

Śaraṇagatī

ISSUE NO. 16

SRAVANA, 8 | 1 | 12

HOW TO GIVE UP MATERIAL LIFE

How is it possible to give up material life? In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* that same question is answered by the Lord in his incarnation of a transcendental swam, Hamsa-avatāra. He was asked how we could be liberated from the tendency of the mind to be attracted to sense objects and the development of material desires. The mind has a natural attraction for material “sense objects” and similarly (even when there are no sense objects nearby) sense objects conceived of in the mind. So how can one break free from the bondage of this attraction? Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura summarizes the Lord’s answer as follows:

[...] *in conditioned life the living entity artificially imposes upon himself the mind and sense objects, which act as covering designations of the eternal soul. Since it is the natural function of the material mind and sense objects to mutually interact, how can you possibly endeavor to prevent such a mutual attraction? Since both the material mind and sense objects are useless, they both should be completely given up, and thus automatically you will be free from all material duality.*

(*Śrīmad Bhagavatam*, 11.13.25, purport)

Hamsa-avatāra is saying that it is not possible to achieve liberation by trying to destroy the tendency of the mind to be attracted to sense objects. The solution is that in order to give up material life, we must give up our false identification with the body and mind. Hamsa-avatāra says, “According to My instructions, one should fix the mind on Me alone.” (*Śrīmad Bhagavatam*, 11.13.30)



As long as we are not overwhelmed by transcendental love for Krishna, the mind will remain occupied with sense objects and the soul will remain asleep. Waking up means to fix the mind on Kṛṣṇa.

USE THE MATERIAL ENERGY FOR YOUR ADVANCEMENT



The answer of Hamsa-avatāra has another implication: in our tradition we do not try to artificially separate ourselves from the material energy. Renouncing everything prematurely will not work. Instead we learn to use the objects of the world in such a way that they do not increase the illusion of our identification with the body and mind. We engage with the material energy in a way that supports our development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; in other words we try to cultivate *sattva guna*. This can be done by increasing the quality of your life physically, mentally, intellectually and spiritually:



PRAYER TO LORD BALARĀMA

During this week we celebrate the auspicious appearance day of Lord Balarāma. You may offer this prayer to his deity or picture to invoke his mercy:

*namas te halāgraha namas te muṣalāyudha
namas te revatī-kānta namas te bhakta-vatsala*

*namas te dharanī-dhara namas te balanām śreṣṭha
pralambāre namas te ,stu ehi maṁ kṛṣṇa-pūrvaja*

“Obeisances to you, O holder of the plow. Obeisances to you, O wielder of the mace. Obeisances to you, O darling of Revatī. Obeisances to you, O kind benefactor of your devotees. Obeisances to you, O upholder of the earth. Obeisances to you, O best of the strong. Obeisances to you, O enemy of Pralamba. Please come to me, older brother of Kṛṣṇa.”



Physically

- Going to bed early and rising early in the morning
- Moderately eating healthy and nourishing food
- Doing physical exercises for the body (e.g. yoga, Pilates, swimming, etc)
- Giving your body enough rest - not overstraining it

Mentally

- Thinking positive thoughts
- Cultivating positive emotions
- Developing qualities such as compassion, forbearance, tolerance, etc.

Intellectually

- Reading spiritual literature that nourishes your intellectual side

Spiritually

- Giving yourself as much spiritual input as possible by investing time in your *sādhana*, studying the sacred scriptures, worshipping the deities, going on pilgrimage, and of course chanting the holy names
- Associating with spiritual people

Engaging with the material world in such a way removes obstacles from your spiritual path and ultimately makes you happy. As you make progress, you will gradually come to the stage where you are really free from matter.

from lectures by Śācinandana Swami during the Kṛṣṇa-samādhi retreat, May 2012, Germany

MEET ŚĀCĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Aug. 9th-12th Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Goloka Dhāma, Germany

Aug. 19th -27th Spiritual Cruise, Netherlands/Spain/France

Sept. 2th-8th Kirtan Mela, Germany

Sept. 14th-16th Sacred Space Weekend Seminar Part 3, Switzerland

Sept. 23th-30th Black Sea Festival, Russia

You can find a more detailed schedule at www.sacinandanaswami.com

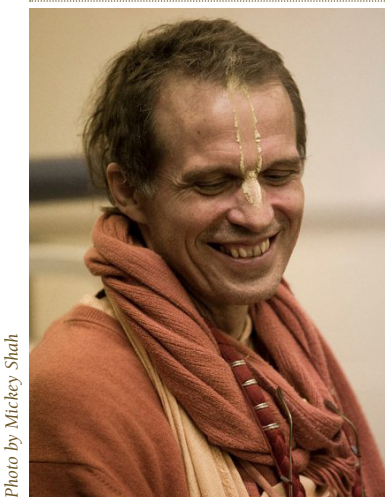


Photo by Mickey Shah