

Towaco Lectures : SB 10.2.31

FOLLOWING IS A LECTURE ON THE SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM CANTO 10, CHAPTER 2, TEXT 31 GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CARU SWAMI IN ISKCON TOWACO, USA, ON 28 APRIL 2009.



Transcription : Her Grace Ranga Radhika Dasi
Editing : Ramananda Raya Dasa

Audio-reference : http://audio.iskcondesiretree.info/index.php?q=f&f=%2F02_-_ISKCON_Swamis%2FHis_Holiness_Bhakti_Caru_Swami%2FSrimad_Bhagavatam

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

Srimad Bhagavatam. Tenth Canto. Chapter Two, 'Prayers by the Demigods.' Text Thirty One.

Svayam samuttirya sudustaram dyuman
bhavarnavam bhimam adabhra-sauhrdah
bhavat-padambhoruha-navam atra te
nidhaya yatah sad-anugraho bhavan

SYNONYMS

svayam — personally; samuttirya — perfectly crossing; su-dustaram — which is very difficult to cross; dyuman — O Lord, who appear exactly like the sun, illuminating the darkness of this world of ignorance; bhava-arnavam — the ocean of nescience; bhimam — which is extremely fierce; adabhra-sauhrdah — devotees who are incessantly friendly to the fallen souls; bhavat-pada-ambhoruha — Your lotus feet; navam — the boat for crossing; atra — in this world; te — they (the Vaisnavas); nidhaya — leaving behind; yatah — on to the ultimate destination, Vaikuntha; sat-anugraha — who are always kind and merciful to the devotees; bhavan — You.

TRANSLATION

O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [vancha-kalpataru]. When acaryas completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them.

PURPORT

This statement reveals how the merciful acaryas and the merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead together help the serious devotee who wants to return home, back to Godhead. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in His teachings to Rupa Gosvami, said:

brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva
guru-krsna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija
(Cc. Madhya 19.151)

One can achieve the seed of bhakti-lata, devotional service, by the mercy of guru and Krishna. The duty of the guru is to find the means, according to the time, the circumstances and the candidate, by which one can be induced to render devotional service, which Krishna accepts from a candidate who wants to be successful in going back home, back to Godhead. After wandering throughout the universe, a fortunate person within this material world seeks shelter of such a guru, or acarya, who trains the devotee in the suitable ways to render service according to the circumstances so that the Supreme Personality of Godhead will accept the service. This makes it easier for the candidate to reach the ultimate destination. The acarya's duty, therefore, is to find the means by which devotees may render service according to references from sastra. Rupa Gosvami, for example, in order to help subsequent devotees, published such devotional books as Bhakti-rasamrta -sindhu. Thus it is the duty of the acarya to publish books that will help future candidates take up the method of service and become eligible to return home, back to Godhead, by the mercy of the Lord. In our Krishna consciousness movement, this same path is being prescribed and followed. Thus the devotees have been advised to refrain from four sinful activities — illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating and gambling — and to chant sixteen rounds a day. These are bona fide instructions. Because in the Western countries constant chanting is not possible, one should not artificially imitate Haridasa Thakura, but should follow this method. Krishna will accept a devotee who strictly follows the regulative principles and the method prescribed in the various books and literatures published by the authorities. The acarya gives the suitable method for crossing the ocean of nescience by accepting the boat of the Lord's lotus feet, and if this method is strictly followed, the followers will ultimately reach the destination, by the grace of the Lord. This method is called acarya-sampradaya. It is therefore said, sampradaya-vihina ye mantras te nisphala matah? (Padma Purana). The acarya-sampradaya is strictly bona fide. Therefore one must accept the acarya-sampradaya; otherwise one's endeavor will be futile. Srila Narottama dasa Thakura therefore sings:

tandera carana sevi bhakta sane vasa
janame janame haya, ei abhilasa

One must worship the lotus feet of the acarya and live within the society of devotees. Then one's endeavor to cross over nescience will surely be successful.

[End of Purport]

Svayam samuttirya sudustaram dyuman
bhavarnavam bhimam adabhra-sauhrdah
bhavat-padambhoruha-navam atra te
nidhaya yatah? sad-anugraho bhavan

So, the demigods are offering worship to Krishna when He was in the womb of His mother, Devaki, in the prison of Kamsa. Prayers are actually an honest expression of one's understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And generally the prayers are offering the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krishna is endowed with all kinds of wonderful qualities. So when we describe those qualities of Krishna, they automatically become glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

So, here the demigods are offering prayers to Krishna. Now, are these prayers like something like flattery? No, they're genuine glorification. What is the difference between flattery and glorification? Prithu Maharaja actually pointed out to the, when they were glorifying about Him, what He will do in future. Prithu Maharaja said that, "Look, it'll just sound like flattery. I haven't done that. Now you are saying that I am this, I am

that, but I haven't displayed that. So people will think that you are unnecessarily exaggerating My qualities." So, that is the difference between flattery and glorification. Flattery is unreal, untruth. It's not founded on proper foundation, but glorification is different. The person is endowed with all these qualities and we speak about them. Then they become glorification.

So here we are seeing a very wonderful glorification of the Lord, which is indicating that, "Only by your mercy that one can get across the material nature. And in this material nature Your mercy flows through Your very dear devotees, the acaryas, those who take up the responsibility to spread Krishna Consciousness." Krishna is very fond of Krishna Consciousness spreading. In Bhagavad Gita Krishna says that no one is dearer to Him than those who preach the glory of Krishna. Preaching means singing the glory of Krishna. So those who glorify Krishna to others and make them understand about Krishna's supreme position and the benefit of becoming connected to Krishna, they are indeed very, very fortunate.

Therefore, Prabhupada was very emphatic that we should not be satisfied just by practicing devotional service ourselves. We must take it upon ourselves to inspire others also to take to Krishna Consciousness. So how will that happen? Simply by glorifying Krishna and that is the meaning of sankirtana. When we make people understand who Krishna is, how great Krishna is, then automatically they will surrender. When we recognize the greatness of Krishna, when we recognize the benefit of becoming devotees of Krishna, when we recognize how rewarding it is to become a devotee of Krishna, then everybody will be interested to become a devotee of Krishna. But if we just sit at home or some corner of the temple and chant, not go out and preach, then the proper glorification will not take place. When you go out and make people understand how wonderful Krishna is then they'll fall in love with Krishna. When we even make people understand that surrendering to Krishna will deliver them from all their miserable condition people will accept it.

The world situation is becoming so difficult. So many people have lost their whole life savings due to this credit crunch. Now at a time like that, what happens? One feels completely helpless. Can you imagine a seventy year old man, all the money that he saved throughout his entire life, he puts it in the investment. And then one fine morning he becomes aware that it is all gone. Can you imagine? All of a sudden this man becomes a pauper. He doesn't have anybody to take care of him. His sons and daughters have left him. He thought this, with my savings I will live a somewhat comfortable life, not depending on anybody and then all of a sudden all the money is gone.

So how does one feel at a time like that? But if you go and tell him, "Don't worry, Krishna is there. You are worried that you won't have your money, you won't have food to eat, but Krishna will provide. Don't worry. Just chant Hare Krishna." And at the same time we also have to give them the assurance: "Don't worry. Come to us. Chant Hare Krishna, we'll take care of you." That is what Prabhupada actually wanted. Prabhupada used to say, "You just surrender to Krishna, I'll take care of you", in a country like India there are thousands and millions of poverty stricken people. And sometimes some reporters challenged Prabhupada, "What will you do if all these people come to you?" He said, "That's none of your business. Let them come, I'll take care of them. Bring them! I will take care of them."

So that should be our attitude. When we tell people that Krishna will take care of you, as Krishna's representative, we should be prepared to take care of them. Not that we say, "Krishna will take care of you." And when they come, "Oh please, don't become my burden! Don't become my responsibility. Go to an old age home." Or go to some, what is it called, homeless, go to the shelter for the homeless. Don't come to us. No! Our mood should completely be reassuring. "You come to us. Krishna will take care of you."

And will it be difficult? Time and time again we have seen in our scriptures how Krishna takes care. Do you remember the incidence of Mrigari? Mrigari's anxiety was, "If I stop hunting, then what will happen? How will I maintain my family?" Narada Muni said, "Don't worry. You just chant Hare Krishna. You become a devotee of Krishna." And Mrigari just accepted Narada Muni's instruction and he started to chant. He gave up his occupation as a hunter and he just became a devotee. And all the village people saw that Mrigari became a devotee. Mrigari became a saint. So they used to come to see him. The hunter became a saint! And when people come they bring something with them. So Mrigari started to get so much supply, so much

bhoga, that he started to feed everybody! [laughs] So that is what Krishna Consciousness is like. Krishna takes care.

Like, this is how we should actually think of preaching. Not only those who will come to our temple only we'll just have them, have Sunday Feast organized for them. No. Our mood should be, okay, you are in difficulty, surrender to Krishna. Krishna will take care of you. And at least about your food and other things we'll take care. Just come to us. We are offering bhoga to Krishna and we'll share Krishna prasada. Now maybe we have five people in the temple, we are sharing the Raja bhoga offering. Ten people will come, it's okay, fine! We'll share it among ourselves. The next day we'll make arrangements that we'll make bigger offering, bigger bhoga for Raja bhoga. Then twenty people will come, we say fine! There is always prasada of Krishna.

That's how Prabhupada actually wanted to have our prasada distribution. Prabhupada's one early instruction actually was that whenever somebody comes to a temple he should get prasada. Whoever comes to a temple, there should be prasada. What should he get? He should get some puri, he should get some subji, he should get some halava. And Prabhupada said, "Cook that for twenty people. Keep it. Make arrangements for twenty people in each go. So make the dough ready, subji is ready, halava is ready, and as soon as they come, you fry the puri. Dough is ready, it will take just a few minutes to fry the puri. Serve them hot puri, subji, halava. And if that lot is finished, then make for another twenty. If that lot is finished make for another twenty. And whatever is leftover, if there is some leftover, the brahmacharis will come after distributing books in the evening and they will take care of that.

Now the question is, where will the money come? When we serve Krishna we have to have the confidence that money will come. If we serve Krishna Lakshmidivi will send all the money that we need. If there is scarcity of money today, that is because we stopped to serve Krishna. That's why Lakshmidivi said that, "You don't need money. Why should I give you any money? You are not serving Krishna." If we serve Krishna, Lakshmidivi will give everything that we need. After all, we are dealing with the Supreme Personality of Godhead! We are not dealing with some fictitious character. He is real. He is the Supreme Proprietor. He is the Supreme Controller, and Lakshmidivi is His eternal consort who is the goddess of fortune. All the wealth belongs to Her. So if She sees that we are serving Krishna, She'll go out of Her way to help us. So we should never think that how shall we shoulder that responsibility? Where the money will come? Rather, we should not worry about that and we should be confident that it WILL be there.

And world situation will become more and more critical. And the more critical it becomes we should consider it is a bigger opportunity to preach. Today our temples are empty. If we start preaching hundreds of people, thousands of people will come. When they're in difficulty and they see that we are actually giving them the shelter then yes, they'll come to us. So world situation becomes more critical, our opportunity for preaching will increase. So we shouldn't worry. "Oh, credit crunch! What will happen to us?" Credit crunch is for those people. Those who don't have any spiritual credit, but those who are devotees of Krishna, they have spiritual credit. Their credit will never crunch. Rather, they'll keep on increasing more and more. The more we serve Krishna, the more credit we'll get.

So with full confidence we should actually serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What is our business? Our business is, as it has been mentioned here, take people across the ocean of material nature. The boat is there. Like, yesterday we discussed, what is that boat? Krishna's lotus feet becomes the boat. We take shelter of Krishna's lotus feet and the lotus feet becomes lotus boat and it takes us across. And here it is saying, although it is taking us across, again it comes back to take others. While it is taking us across it is here, to take others. While they're taking others, it is taking others. [laughs] So that is the transcendental arrangement of Krishna. Normal boat, one boat goes, then it reaches the other shore, and then it may come back or may not come back. But this boat is very, very special. There are unlimited boats to take unlimited number of people across the ocean of material nature.

So we should have full confidence in this process. It works. It works. It is Krishna's divine arrangement. And the more we try to help others more of Krishna's mercy will flow. Krishna is not a miser. Krishna never says that, "Well, I can give you only this much." Krishna says, "Unlimited number, unlimited amount. Let

unlimited number of people come and I will give them unlimited amount of mercy.” And we are representing Him. So why should we be worried about it? The demand is there, the supply will be there. And that is how this Movement is going to spread. Therefore, we must consider the difficulties and the external, material nature, the crisis in the material nature is to our advantage. We should not be afraid.

[altar curtains open] Jaya Sri Sri Gaura Nitai ki jaya! Jaya Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana Hanumana ki jaya!
Jaya Sri Sri Giridhari Gopala ki jaya!

And devotees will never face unemployment. There is no unemployment in Krishna’s world. Everybody has enough service. How do the devotees feel? I wish I had forty eight hours a day instead of twenty four hours. There is so much to do. I do not have enough time. So that is the devotee’s attitude. Unemployment is another misfortune that has been created by this world. Their employment is only a conditional or selfish appointment. They will employ people only when they can exploit them, which means by paying them hundred dollars they will make five hundred dollars. That is why they employ. They give them five [one] hundred dollars, the people getting one hundred dollars thinks, “Oh, I am so happy I got a job. Now my life is successful. I got a job, now I can rent a house, now I can get married.” And so forth. That is how they think. But actually those who are employing, how they are thinking? They are thinking, “Okay, I am giving this guy a hundred. Like, I should at least make five hundred dollars out of it. Better, try to make six, seven, eight hundred dollars out of him! Let him work like a monkey and I’ll make money, profit.” And when he can’t make that profit, then he says, “Okay, fired!” He is not giving the job out of his love and sympathy for those people. And the education system is also preparing them to become slaves of this system. Working so hard, so for what? So that they can get a job.

But we don’t need all those mundane qualification and education. We don’t need anything from this world. And everybody has employment. Okay, you have nothing to do? Just go sit in a corner and chant Hare Krishna. That’s an employment. You have some time to do, you have some time to render some service? Okay, clean the floor of the temple. You are free? Go to the kitchen and cut the vegetables. Go to the garden and take care of the flowers. So there is always something to do. Like, in Krishna’s world, there is no unemployment. Okay, you have nothing to do? Okay, sit in front of the deities and sing some bhajan. So, always there is something, some service we can render to the Lord. And if we do that, Krishna will be pleased and Krishna will give us everything. But if we don’t, then Krishna will take everything away.

Like, look at the world situation. What is happening? The rivers are drying out. There is an acute shortage of water in India today. India! Can you imagine? The most fertile land is becoming a desert. Why? Okay, don’t serve Krishna and that’s what will happen. Don’t surrender to Krishna, that’s what is going to happen. Yamuna is becoming dry. So many rivers are becoming dry. And if there is no water then what will happen? If there is no water there won’t be any food. Not only in India, in Australia, in Sydney area, I heard, for so many years there hadn’t been rain. Isn’t it? How many years there was a drought? So you lead a sinful life, you kill cows, abort babies, eat meat, indulge in sinful activities, what will be the consequence? This will be the consequence. But you surrender to Krishna and render devotional service, everything will be there in abundance.

They may not understand that, but at least we should have full confidence in that and we should be acting with that understanding in that platform. That is how we have to bring some sanity in this mad world.

Hare Krishna! Gaura Premanande! Hari Haribol!

Does anybody have any question? Yes, Samika Rishi prabhu?

Devotee: Maharaja, this credit crunch and all this economy, we are planning for a larger temple, so we have to be practical, reduce expenses and reduce, so how we should go along and how we could simultaneously achieve preaching work, bringing people, cutting discount. Where is the compromise ?

BCS: It is your project, you have to decide! Why you are asking me! [laughter]

Devotee: I am asking for your advice.

BCS: We have to, you know, like, we have to do things according to the time, place and necessity, right? Like, we have to make practical, you know, moves, practical decisions. And I am sure you will see it

yourself. That's why my advice will be, not advise, my suggestion will be, remain open. Like, whatever necessary, just do that. It is not that because I have plan I have to do it. We have to listen to what Krishna's plan is. And we have to move according to Krishna's arrangement, Krishna's plans.

And, you know, Krishna will guide us. Krishna will give us the intelligence. Like, for example, there is a credit crunch. Hundreds of people, thousands of people are starving. Naturally, government will think of some ways. They will look for some organization that they can trust. So we can go forward and say that, "We'll do it. We'll do it." And the government will give all the facilities. Then probably we can use that land for food distribution arrangement, right? Then what will happen? When the government sees that we are actually honest and genuine, they'll give all their help.

You know, I am experiencing that in Ujjain, actually. Indian government has a program called Midday Meal, Midday Meal Project, that is to feed the school children. You see, in India children from poverty stricken houses they don't think of going to school. So government started this system, thinking that if we can give them food, then because they'll get food they'll send their children, come to school. And, you know, we started with twenty five thousand people, twenty five thousand children.

And in Madhya Pradesh we had a big challenge. In other places they can serve khichari and rice, which is easy to cook, right? But Madhya Pradesh, they wanted chapati because they have only wheat to give. No rice. So, it was a challenge and twenty five thousand children means each child gets three chapatis. So that means seventy five thousand chapatis. It's impossible to make them by rolling them. It was a challenge, so we got a machine, chapati making machine, that makes ten thousand chapatis per hour. We earned such a good will now that the government people are asking to us, first of all they said, that now you expanded take Dewas, Dewas district, but I said no, because we already, you see, it's like a big investment, big head ache, big organization. What actually happens, normally people make money out of this project, right? Whereas we are putting money to undertake this project.

So, they're no fools, you know. They could see, you know, what we are doing as opposed to what they had been doing. So that's why they are saying, "Take up Dewas." Take up Dewas means to set up another setup like that and machines and things, you know. So we said, "No, we are not really ready for that." So then recently, recently means a couple of months back, they came, the government officials came to us to supply food to the prisoners in the prison. In this way, they're actually coming to us, you know. They're giving the money, we simply have to make the arrangements. They're giving the money and initial setup costs us money, but after that they supply. And also Debi Deva prabhu, you know he's made millions of dollars just by supplying the homeless people. Of course, they're making profit. I mean here, American government is not like Indian government, you know. When they give, they give you, they make sure that you also can make your profit.

So we can think of where is the means to expand our preaching, and ultimately it is all a matter of service. If we serve, they'll come to us. And at the time of difficulty they will see what we are capable of doing or how sincerely we are actually trying to benefit them. Ultimately what do we have to take from them? We have nothing to gain from them. We can simply serve, and by serving we get the joy. Like, you know, when we see so many school children are getting nice prasada we feel happy. When we see the government is responding so favorably we feel happy, and that's the way we experience our joy. And what to speak of seeing how Krishna is becoming happy about that? Even in this platform we experience this happiness.

Devotee: About these talks about the acarya's, that how according to time, place, necessities change. It seems it is very difficult. Many, may come and proclaim that I am acarya, so how to recognize, how to see that what he is changing is proper or not proper? Like, just changing the books to become a proper understanding. There are so many challenges. And another thing also, like in temples changing something and then so how to come to It's a very..

BCS: You see, it is not a matter of somebody coming and saying I am an acarya. It's a matter of somebody coming and doing things to expand Krishna Consciousness. He is the acarya. It is not a matter of our claim. It's a matter of practical demonstration.

Devotee: But they don't allow even or we cannot walk.. Suppose there is some matter and we want to try, but then before try we'll be stopped, don't do it, it's no profit. To see the result we have to go out

BCS: Then I will say bypass those obstacles and do that.

Devotee: Bypass the obstacles.

BCS: Yeah, if somebody is trying to stop you just Krishna Consciousness Movement is meant to expand, not to obstruct. If someone is obstructing preaching, if someone is obstructing service, then we have to understand that something is wrong. So why should we surrender to him? I mean, I am saying that if the situation becomes like that, then, like we can see with Prabhupada. He tried to work with his Godbrothers, but when he saw that none of them were actually serious about serving he didn't want to waste his time. He just carried on with his mission.

Yeah, there may be obstacles. There are already some very serious criticisms about food distribution. But the thing is, at the time of need, when people are going hungry and if the food is distributed and if there is criticism, then better not to worry about that criticism. Just carry on doing it. What people think, what people talk is not important. What is the need of the moment, acting according to that need is what is important. And that's why I am saying acarya doesn't talk. He acts and he does, and that's how he becomes an acarya. Prabhupada was not acarya. Prabhupada never claimed that I am an acarya, but the world has recognized Prabhupada as an acarya and the world will continue to see what a great acarya Srila Prabhupada is through his actions.

Devotee: One question I wanted to ask on behalf of our congregational member, Krishna Naidu. She was asking that you commented in one of your talks that we must bring at least one Western devotee. So she said why Western devotees, there are so many, Swami Narayana, so many others. Any soul, why are we seeing the external dress? Anybody can, the whole world needs

BCS: There is no harm. Bring twenty Swami Narayanas, but along with them bring at least one white person. We are not saying don't bring the Swami Narayana, otherwise what will happen? What is happening is, our institution will be seen as a Hindu organization and the actual purpose will be lost. It won't have that international flavor. Bring twenty swamis, two hundred Swami Narayanas. We are not stopping that, but along with that bring a few white men, so that you know this has an international flavor. I am not saying don't bring Indians. Bring all the Indians! But what I am saying is don't just limit it only to the Indians. Then what's the point in calling it an International Society for Krishna Consciousness? And then what is the difference between Swami Narayana and ISKCON? Because they are not attracting the Europeans, but look what Prabhupada did. Prabhupada started this Movement with the Americans and Europeans. And that is Prabhupada's unique ability and inconceivable achievement. Why didn't she ask me that question?

Devotee: She was a little bit shy, and she said that...

BCS: Okay, you give her this.

Devotee: And if they don't want to come, what can be done?

BCS: If they don't want to come, how did Prabhupada bring them? How did Prabhupada bring them? And again, my point again, I will repeat. When I see only the Indians are coming that means you are not preaching. Those who are coming on their own, we are just happy with them. If we are preaching then it would have attracted other people. And people are ready to listen. People are ready to develop friendship. Even if they don't accept the Krishna Consciousness philosophy, but if they find good friends in us, they'll come to us.

Devotee: That's true.

BCS: Thank you! Yeah, any question, Madhupati prabhu?

Devotee: During the credit crunch at our centre we saw we have a jump of 25 percent increase of the congregation.

BCS: Right, right. At the time of distress people will take shelter of Krishna.

Devotee: In India they're asking for the prasada, in Vrindavana also, twenty rupee, to go and pay the brahmacharis, in many places. On the Sunday feasts like a law in the temple also, they started that if they want to take Sunday prasada then they must pay. It started with thirty rupees but they might have reduced last time I was there. So what is your suggestion, should it be there or should it not be there? How should we manage because it is quite expensive. Any way to feed halava, puris and subji? Here we manage because people donate, but there, it is not there. So, I just wanted your practical experience. Should we charge, not charge? Because many temples have started in India.

BCS: Well, my response will be, just do it the way Prabhupada did it. It was Sunday Love Feast. People were invited to come, prasada was given. Now there may be reason, you know, all kinds of undesirable elements are coming. The same people are just coming. But in order to control that, you know, we can probably take different, other course than charging money. Because Prabhupada didn't charge, Prabhupada didn't want to. Like, for example, in Calcutta also we faced a similar situation that the same people were just coming.

Devotee: right! Who will never take to Krishna Consciousness.

BCS: They won't take to Krishna Consciousness. They just come to have a free meal and as a result of that, the genuine people who are not actually coming because they are seeing the temple is packed with these kind of characters. So then we started a system. We have so many life members, we used to send invitations. And Sunday Feast was on invitation. As a result of that what happened, we started to get newer and newer people coming those who were life member and it was an opportunity to cultivate. So, I personally would feel that these are the ways to actually go. Not charge money, because if you charge money for Sunday Feast then it sends a wrong message across. Like for that matter Bombay temple has so many people coming. They don't charge money. Chowpatti has such huge gathering on Sunday. They're happy, two, three thousand of people are coming. And they have given the assignment to different sangas, groups. They call it council. Different days different groups are taking care and it is their responsibility to feed.

Devotee: So, it's not the temple who is paying for the bhoga, the council

BCS: I don't exactly know. Maybe temple is probably paying for the bhoga, but ultimately bhoga is how much? When you come to think of it, you know, it doesn't cost so much.

Devotee: And even in this temple, Maharaja, I have been observing, people just come out and they sponsor.

BCS: Right. That's the thing, yeah. If the right spirit is established things will automatically happen.

Devotee: You gave us many practical hints, Maharaja. This is sincere, from your heart. They are very valuable for us. To the children, to the youth group, to us, everybody who wanted to see you, and you opened the door, anybody can walk and and talk to you. Ajaya Kumar, he talked to you already. That's your nice [unclear] concern.

BCS: Last Sunday I couldn't actually keep my door open [laughs], because I had some special guests. See, this is the thing. Like these people, this is the second Sunday Feast that they came to, Sunday program, because you see they are very busy people. Only time they can come is Sundays. The last one, they came in Central New Jersey, I was there. When I was there, they came. This time also they came here. And you know something, they're not only whites, they're Muslims. And this person, the husband, is actually the director of Military Peace Mission of United Nations. You see, when they send army, the military, to establish peace in some areas, he is the person who decides. It's a very important position. So the thing is, you know, we can't say that I mean, he is a Muslim person and of course, a very broadminded person, very broadminded. His wife was telling me the other day that I am the first Indian, the Hindu swami, that he met and she was telling from the very first meeting the two of us just clicked. [laughs]

Devotee: They live here or in New York?

BCS: They live in New Jersey.

Devotee: Oh, they live in New Jersey and they came to this temple?

BCS: They came here, in this temple, yeah. They came here last Sunday, the Feast. And that's why, because I was talking to them..

Devotee: You could not meet the others.

BCS: I could not meet anybody else. Quite a few devotees came from New York and all. Unfortunately I couldn't.

Devotee: But that's more important, you had to do that, regular things aside.

BCS: Yeah. I mean if I allowed everybody to come there I couldn't speak to them properly. And we had some very in depth discussions. Like, one topic came up, what I was telling, about Islam. The thing is Islam demands that you have to have the faith. So I pointed out, yes, naturally this spiritual progress or spiritual approach begins with faith. Not only spiritual, even material things begin with faith. When I go to study something I go there with faith, that they will teach me the right subject, the teachers are qualified. Even when I learned, A B C D, I had to accept it with faith. A is A and B is B.

But then we have to understand that this faith will be verified in course of time. Then only the faith will become properly established. Otherwise it will be just blind faith and that is not desirable. And I pointed out that we cannot see God. We cannot see the spiritual reality with our eyes. So, yes, we have to approach that domain with faith. But at the same time, with our intelligence and common sense we can establish the proof of it. Like, if I say, if I ask, did somebody make this? What will be your answer? I may not know him but somebody, at least I assume that naturally somebody made this. Somebody made this. Somebody made this. Everything has been made by somebody.

Now, who made this world? I may not know him, but at least [with] our common sense we'll have to understand that somebody has made it. And so when I was making that point, just don't leave it at blind faith and say that, "Well, whatever I am saying you have to accept." Rather, the approach should be, whatever I am saying see, it is rationally justified. Then only the faith will have his foundation. And come to think of it, that's the real problem with the Islam, and he accepted it.

So, you know, like we can have a dialogue with people if we befriend them. So that is how. You have seen, I am not even forcing them to come to the temple. Actually, she asked me when she should come. I told her that from six to seven I'll give the class and you come after that. Of course, last time they came and she was dancing. After the thing, when you were having the kirtana, she was dancing. But still, I said that this is what my program is, six to seven I'll be giving the class, so you can come to class. Then she said actually they have some guests so they'll be little late in coming. So, there is no need to force. Let us just, you know, develop friendship, have intelligent dialogue, intelligent discussions. Things will naturally happen. And the thing is, this program, in New York actually I had only one program this time, fifth, but when they got to know I was coming on the fifth, I mean having a program, they decided to have another program with me. So the program on the sixth is just a recent happening and they're organizing it. And you know what will be this program? There will be an Imam, from Muslim, and there is going the some Christian, some Christian man. So, three of us are there. And Sally is going to moderate it. Let's have a dialogue, let's..

Devotee: let's preach on international level and people can [inaudible]

BCS: Right, yeah.

Devotee: what particular faith, to appeal to them, how to become closer to Krishna, God and know Him more.

BCS: Right, right.

Devotee: Can we say that religion is a very plural thing and it is not [inaudible]

BCS: That's true. And when they become exposed they do understand. Like do you remember Ravanari? Ravanari is one of our godbrothers. He is from Muslim background. He is the one who translated Bhagavad Gita in Arabic, a very brilliant preacher. I took him to India and had a program with him. And we went to different places. First started off in Calcutta and then we went to Bangalore, to Chennai, Madras, at that time it was not Chennai, Madras, Bombay, Delhi. He was so brilliant. He was not only a Muslim, he was coming from a family of mullahs, like generation after generation they were mullahs. So he was being trained up, you know, to become a mullah himself. So he knew Koran like the back of his hand and his presentation was, where Koran ends Bhagavad Gita begins. To give an example, you know, how effective he was, we had a meeting with the governor of Karnataka. He was a Muslim. He gave only fifteen minutes time for us,

because, you know, they're very busy people. So they gave like ten, fifteen minutes to each and we were with him for more than one and a half hours. And Ravanari was doing all the talking. He was just listening. [laughs] He was a brilliant preacher.

Devotee: Where is he now?

BCS: Ravanari? Last I heard he was in Canada.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: What's that?

Devotee: Srila Prabhupada also visited this Muslim brother, [unclear], from Iran. They are accountants.

BCS: Oh, Aitreya.

Devotee: Aitreya rishi, yes.

BCS: Did he join with his brother?

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Yeah, Aitreya was the GBC. Prabhupada made him the GBC. He is from Harvard. He is a Harvard graduate.

Thank you! Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada! Gaura Premanande! Hari Hari bol!