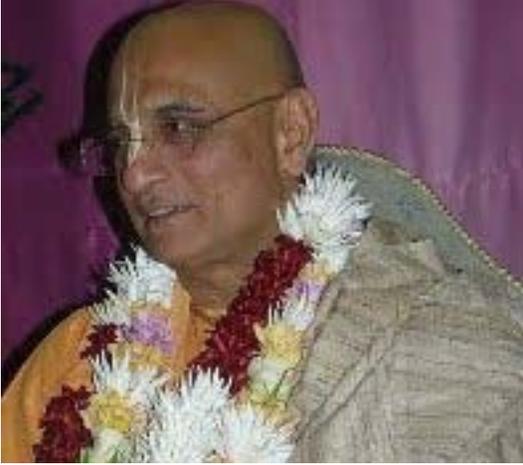


Evening Class Guru Maharaja In Rotterdam : 13-07-2010



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Hare Krishna

I am very happy to be here today. I have not been able to come for the last three years. I was so busy and also my health was not very good and that is why I could not come. But, often, I thought of you all and I used to get regular reports on how things are developing here. And now that I finally managed to come, although it is a very short visit, I feel very happy to be in touch with you all again.

I see the need for being in touch. Often, due to pressure, due to other responsibilities we cannot make ourselves so much available. But, with the passing of time, as our responsibilities are increasing, I am realizing the need to be available to the devotees. Because you can see that the devotees look up to the association of other devotees.

Spiritual life is very rare. That is why when one gets the opportunity to become involved, become engaged in spiritual life; one must take it up very, very seriously – because this is the most important thing in our life. We got a very wonderful opportunity by getting the human form of life. There are various types of living entities. We can see the whole world is filled with living entities. The entire universe is filled with living entities. But, it is only when one gets the human form that one actually gets an opportunity to take to spiritual life. Just consider if you had any other type of body which is below human form then could you take to Krishna consciousness? Could you question if God is there? Can a monkey question if there is God? Can a dog question? But human beings can. This is a very, very rare opportunity for the human beings. That is why it has been described in

the Vedic scriptures, athato brahma jijnasa. Now that you have got the human form of life, you must enquire about your spiritual identity.

Generally, the animal life is involved with eating, sleeping, mating and defending. The animals are simply concerned about these four activities. They think that this is the most important business: to eat, to sleep, to mate and to defend themselves from danger. But the Vedas are saying that human life is not meant for that purpose, that kind of activities. Human life is meant for a higher purpose. What is the higher purpose? The higher purpose is brahma jijnasa. Brahma jijnasa means the question about our spiritual identity. "Who am I?" The brahma jijnasa begins from there. "Who am I?" Generally people think that they are the bodies. But the brahma jijnasa leads us to understand that, "No, we are not this body." That is the brahma jijnasa – I am not this body. I am something that is beyond this body. I am somebody who makes this body alive. Because of me being in this body, this body is alive. And when I leave this body what will happen? This body will become dead.

To begin with, what is this body made of? This body is made of dead matter. Matter is dead. Just like this instrument, harmonium, this microphone, this recorder, this floor, these walls, and this room. What are they made of? -matter. And matter means no consciousness. Don't we say dead matter? So matter is dead. What is our body made of? Our body is also made of matter. So this body made of matter is a dead body. But is it a dead body? No. My body is not a dead body; your body is not a dead body; your bodies are alive. Now what causes this body to be alive? That is the beginning of brahma jijnasa. The question, "Why is this body alive?" This body is made of matter, so why then is this body alive? Why is this body conscious?

Now if we enquire, if we sincerely question, then what will we naturally want? We will want to have the answer. Now if you want to know something what do you do? If I want to know Dutch, what should I do? I should go to a person who knows Dutch and ask him, "Can you please teach me Dutch?" So when you want to know something then, we must approach a person who has the knowledge about that subject. So this is the subject – brahma jijnasa, the spiritual reality. The question is, "I am thinking that I am this body but this body is made of dead matter, now can you please tell me why this dead body is functioning in a way which other dead matter does not function?" So if the person knows the answer, what will he say? He will give a simple answer that, "Because you are a spirit soul and because you are present in the body that is why the body is alive."

These are the very basic enquiry and very basic answers. I am sure you have heard this many, many times but still I have to speak about it. Just to remind you that, "This is our business. This is your business." Because, although we know that we are not this body, but still we get caught up with all kinds of affairs relating to the body. We are also concerned with eating, sleeping, mating and defending. Living entities are naturally inclined towards that. But, one must transcend that platform. That is why we need the proper guidance to teach us how to transcend that platform – somebody who can guide us in that path, somebody who will lead us beyond this platform of animal activities.

So, let us go back to that original point when we question, "Why is this body alive?" Clinically or medically, they can get an answer that the body is alive because so many

organs are functioning in the body. The heart is pumping blood, lungs are breathing, stomach is digesting, kidney is filtering, and all kinds of activities are going on in the body. That is why the body is alive. But then, the question arises, “Why are these activities going on?” These activities are not going on anywhere else. To make that kind of arrangement, it needs much complex arrangements. The kidney filters the blood. It is a small little organ. Do you know how much blood this small little organ is filtering? – Two hundred and fifty gallons of blood every day. It is purifying the blood. And it is purifying in such a systematic way. All the impurities are going. The pure blood is just kept in one way and the impurities are going out in the form of the urine. What is the urine? Urine is the impurities from the blood which, the kidney has purified.

The heart is pumping the blood. What is blood actually? Blood is the carrier of the life energy. Blood is carrying the life energy. And what is the blood doing? The blood is supplying the life energy through the arteries, and then, by supplying the energy, the blood is becoming empty of that energy. The carrier has now become empty. So, it comes back again to the heart. Arteries are pumping the blood throughout and the veins are bringing the blood back to the heart. Who studied medicine here? So scientifically, we understand that. Biology or medical science is giving us the information. The blood is carrying the life energy through the body and then, the blood is coming back into the region of the heart. Then the blood is getting surcharged with the life energy. Who is surcharging the blood with life energy? Someone, somebody must be doing something in the heart. Who is doing that? Who is making all the arrangements? – The soul. It is because of the presence of the soul that all these things are happening. Another thing is happening. That oxygen is surcharging the blood and the blood is carrying the oxygen. Therefore, for us oxygen is so vital, so important. Then it is coming back into the region of the heart. In the process the blood is getting dirty and, as I said, that dirt is filtered out of the blood by the kidneys.

Then there are so many other organs. The food is going in the stomach. In this way the body is like a machine. What does a machine do? To run a machine what do you need? You need fuel. Is there any mechanic here? I am sure these are the common understanding. I am sure you all know that. For example, you are running the car. How is the car running? Answer is given. You have to put fuel in it and then what happens to the fuel? It goes to the piston and there the ignition takes place. The carburetor causes the ignition, the fire. The fuel is burning and the energy is generated which is making the piston go up and down in the cylinder. And that up and down movement is connected to a shaft. And that shaft is making the wheel, the gears move. And that is making the car's wheels move. So you have fuel and oxygen and the burning of that.

Now the same thing is happening in our body. Food is the fuel and we are taking in oxygen. When you are breathing what are you taking in? We are taking in oxygen. That oxygen is causing the fuel to burn. When the fuel burns, what happens? Carbon dioxide is produced. So what are you giving out? – Carbon dioxide. So your body is actually a machine but a more complex machine. Take for example a very sophisticated machine like an aeroplane engine. It is a very sophisticated machine. It is operating on the same

principle. But that machine, the aircraft, does not have a kidney, does not have lungs, what to speak of a heart and what to speak of a spirit soul. All these operations are going on. Now you consider the price of an aircraft; a boeing 747. Now it is even better, airbus 380. How much do you pay for that? -Almost a billion dollars. You pay so much money for an aircraft. Now this body is so many times more complex. Can you imagine what the price of this body is? And this body we got free. Did you pay any price? Your mother paid the price for that. She had to carry you for so long, feed you for so long in the womb and undergo so much pain. But we did not pay anything. We got it free. This body is such a complex, such a wonderful machine.

Now what should we do with this body? If you get a very nice machine, if you get a very nice car, what do you do? Do you squander it? Do you just misuse it? Or do you take care of it because you know the value and you know the utility of that car? So, similarly we must recognize the importance of this body. We should not use this body for something which is completely useless. So what should you do with this body? Do you know what the purpose of this body is? The purpose of this human body is to liberate us from the material bondage. It is the only opportunity. There are eight million four hundred thousand species of life. Out of that only four hundred thousand are human beings. So these four hundred thousand bodies are actually providing us with the opportunity to become free from the bondage of matter. No other body will provide us with this opportunity.

Now what should we do with this body? Should we just use this body for animal purpose, animal propensities; that are eating, sleeping, mating and defending and watching football? No.

This body has a very, very special purpose. That purpose is to understand the spirit soul. That is where we begin, that I am not this body. I am spirit soul. That is the first step of understanding. Then we understand that this soul is a part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And then, the soul has a relationship with God. We recognize ourselves as the soul and we recognize that the soul is a part and parcel of the Supreme Soul. We are souls and there is one Soul from whom all the spirit souls come. Now, at least, we recognize that I am a spirit soul and there is a Supreme Personality of Godhead. Now how can we establish our relationship with Him? Now there also arises a question, "What is the relationship between the part and the whole? Does the part have a relationship with the whole?" Part is a part, meaning it is a part of a whole. So what is the relationship between the part and the whole? There must be a relationship.

For example, this finger is a part of my body. It is a part of my body. That is why when it is connected to the body, it is useful. When this finger gets cut off from the body, does it have any use or any value? When the finger is cut off, you just throw it away. So the business of a part is to be connected to the whole. We are the parts of Krishna, so what should we do? We must become connected to Krishna. Unless and until we become connected to Krishna, our existence does not really have any utility, it does not have any meaning, and it does not have any purpose. The goal of our existence, the purpose of our existence is to become connected to Krishna. Now that is the goal of life.

Now again, how do we understand how to become connected to Krishna. Again, we need somebody to teach us how to become connected to Krishna. Somebody must teach us. We have to find that person. If we come across that person who can teach us, we should consider ourselves to be very fortunate. We should consider that we are very fortunate that we have come across such a person. And very fortunately, we have come across such a person. That is Srila Prabhupada. , Prabhupada, in his books, gave us all the information. How did I get this knowledge? I got this knowledge from Srila Prabhupada. You all go out and preach so, you also speak. Where did you get this knowledge from? – Srila Prabhupada. Prabhupada’s books. And this is the authority of our presentation. The authority of our presentation is Prabhupada’s books.

And Prabhupada, also, is not concocting something himself. Prabhupada is presenting everything from the basis of the scriptures. Krishna spoke Bhagavad-Gita and Prabhupada is simply presenting Krishna’s wisdom, what Krishna gave, the information that Krishna gave. Prabhupada is giving that. Prabhupada is giving that in a very special way. Just the way Krishna gave. That is why Prabhupada’s Gita is Bhagavad Gita As It Is. Prabhupada is presenting Srimad Bhagavatam with his Bhaktivedanta purport. We may not understand Srimad Bhagavatam, but Prabhupada is making Bhagavatam simplified. So, in this way, Prabhupada has presented things in such a way that anybody can understand it.

In this way Srila Prabhupada has given us a wonderful opportunity. We must take advantage of this opportunity. Always remember that it is your great good fortune that you came across this wisdom. It is your great good fortune that you have come across Srila Prabhupada’s teachings. It is a great good fortune that you have become connected to Iskcon. So please take advantage of that. Do not think that, “Well, let me just do something and let the Hare Krishnas do their own things.” No, do not take it like that. Become very, very serious about your spiritual life, for your own benefit. Maya will try to test you from time to time. Do you know what Maya’s test is? Maya’s test is a simple one. “Have you become ready to go to Krishna?” That is what Maya is always testing. “Have you become ready to go to Krishna?” Maya will put various kinds of tests to take us away from Krishna. So don’t go away from Krishna. Now that you have got this opportunity to go towards Krishna, stick to it, and keep moving towards Krishna and never ever deviate from that. And the process is very simple. Do you know what the most important thing in this respect is? I will go step by step.

-The most important thing is to chant Hare Krishna, the Hare Krishna maha-mantra.

-The next important thing is to read Prabhupada’s books.

-Then the next important thing is to remain in the association of devotees.

Be in the association of devotees because, if you are not in the association of devotees, it will be very difficult to overcome the onslaughts of maya; overcome the attacks of maya. Be in the association of devotees. Association of the devotees means be favourable towards the other devotees. Love the devotees, become their friends. Be together, try to serve together. That is the purpose of devotion. Association of devotees means to be

favourably disposed toward the other devotees. Try to serve them. Do not try to use them; try to serve them because the way to approach Krishna is through a devotee. Do you know what the safest way to go to Krishna is? Do not try to go to Krishna yourself. Put a devotee in front of you and follow him. That is how we can approach Krishna. If you go yourself, Krishna will say, “No way.” And before you hear Krishna say, “No way”, maya will catch you and take you away. That is the danger of trying to approach Krishna alone.

Follow a devotee. The more devotees you have, the better for you. They will not only take you to Krishna, they will carry you to Krishna. That is the advantage of being in the association of devotees. And, at the same time, I can tell you one thing also. It is Kali's age. What is Kali trying to do? Kali is trying to establish adharma. And what is Caitanya Mahaprabhu establishing? Dharma – yada yada hi dharmasya. That is why Krishna comes. So Caitanya Mahaprabhu is establishing dharma. Kali is trying to establish adharma. So when Kali sees that you are following Caitanya Mahaprabhu what will Kali do? Won't Kali become afraid? If somebody sees his enemy is becoming strong, then what will he try to do? He will try to stop that. So when Kali sees that you are trying to go towards Caitanya Mahaprabhu and are serving Him in His sankirtan movement, what will Kali try to do? Kali will try to stop you. And how does Kali stop you? Kali stops you through quarrel. Do you know what the meaning of the word Kali is? Kali means quarrel. Kali will try to spread his influence through quarrel. Look at the whole world. What is happening? There is quarrel, there are fights, there is dissension; there is conflict everywhere. And what is Kali doing? What is Kali promoting? Is Kali promoting dharma or adharma? Now what are the symptoms of adharma? -meat-eating, intoxication, illicit sex and gambling. What is increasing in today's world? – All of these four sinful activities. So this is a clear indication that Kali's influence is spreading.

Now if you want to follow Caitanya Mahaprabhu, what is the first thing you do? Off-course you chant Hare Krishna. But then what do you do? No meat-eating, no intoxication, no illicit sex and no gambling. So that is what dharma is standing for. When Kali sees that you are going towards Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Kali will automatically try to stop you. And how will Kali stop you? – Through quarrel. Now let us go even a little further.

What causes quarrel? In order to understand that, let us find out whose son Kali is? Kali is a person. Do you know whose son Kali is? Kali is the son of envy and anger; himsa and krodha. These are two personalities. So Kali is the son of anger and envy. So how does Kali spread his influence? -Through quarrel. What causes quarrel? – Envy and anger. Envy leads to anger and then, there is an explosion.

So how do we overcome that? Whenever we see that there is a possibility of conflict amongst ourselves, what should we try to do? Should we allow ourselves to become victims of that? We should try to prevent that; we should try to counteract that. That is how we actually have to overcome the influence of Kali. Now how do you counteract the influence of Kali? Answer is given. Yes, chanting, but beside that what should there be? – Tolerance. Tolerate. What does anger mean? Anger means no ability to tolerate. We become angry because we cannot tolerate it. But, if we can tolerate it then there won't be

any anger. Does the mother get angry even though the child does so many things? The mother tolerates. Why does the mother tolerate? Behind the tolerance, what do we need? -Love. So we have to see that our heart is filled with love. That love for Krishna will manifest in the form of tolerance towards other devotees. Now, the question may arise, “Well if somebody is acting in such a way, how can I tolerate? The question will be, “Do you think you are advanced or are you a neophyte?” Do you think you are neophyte? Yes, if you are neophyte then you will get angry. But, if you are advanced then tolerate. Now how many of you here are advanced? Very good, raise your hands. Therefore tolerate. The more you can tolerate, the more it is a sign of your advancement.

So, in this way, become the soldiers of Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s army. What is our weapon? Do you know what the weapon of Caitanya Mahaprabhu is? Answer is given. Yes, maha mantra. But what is the maha mantra symbolizing, signifying? Answer is given. Very good – Krishna prema. Prema. Mahaprabhu’s weapon is love. Do you know that verse? Krsna Varnam Tvisē Krishnam, Sangopangastra Parsadam Astra means weapon. So Caitanya Mahaprabhu came with a weapon. What is His weapon? His weapon is love. So surcharge your heart with love. That is your weapon. With that weapon, we will fight Kali, we will fight maya and you will go back to Godhead. We have got this wonderful opportunity, therefore take advantage of it. It is such a simple process. Just chant Hare Krishna and, and as I said, read Prabhupada’s books. Why is reading Prabhupada’s books so important? Because Prabhupada is giving us a constant reminder what we should do. Prabhupada is guiding us on how we should progress. Prabhupada is reminding us about the mission of our life. That is why we need to read Prabhupada’s books. You read Prabhupada’s books, you will get a constant reminder; you will get constant guidance.

And you will see, as a result of that, your heart will become so peaceful, your heart will become so content, so satisfied. And your heart will become filled with love. Sometimes devotees ask, “Maharaja, how do we understand whether we are progressing?” My answer is that, “See what the condition of your heart is.” From there we will understand whether we are progressing or not. Is your heart content, is your heart satisfied? If your heart is satisfied that means, yes, you are on the right path. If your heart is ready to give out the love to everybody around you, then you are advancing. Yes, you have a question?

Question: I have been told that if some person gets angry, he loses his bhakti. Can you tell me something about that? Because sometimes, like a teacher with children, you need to play angry when they all are [unclear] and then you lose bhakti with that.

Guru Maharaj: Well it depends. As you said that sometimes the teacher shows he is angry, but he is not really angry. It is the teacher’s duty. He may get angry when he sees that the student is not acting properly. If you are a teacher, then you have to show your anger sometimes, to get your students in line. But that anger is not going to affect your bhakti. That will increase your bhakti because you are doing it with a responsibility. But otherwise, yes, anger will cause the bhakti to disappear. These are the enemies of bhakti -lust, greed, anger, illusion, pride and envy. Not only anger, envy is the worst enemy.

So this is how we have to be careful that the creeper of devotion does not become affected. We have to cultivate the devotional creeper properly. That is why it is important to remain in the association of devotees. Because, if you are in the association of devotees, if something happens, other devotees will help you. Like when you are climbing a mountain, if you have some injury, then what do they do? Do they leave you and go? No, they carry you. So this is how the association of devotees will protect us in our progress towards the spiritual sky.

Question: How should you react if you see a devotee is being hurt?

Guru Maharaj: How do you react?

Answer: You get angry

Guru Maharaj: Like I said try to avoid anger. Because anger agitates the heart, agitates the mind. But you know the heart has to be peaceful to cultivate Krishna consciousness properly. Just like, if the water is turbulent, if the water is not placid can you see the reflection properly in the water? So now mind you, the mirror of the mind, it is like a mirror that reflects. But the difference between the mirror and our mind is chitta. The mirror is always plain and stable but our mind is like a pool that has waves -vritti. So if there are waves can you see the reflection properly? Therefore, in order to see the reflection, the surface of the mind should be very peaceful, placid. What does lust, greed, anger do? They agitate the mind. And, as a result of that, you do not see the reflection. So that is why it is important that you keep your mind peaceful. Even if there are reasons for the mind to become agitated, control it.

Now to go back to your point, what do you do when you see a devotee is being mistreated? Go to the devotee and give all your care, all your concern, all your love. Because he is hurt, he needs it. That is the time he will appreciate it the most. But, on the other hand, you can do another thing also. You pick up a danda and start fighting with the other person who hurt him. But then what will happen? You will just keep on fighting and your main objective will be lost.

Question: Guru Maharaj, how is it possible that a mother discipline a child without becoming angry? How a mother can correct the child without showing some anger when it is really necessary?

Guru Maharaj: I think you should answer the question. You are a mother. Again, we go back to that point; love. Mother sometimes chastises the child also but that is done with love. So in the mother's heart for the child there is only love.

Question: Guru Maharaj, you spoke about tolerance. Sometimes with the women tolerance seems little bit out of reach.

Guru Maharaj: OK, look at Mahaprabhu's instruction: trnad api sunicena. He is teaching us the qualification that we need to chant purely. What is the qualification? – trnad api

sunecena, taror iva sahisnuna. Tolerant means sahisnuna. How tolerant? – As tolerant as a tree. An example has been given. You see how tolerant the tree is. Somebody is cutting the tree, but the tree is giving him the shade. In the hot sun he is cutting the tree and the tree is giving the shade. Then he becomes hungry, the tree is offering him the fruit. The tree is not saying, “Oh, I won’t give it to you, you are cutting me, you are hurting me, why should I give you the fruit?” No. That is how a vaisnava must be like. You may hurt me, but still I will give you whatever you need. And, in order to be like that, you have to be more humble than a blade of grass. So this is the way. This is the process. And it will happen. We do not have to artificially demonstrate something. As we make spiritual advancement, these qualities will automatically manifest. It is a matter of our purification of the heart. It is a matter of our spiritual progress. The more we progress spiritually; all these qualities will become more and more manifest.

Question: Maharaj, all these people are asking about anger, but what I understand from you is that anger is also Kali?

Guru Maharaj: As I said, Kali’s father is anger.

Question: My question is that anger is also between husband and wife. That is the most important (unclear) thing we forget to ask you.

Guru Maharaj: That happens. But, that you know is loving anger and after five minutes they become peaceful again.

Question: If the husband comes from work and he sees that the wife shouting and the husband is also angry. Anger from two sides is just like a fire.

Guru Maharaj: So when she becomes angry, you remain cool. Tolerate. As I was saying, how to overcome anger is by tolerance.

Question: OK, that’s the part of the husband, he tolerates. But the wife should also understand that she must also tolerate

Guru Maharaj: Tell her that when she cools down. Because if you tell her that at that time when she is angry then she won’t be able to understand. She won’t react properly. She will also get angry. She will get more angry. And you will also get more angry. So when she gets angry, you stay cool.

Question: But this is the modern world. She wants to know, explain it why you are telling that you must have to shut your mouth and sit somewhere.

Guru Maharaj: If you speak to her like that, shut up, then she will off-course react in another way. You can reason with her when she becomes peaceful, when her anger subsides, you can tell her that, “Look, why did you get angry like that? You try to understand that I work the whole day and I had to go through so much. I come home to get some peace and if you behave like that can you imagine how I feel?” So this is how

when you make her understand, then she will understand. And as I said, at the bottom of it, it is all love. It is the love that overcomes all these negative qualities. Not only between husband and wife, it is with everybody, everywhere. There are so many reasons to be angry. But, we have to learn to be tolerant. That is why Caitanya Mahaprabhu is telling the most important instruction is become humble and become tolerant.

Question: (unclear)develop Krishna prema by chanting and taking association devotees. What if one comes in the situation where the association lacks, there is less association, so the person tends to fall down or get into maya, how should one handle that?

Guru Maharaj: Well, as I said, you have to find the association. Now if you cannot find the association, then make the association. You preach to other people around you and create the association of sadhus. The association is most important. Without the association of devotees, we won't be able to continue with our spiritual life for very long. So you may say, "Well I don't have association." My answer to that will be, "Then go and make that association, create that association, preach and make devotees. You have to do it for your own sake."

Question: A devotee has to be humble as a tree

Guru Maharaj: More humble than a blade of grass.

Question: More tolerant than a tree. And even when someone is cutting it, they have to give it shade and go through it, but what is the next process, like if the tree is cut how will the tree be Krishna conscious?

Guru Maharaj: It is just an analogy. An example we do not take literally. Even if you take it literally, then also the answer will be that if somebody cuts you (as you said if the tree is cut then how it will become a Krishna devotee)if Krishna sees that the tree is tolerating for His sake, then Krishna Himself will come and take him back to Godhead, that soul. The point is, if somebody hurts you, even to the point of death, and if you tolerate him because of your love for Krishna, then Krishna will come and take you back to Godhead. Because whatever you do for the sake of Krishna will never go in vain. Because Krishna is seeing, He is omniscient, He is all pervading and, as the Supersoul, He is sitting in everyone's heart, so Krishna knows everything. So we do not have to hide anything from Krishna or we should never think that, "Well Krishna is not watching, Krishna is not seeing." Krishna is seeing everything and accordingly Krishna will reward you, especially if you do something for Krishna.

Question: Maharaja [name is unclear] told us about the difference between rendering service at home and in the temple because Srila Prabhupada told us many times to render service and we have Krishna at home and we are chanting there.

Guru Maharaj: The question is: What should one do? – whether one should render service at home or whether one should render service in the temple and that Prabhupada said one should render service in the temple. Then the third point is what about rendering service

at the office? What about rendering service in your workplace? Most of the time actually goes just rendering service in the workplace because that is the unfortunate situation of this age. Life has become so complex that you have to have so much money every month, otherwise you cannot survive. And the money does not fall from the tree. So you have to go and earn it. And to earn the money you have to work for ten to twelve hours a day. So, most of the time is actually spent at the workplace. In spite of that, we must try to save some time for Krishna's service.

The first preference is chanting your sixteen rounds. Chanting is the most important business. Then you can think of other things. Today only I was discussing with a devotee. She came to me and told me that she has the Deities of Radha-Krishna and Gaura-Nitai and she cannot take care of Them now. So my answer to that was, "That is why we have been telling you again and again there is no need to have personal Deities." You go to Vrndavan and a nice looking Deity costs only hundred euros. You think, "Oh, costs only hundred euros." And you just bring the Deities; you think now you got a toy.

The Deities are not toys. The Deities are Krishna. So you should invite Krishna when you are ready to take care of Him. If you are not really able to take care of Him, then think about it twice. That is why Prabhupada said that he is setting up the temples, so that everybody can come and render service to the deities. And when twenty five of you get together and serve, you can serve very nicely. But, if you have the Deities at home, then you have the problem. You do not have the time. And then you come to a situation when you cannot actually take care of the Deities. Then what happens? You have the Deities, Radharani and Krishna came to your house and They are starving. Nobody is dressing them, nobody is bathing Them. Would you like that to happen to your child? Never.

So Who is Krishna? Should you not treat Krishna as your child, should you not treat Krishna as your Friend, should you not treat Krishna as your Husband or your Father? Krishna is so dear. Like when you have a relative, when you have somebody who you love, can you treat him or her in such a way that he suffers? One thing I can tell you; during Prabhupada's time very few devotees had personal Deities. Now everybody has personal Deities. And they are so busy serving their personal Deities, that the temple is becoming empty, the temples are empty.

Question: Is it even allowed to have personal Deities without being brahman initiated?

Guru Maharaj: That is another thing. To serve the Deities you have to be a brahmana. Deity worship is for brahmanas. Anyway, that is what I wanted to tell you all. Before you get your Deities, be very, very careful. You should not think just about one month, two years or five years or ten years. You should think what will happen to the Deities when you become old or when you die. Will your children take care of your Deities? You have to think about that. In the early days in India it was alright because there were joint families, big families, twenty/thirty members in one house. Deity worship was no problem. If the father became old, his son took care of the Deities. When the son became old, his son took care of the Deities. In this way, generation after generation,

they took care of the Deities. That is why you must remember: this is why Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave the Holy Name. Caitanya Mahaprabhu knew that in this age people would not be able to do the Deity worship. Therefore Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Just chant the Holy Name of the Lord." Is it difficult? No. Chant we can, even at the time of death. And that is what we should train ourselves to do so that we can chant the name of the Lord at the time of death. Can you do Deity worship at the time of death? Maybe some very advanced devotees can do that in their minds but not everybody. But chanting is possible for everybody.

Question: Maharaj, addition to this subject, I am told that one instruction of Srila Prabhupada was also that for neophyte devotees it was advisable to engage in Deity worship.

Guru Maharaj: Did Prabhupada say neophyte devotees? I thought Deity worship is for the brahmanas. Prabhupada did not say neophyte devotees. Prabhupada said in order to get rid of sex desire you should worship Deities. But that is not household Deities, Prabhupada meant the temple Deities, in the temple.

Question: When there is no temple available for regular Deity worship?

Guru Maharaj: Worship the Deity in the picture. They are already dressed. They are already bathed. All you have to do is just offer Them some bhoga. But the moment you get regular Deities, then it goes into another standard. And especially if you have Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Deity or Panca Tattva Deities or Gaura Nitai deities you can just chant Hare Krishna. That will be enough. If you chant Hare Krishna, He will be pleased.

Question: My biggest problem is to overcome illusion. I am aware about the material and spiritual world and sometimes I just want to enjoy the material world, even when I know it's illusion. So sometimes it's problem with that.

Guru Maharaj: Very good, very sincere question. You see there are three modes in the material nature. Generally most of the people are influenced by the mode of passion. And the mode of passion actually causes this illusion. That means taking illusion to be real. It is not real. Just like on a movie screen you see the characters. Are they real? No. But to think they are real and act according to that will be illusion. Similarly, this is a three dimensional movie screen. And here we are actually getting involved and that is illusion and it is caused by mode of passion. Therefore, we have to become situated in knowledge and it is the mode of goodness that takes us to the platform of knowledge. That is why what we have to do is try to overcome the influence of mode of passion with the mode of goodness. And mode of goodness means knowledge. So therefore you have to study, you have to practice the process that has been given, associate with the devotees. When you are in the right association then everything will become clear. Like you will understand what should be done and what should not be done. Another thing is, the body also reacts in a certain way. When the body is young, the influence of the mode of passion is strong. But then, as the body grows old, the passion gradually wears out and one becomes situated more in the mode of goodness, provided he is cultivating the

process properly. By nature's arrangement it is there. What to do? Tolerate and practice the process. On the one hand tolerate the onslaughts of maya and at the same time practice the process of Krishna consciousness.