial act for the spirit soul.

Now that act apparently appears to be selfless from a material point of view, but in reality it is selfish and the ultimate consideration is to be Selfish with a capital 'S', right? Because who is the Self of the self? Krishna. So when you look for His interest, that is the Self with a capital 'S', and when we act for His interest, that is the real Selfishness, and we all are doing that. That is the ultimate goal of life, to be absolutely Selfish, right? Because when that Supreme Self is satisfied, then everybody will be satisfied, including ourselves, our tiny self. And that's why Krishna consciousness is the most beneficial act for this world, right?

Thank you. Hare Krishna! All Glories to Srila Prabhupada! Gaura Premanande Hari Hari Bol!