

**Lecture given by H.H. Suhotra Swami
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Title: The python of lust

*śrī-śuka uvāca
evam etan nigaditam
pṛṣṭavān yad bhavān mama
nṛṇām yan mriyamāṇānām
manuṣyeṣu manīṣiṇām*

SYNONYMS:

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; evam—so; etat—all these; nigaditam—answered; pṛṣṭavān—as you inquired; yat—what; bhavān—your good self; mama—unto me; nṛṇām—of the human being; yat—one; mriyamāṇānām—on the threshold of death; manuṣyeṣu—amongst the human beings; manīṣiṇām—of the intelligent men.

TRANSLATION:

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mahārāja Parīkṣit, as you have inquired from me as to the duty of the intelligent man who is on the threshold of death, so I have answered you.

PURPORT:

In human society all over the world there are millions and billions of men and women, and almost all of them are less intelligent because they have very little knowledge of spirit soul. Almost all of them have a wrong conception of life, for they identify themselves with the gross and subtle material bodies, which they are not, in fact. They may be situated in different high and low positions in the estimation of human society, but one should know definitely that unless one inquires about his own self beyond the body and the mind, all his activities in human life are total failures. Therefore out of thousands and thousands of men, one may inquire about his spirit self and thus consult the revealed scriptures like Vedānta-sūtras, Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. But in spite of reading and hearing such scriptures, unless one is in touch with a realized spiritual master, he cannot actually realize the real nature of self, etc. And out of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men, someone may know what Lord Kṛṣṇa is in fact. In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 20.122-123) it is said that Lord Kṛṣṇa, out of His causeless mercy, prepared the Vedic literatures in the incarnation of Vyāsadeva for reading by the intelligent class of men in a human society which is almost totally forgetful of the genuine relation with Kṛṣṇa. Even such an intelligent class of men may be forgetful in their relation with the Lord. The

whole bhakti-yoga process is therefore a revival of the lost relation. This revival is possible in the human form of life, which is obtained only out of the evolutionary cycle of 8,400,000 species of life. The intelligent class of human being must take a serious note of this opportunity. Not all human beings are intelligent, so the importance of human life is not always understood. Therefore manīṣiṇām, meaning "thoughtful," is particularly used here. A manīṣiṇām person, like Mahārāja Parīkṣit, must therefore take to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and fully engage himself in devotional service, hearing, chanting, etc., of the holy name and pastimes of the Lord, which are all hari-kathāmṛta. This action is especially recommended when one is preparing for death.

LECTURE BY H.H. SUHOTRA SWAMI:

This verse and purport are containing many deep points as we find always in Srila Prabhupada's Srimad Bhagavatam. Srila Prabhupada opens the purport by remarking that in human society all of the world there are millions and billions of men and women and almost all of them are less intelligent, because they have very little knowledge of the spirit soul. Then he goes on to explain how they are covered by gross and subtle body and they think that this gross and subtle covering is the self. In this way they are said to be less intelligent. This whole point of this line of explanation brings up many interesting points. So we can go into this. It is very philosophical subject. Like it is explained in one verse, which is quoted by Srila Prabhupada. Verse coming from the book called Prema Vivarta, Gaudia Vaisnava literature. This verse explains, that Kṛṣṇa bahir mukha hon bhova vancakri nikata stha maya japatir dhari, that when we forget Kṛṣṇa, this is the beginning point of our material existence. When we forget Kṛṣṇa, we accept simultaneously the mind or the subtle body. This subtle body is the reservoir of all kinds of desires. All kinds of unlimited material desires are being generated out of the subtle body. Of course to act on the subtle desires, one needs the gross body. In this way, the agitated subtle body causes to accept gross body after gross body after gross body in this material world. Thus we are constantly moving through the cycle of samsara, repeated birth and death. This verse very nicely (in a nut shell) explains our predicament, our entanglement in this material nature. Now one can look into this deeper and deeper. We forget Kṛṣṇa, that is Kṛṣṇa bahir mukha hon. We forget Kṛṣṇa. First point to consider when you forget Kṛṣṇa, then you forget yourself also. Because as Kṛṣṇa says in Bhagavad-gita mamaivamso jiva-loke jiva-bhutaḥ sanatanah. The spirit soul is actually my part and parcel. All the living entities, the jivas are part of Me. Mamaivamso means: mama, mine amsah means part or portion. The jivas are part of Kṛṣṇa. If we forget Kṛṣṇa, we forget ourselves also. Ignorance of Kṛṣṇa means ignorance of the spiritual existence, ignorance of all real spirituality.

It is just like an eclipse of the moon at night. The moon is in the sky and then this darkness falls over, it covers the moon. Lunar eclipses are very inauspicious. The planet Rahu, which is an evil planet, it is actually attacking the moon. In the same way the moon is like consciousness of the liberated living being. When he forgets Kṛṣṇa, that forgetfulness, that state of forgetfulness means being covered. Just like this darkness covers the moon. We were quoting this verse yesterday: avrtam jñanam etena jñanino nitya-vairina. The soul is jñani, the soul is the knower, but his knowledge is avrtam, covered. Just like this darkness covers the moon. It is very interesting that this covering, that state of forgetfulness means covering. Those two things are the same. Forgetting Kṛṣṇa means to be covered. Covered by what ? Covered by subtle body. This is very interesting

progression we should, we can think about. That consciousness is covered by ignorance. Ignorance is there in the form of the material mind, material intelligence, material false ego, material senses. That is ignorance. It is a subtle structure, which encloses over the consciousness. Now, we can go deeper into this subject matter, because consciousness belongs to the soul. Consciousness is the symptom of the soul, consciousness is spiritual. What is it mean, when we think? We use the mind to think. This is very important to consider, at least for those who want to think about this deeply. Prabhupada says manisinam, we should be thoughtful. Someone may raise this point. If we are thoughtful, manisinam, that means we are using the mind and if the mind is covering of ignorance, what does this have to do with the soul? What does this have to do with Krsna consciousness? That is very interesting point to consider. What is actually the interactive relationship between the mind, intelligence and the soul? How does this covering, this subtle structure, which covers us, how does it actually affect the soul? It is very interesting point. Krsna explains like this in Bhagavad-gita 3.40 indriyani mano buddhir asyadhistanam ucyate etair vimohayaty esa jnanam avrtya dehinam. Krsna says: "The mind, the intelligence and the senses are covering the living entity, they are covering his knowledge." Within this structure, we described it like a subtle structure, the senses are also in their original form subtle, because it has been shown, that the subtle body can leave the gross body for some time. In that subtle body you can still perceive, you can still see.

Sometimes, people in emergency operations in the hospital are having heart attack, they are very close to death. Subtle body rises up to the ceiling and is looking down. The person can see the doctor is working on the gross body. He can hear what they say. He sees them to adjust instruments. He can see the whole procedure. Then he comes back down. When they fix his body, he can enter it again. After coming to bodily consciousness he tells the doctors: "Yes, I know, I was very near death. You were working very hard. You told the other man to bring this and that medicine, you set the medical machine in this way, you said this to that one, you did this and that." The doctors are amazed: "But you were totally unconsciousness. We thought you were dead. How do you know this?" "Well I was up above looking down." So senses have their subtle, original subtle form. Senses are originally also subtle. There is subtle structure. Krsna says: (BG 3.40) "indriyani mano buddhir - the senses, the mind, the intelligence are covering the soul. Dwelling within this subtle structure or hiding within is lust. These places, the senses, mind, intelligence are the sitting place of lust." Subtle structure is there, covering the soul and within that subtle structure is hiding lust; and lust is waiting to strike. We all have that experience - how although we always have senses, mind and intelligence through our life, that is not that we are always lusty. But lust is always dormant, it is always potential, it is always there.

Just like one may be in some situation like for instance riding airplane. There is some man. He is in a passenger airplane and there is stewardess. She is young and beautiful. So looking at her, he becomes lusty, he becomes attracted. He thinks, oh, she is very nice, and he begins to make some plan to speak with her, have relationship with her. He is absorbed, thinking like this. Then suddenly, there is some disturbance. Airplane drops 500 meters and everyone is frighten. The lust is immediately forgotten. Then he is worried for his life. He is fearful for his life. This woman does not mean anything to him. But then after plane is again under control and begins to fly steady, then again, after few minutes, he starts to look at stewardess again and speculate all kind of lusty thoughts. The lust is hiding in there. It is not always manifesting itself, but it hides in these places.

Just like there is this big snake python. We, who come from America, know, that they have many banana plantations in South and Central America and bananas are shipped to North America, so the python actually likes to hide within the structure of the banana tree. Because on the top of the banana tree, of course these bananas they are yellowish greenish bunches and when python rolls up to the coil and hangs from the branch in mid of these bananas, you cannot see it. It looks also just like a bunch of bananas. They harvest these bananas simply by chopping branches. Very often a python will be packed in the box of bananas along with bananas and be shipped to America, shipped to Miami or somewhere. When they unpack to put bananas on the shelf, there is one big snake coming out; suddenly everyone is shocked. So like that. The lust hides. Just like the python can hide within the structure of banana tree. The lust can hide very nicely within the mind, the senses and the intelligence. Why is he hiding up there just like python? He is waiting. They hide up there. They are very quiet, very still, no one can see them. When some animal, some pig, for instance, happen to walk underneath, suddenly the python drops. Right on the pig and wraps itself around, squeezes it to death and swallows it. They like to swallow these animals whole. Then afterwards the python has big lump in his belly. It takes few weeks to digest, some weeks before the lump goes down. Like that, lust is hiding in senses, mind and intelligence. Waiting to strike at the right moment, when everything is right. The situation is right, then strikes.

SENSES

How does it strike? How does it strike at sensual platform? We said senses, mind and intelligence. From Bhagavad-gita these are hiding places of lust. When lust strikes from the sensual level, that is the most gross and direct attack. Just like in Rio de Janeiro. There is one beach, one strand called Ipanema, which is very famous. You often see pictures of this. Recently I saw one picture again of Ipanema beach. Every time you see a picture of this beach, you always see real girls. They seem to be arise species of lusty women, that are always on this beach and they wear next to nothing. They have bathing suites, which practically you can say they are just made out of the stuff you clean your teeth with. Just what they can get away with, without being completely naked. That is what they wear. They go to this beach, Ipanema beach, not for swimming, and not even for the lying in the sun, to get the sunrise. But they go there just to agitate men, they are there. You always see the rows and rows of these real girls lying on their blankets. This is an example that when some man walks by, he may be thinking of something else all together. He may not have women on his mind, but if he sees one these real girls, then of course the lust immediately strikes the senses. The eyes, they see and lust immediately strikes. Just like the python, the snake. Right through the eyes into the brain, into the heart. Then just like that, he loses his control and his intelligence and becomes lusty. So that is the sensual attack. It is very gross and very direct. If our consciousness comes in contact with certain sense objects, then the lust is agitated, the lust strikes.

THE MIND

Then there is the mind. The mental level is also easy to understand. At the mental level, there may not be directly the stimulation from the senses. The senses, we may not be in contact with lusty sense objects. Lust is provoking sense objects. We may also be on the intellectual level trying to control, we have something to do, something important to do and we want to do it, no time to engage in sense gratification. But then the mind keeps bothering you with some nasty memory. This is how the mind strikes with the lust, some memory, or something like that. Some memory, some conception -- it is just there in the head and it will not go away. So in this way the senses

gradually become too much agitated and the intelligence becomes too much weak. Then one starts to act in a lusty way. I think, that everyone had that experience, too.

THE INTELLIGENCE

Then how does the lust strike the intelligence? That is very interesting, because that is the most subtle, the most deep instance. When lust does strike the intelligence, let us say this first, let us explain this first. It manifests as self-justification, that the intelligence says it is all right. That is all right to act in a lusty way. The intelligence gives some philosophy how it is OK. Everyone can have the experience, that you become lusty from the senses, then the mind becomes agitated, and then one gets so agitated, that finally intelligence says: "Yes, yes, yes it is OK, satisfy this lust, it is better, it is healthy, or whatever, give some philosophy. Yes, it is healthy to satisfy the lust." Now you are so agitated, just go do it, it is healthy, but that is kind of lust coming up to the intelligence, to the other, to the senses and mind. But lust can begin at the intellectual platform also. But you don't observe it so much in ordinary human society, because as Prabhupada says and he explains it here, that people are not intelligent. People are not on the intellectual platform, they are on the sensual platform, mental platform. Generally they don't have any intelligence. Their intelligence is so destroyed by agitation, that they just immediately surrender to the lust anyway. But this point how lust strikes the intelligence is very important to consider within the spiritual society, such is our society. Because in this society there are actually intelligent people, who are trying to control their senses and minds. Actually devotees are suppose to be situated on the intellectual platform at least. Prabhupada said the intelligence is next to the soul. We are trying to become transcendental to this material world. So first one should rise up to the intellectual platform and that is what one does for instance when one accepts, when one reads the sastra. That is Prabhupada explaining: reading the sastras, excepting a spiritual master, than, that is the intelligence, manisnam. That is actually thinking deeply. But still lust can strike. How does it do it? How does that happen? That happens because we are neophytes. Simply because we are neophytes, we are not very advanced in devotional service. Therefore our devotional practice sometimes it is not so blissful. Sometimes, you know, although we are trying and of course Krsna consciousness is suppose to, it is a blissful process, but because of we have contamination, we have some bad habits, we have something wrong, therefore the bliss does not always come. When one is doing something and not experiencing bliss from it, happiness, satisfaction, naturally one is feeling dissatisfied, one is feeling something is wrong, like that. Something is incomplete, something is not there. At that point lust can strike the intelligence by the intelligence starts to say things like: "Well, it is not working today, but we got to have fun somehow." Just like one may be chanting rounds.....It is not just happening, it is not just clicking. One is chanting, but he just cannot get into it. Everybody has that experience, is not it? Yes. Everybody has experience how they just cannot focus their mind into chanting. They are disturbed. Then one may think: "Well, yeah, it is pretty boring to walk back and forth here in the temple. Maybe I should go outside. It might be better. What might be better? Will the chanting be better? If you go out in the midst of this endless ocean of sense objects called the material world? Do you think the chanting will be better then? No, what will be better is that you can more easily come in contact with varieties of material energy. Then you have something to occupy your mind with, because anyway, the chanting is not working this morning. I might as well walk around and do this what is called radar japa. This..... This is how lust strikes the intelligence. It is very subtle. And then the intelligence starts

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against the interest of Krsna consciousness by giving us some: "Yes, it is better to go out there." And there is always some self justification. That: "There you will chant better." But if you are completely honest with your self, you know, you are not going out there to chant better. You are just going out there, because it is too boring in here. Because the chanting is just not going this morning anyway. In this way the intelligence leads us into some situation, in which the mind and senses can become easily agitated. In this way the lust develops. It is important therefore to understand how this is working. Especially for those of us, who want to get out of this material atmosphere. It is important for us to consider how lust is striking; senses, mind, intelligence. But still, now the point is, we have not answered our original question. What is the interaction between all of that and the consciousness? After all I am not senses, mind, intelligence. That is not me. Why should this make a difference, what is happening? Anyone got the answer?.....(I did not think so, anyway...) The answer is that consciousness can expand, or contract. That is feature of consciousness. It can expand, or it can contract. When we are covered (this word avrtam) by this subtle energy, and then the subtle energy in turn is being covered or pressed by lusty desire. Then this contracts the consciousness. Just like in winter time, such a tree like this, or any nice tree with many leaves, when the snow falls on it, the heavy weight of snow presses the tree down. Similarly when our consciousness becomes covered by this subtle energy and the lust etc., then the consciousness contracts. It becomes pressed down. It becomes diminished, reduced. That does not mean, because after all it does say very clearly in Bhagavad-gita that for instance the soul cannot be cut by material energy. It is not that something is being cut from the soul, reduced that way. No, it just means being pressed together. More, more contracted, more, more withdrawn in itself. This is the effect.