

Seminar On Brahmacharya : Part Three



Transcription and Editing: Vinod-Bihari Dasa

Today we are concluding our seminar on brahmacharya. We will conclude with Lord Rsabadeva's teachings to His sons described in the fifth Chapter of the fifth Canto. We will read the first verse of that chapter together.

“Lord Rsabadeva told His sons: My dear boys, of all the living entities who have accepted material bodies in this world, one who has been awarded this human form should not work hard day and night simply for sense gratification, which is available even for dogs and hogs who eat stool. One should engage in penance and austerity to attain the divine position of devotional service. By such activity, one's heart is purified, and when one attains this position, he attains eternal, blissful life, which is transcendental to material happiness and which continues forever.”

So Rsabadeva is giving His parting advice to His sons. He was a king, about to leave home to take to Vanaprastha. He was leaving everything behind, just about to walk away without anything. He would just leave home and start walking toward the forest. That is the Vedic culture: detachment and renunciation. He did not hesitate to walk away, but before leaving He gave his parting advice to his hundred sons.

The first thing He tells His sons is: “Do not become unnecessarily engaged in sense gratification, especially that now you have a human form which is very precious and meant for spiritual emancipation.” He tells them that sense gratification is also available to stool eating animals. What is available for the stool eating animals should not be run after by you. A stool eater is a hog or a pig. Pigs are famous for eating stool. But one who is called a pig is actually a woman hunter, one who's whole life is centered around sex life. So why should a human being waste his special facility in running after sex life? Rather, tapo divyam, one should design his life to perform austerities, or voluntary acceptance of difficulties for the sake of spiritual advancement. For example, Rsabadeva voluntarily accepted the austerity of leaving home. He decided that his home atmosphere was no suitable for spiritual advancement. So even though He did not need to, He voluntarily went to the forest.

We must therefore be brahmacharis, be focused on the spiritual platform. Not just celibacy, which is just a by-product. Actually, devotees want to become lovers of Krsna, not celibates. They want

to become attached to Krsna. In order to do that, one must be very careful not to be overly involved in sex life.

Rsabadeva then tells something else to His sons. In text 4 He tells His children:

“When a person considers sense gratification the aim of life, he certainly becomes mad after materialistic living and engages in all kinds of sinful activity. He does not know that due to his past misdeeds he has already received a body which, although temporary, is the cause of his misery. Actually, the living entity should not have taken on a material body, but he has been awarded the material body for sense gratification. Therefore I think it not befitting an intelligent man to involve himself again in the activities of sense gratification by which he perpetually gets material bodies one after another.”

Here He is pointing out the cause of our material bondage. Material nature creates an illusion which is, first, to consider this body to be the self. I am not this body, but I am thinking that this body is me. This is illusion. The body is matter, but I identify with it. That is everybody's illusion. What is the result? Text 8 tells us: “The attraction between male and female is the basic principle of material existence. On the basis of this misconception, which ties together the hearts of the male and female, one becomes attracted to his body, home, property, children, relatives and wealth. In this way one increases life's illusions and thinks in terms of “I” and “mine”

See how the illusion thickens? That is the root of our bondage in the material nature. So you see how a living entity becomes bound to matter due to the basic attraction for the opposite sex? The whole trouble begins with that. Srila Prabhupada was so emphatic that we are not our bodies, because there lies our entire material bondage. As soon as we identify with the body, we automatically become attached to the opposite sex, and all the rest. In today's civilization, though, people are not even interested in marriage even, just free sex. It is being so advertized. Therefore the spiritual culture that Srila Prabhupada gave is very important to uphold and distribute to others. Until we do that, we are not performing our duties. We have to distribute it to others. In the Bhagavatam we find the same advice being given again and again: “Don't become attached to your body; rather, develop your attachment to Krsna.”

I think there is a need for an in-depth understanding of this point. Brahmacharya means to become situated on the spiritual platform. Sometimes there used to be people who used to say that to be a brahmachari means to hate women. It doesn't work. The biggest women haters were the first ones to fall down. It is not by negation that one makes progress. One must learn to respect women in order to become a true brahmachari. Then also, it is not only meant for the brahmacharis. Srila Prabhupada pointed out that even the householders are brahmacharis. Those who unite for the sake of procreation are also brahmacharis because that is the purpose of sex life: only for the sake of procreation. In nature, do the animals unite for sense gratification? No. Now, a certain pleasure has been attached to this act, otherwise humans would not do it. So in order to trick you into that act, some sense gratification has been added to it. But foolish people forget the real purpose and therefore destroy themselves spiritually. Therefore an intelligent person should understand that sex life is the worst illusion.

Stupid human beings led by even more stupid leaders think that this is the goal of life. And the result is disaster. But Srila Prabhupada brought sanity to humanity, an intelligent class of people who transcend this illusion and come to the spiritual platform. They are the only ones who can benefit human society. Those who are in illusion cannot benefit others. A blind man will bring another blind man down a ditch. Therefore in order to properly guide human society there is a need of a class of people with the proper vision. Therefore we must take to Srila Prabhupada's teachings, and the basis of that is spiritual life, which has brahmacharya as the essence.

Generally in ISKCON one does not want to speak about this in public because it is a sensitive subject. But recently, after the Australian olympics, I was reading an article of how the coaches train up their athletes. All of them are very strict about them refraining from sex life. So even the materialists have figured out that you have to learn to control your sex desire. Then after class yesterday, one of the devotees told me that Muhammed Ali, when he used to have a fight, for three months before the fight he would not indulge in sex life. But the stupid leaders of human society say, "no. Engage in sex life. It is the goal of life."

So pigs are trying to make a pig society. But our mission is to counteract this. Srila Prabhupada established ISKCON for this. We say no to their entire emphasis on sex life, meat eating, intoxication and gambling. They are promoting these things everywhere. Today, the biggest businesses are these 4 things. Maximum money is spent on these 4 activities. Is it not? If anyone wants to become a successful businessman, these are the 4 things one get can involved in. The American government decided to spend 10 billion dollars to prevent drug smuggling, but those passing the budget are themselves involved in drug trafficking, so then the money will simply go to their own pockets.

Prostitution is another big business. It means illicit sex. Gambling is also huge: Las Vegas, Reno. There are entire cities based on gambling. In a middle of a desert they built an entire city based on gambling where people from all over the world come to lose billions of dollars. Kali is spreading his influence through these four activities. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came here to defeat Kali. That is why in ISKCON, members must themselves follow these four regulative principles. They should also stop these activities in the world. Today Kali is winning. Who are we siding with, Kali or Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu? We are siding with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and are in His army. Therefore we must defeat Kali. The sign of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's victory will be the abolition of these four activities. When no more of these activities will go on in the world, then we will understand that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has won. Some will continue to do these things, but they will be driven out of human society into the forest. So we must become qualified soldiers in the army of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Hare Krsna.