

**Lecture given by HH Suhotra Swami on
Srimad Bhagavatam 4.23.10, recorded on
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Title: The origin of our tendency to sin

*bhagavad-dharminah sadhoh
sraddhaya yatatah sada
bhaktir bhagavati brahmany
ananya-visayabhavat*

TRANSLATION:

Maharaja Prthu thus engaged completely in devotional service, executing the rules and regulations strictly according to principles, twenty-four hours daily. Thus his love and devotion unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, developed and became unflinching and fixed.

PURPORT:

The word bhagavad-dharminah indicates that the religious process practiced by Maharaja Prthu was beyond all pretensions. As stated in the beginning of Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.1.2), dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra: religious principles which are simply pretentious are actually nothing but cheating. Bhagavad-dharminah is described by Viraraghava Acarya as nivrta-dharmena, which indicates that it cannot be contaminated by material aspiration. As described by Srila Rupa Gosvami:

*anyabhilasita-sunyam
jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsnanu-
silanam bhaktir uttama*

When one who is not inspired by material desires and is not contaminated by the processes of fruitive activity and empiric speculation fully engages in the favorable service of the Lord, his service is called bhagavad-dharma, or pure devotional service. In this verse the word brahmani does not refer to the impersonal Brahman. Impersonal Brahman is a subordinate feature of the Supreme personality of Godhead, and since impersonal Brahman worshipers desire to merge into the Brahman effulgence, they cannot be considered followers of bhagavad-dharma. After being baffled in his material enjoyment, the impersonalist may

desire to merge into the existence of the Lord, but a pure devotee of the Lord has no such desire. Therefore a pure devotee is really bhagavad-dharmi.

It is clear from this verse that Maharaja Prthu was never a worshiper of the impersonal Brahman but was at all times a pure devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Bhagavati brahmani refers to one who is engaged in devotional service to the Personality of Godhead. A devotee's knowledge of the impersonal Brahman is automatically revealed, and he is not interested in merging into the impersonal Brahman. Maharaja Prthu's activities in devotional service enabled him to become fixed and steady in the discharge of devotional activities without having to take recourse to karma, jnana or yoga.

LECTURE BY HH SUHOTRA SWAMI:

So, Srila Prabhupada used the phrase "open secret" for the process of devotional service. Open secret means that there is nothing esoteric in the teachings of Krsna consciousness. There is not, as in some mystical processes, some front that is presented for common people, which is misleading, and then behind, for those who are within the inner group... then there is so much detailed esoteric knowledge. It is not like that. The process is open, accessible to everyone, just like Srila Prabhupada's books. Everything is there for not even devotees, the common people then the neophyte devotees then the advanced devotees in Srila Prabhupada's books, everything according to one's level is presented, and the members or distributors of this International society of Krsna Consciousness are distributing Srila Prabhupada's books, the Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Caitanya-Caritamrta, all these books are distributed. Anyone can read them. It is open, yet at the same time it is a secret. What is the secret? Actually here is the secret in this verse that Maharaja Prthu, he was very careful to execute rules and regulations of devotional service strictly 24 hours daily. "Thus his love and devotion unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, developed and became unflinching and fixed." This is the secret actually entering into an intimate personal relationship with Krsna. The books of Srila Prabhupada, practically on every page, they are telling us that this is what we must do. But until you do it we can not actually know what it means to enter into a intimate personal relationship with Krsna.

Many people, they theoretically appreciate the philosophy of Krsna consciousness, the philosophy of personalism, and scholars, they will be very happy to much up what they read in Srila Prabhupada's books with statements of saints and sages in other traditions. Like in... because this is the Christian culture, they will look into the writings of Christian theologians and saintly persons from the past, and they will say, "Yes!. Yes! It is the same." And they will appreciate that, "Oh! On this point this was made by saint so and so back in 1623." Because at present I am

studying some research on another book I am also reading some of these old writings of saints etc. It's a fact. You can see, on many, many points, there is a common ground, but this is theoretical. The theoretical construct can be similar, but what remains to be understood is the actual rasa or taste. On the material platform, this is just the point Srila Prabhupada is making, *anyabhilasita-sunyam jnana-karmady-anavrtam*, this is the material platform that must be overcome. Prabhupada also mentions that pure devotional service is *nivrtti-dharma*, and we were saying this in last days, there is *pravrtti-dharma*, and this is the platform on which materialistic people stand.

The Bhagavatam itself explains, *nivrtti-tarsaih upagiyamanah* that the nectar of this narration, every verse, every word in the Srimad-Bhagavatam is an ocean of nectar, but in order to enter into that one has to be *nivrtti-trsna*, one has to have overcome all material desires. Until one has done that one can see on the theoretical platform, as Prabhupada is saying... where is he saying?... just to get the words correct... "...fruitive activity and mental speculation..." Yes, one who is situated in fruitive activity - karma and mental speculation - jnana, he may be able to find so many similarities, surface similarities between Krsna consciousness and some other process he himself is familiar with. I mean that's a fact. Especially in Vedic culture there are karmis, there are jnanis, and there are devotees, and they are all accepting Vedic scriptures. Of course they are accepting different bodies of Vedic scriptures, different lines of teaching, but there is a basic similarity. Ultimately, included in the realm of Vedic knowledge, they are all bona fide religious traditions. So there is similarity there. But it is a surface similarity. The real question, in terms of understanding Srimad-Bhagavatam, is whether we've overcome our material inclinations, *pravrtti* means our material inclinations, whether we have overcome that and actually entered into the *bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*, the nectarian ocean of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Until one has done that then one will continue to be baffled - *moghasa mogha-karmano mogha-jnana vicetasah*, this is Krsna's own statement in the Bhagavad-gita that those who are attracted by materialistic views then, actually, their activities and their knowledge will continue to be baffled.

Why is one attracted to materialistic views? That is just the point - attraction, what is the center of our attraction. So this is, again coming to the point of open secret, this is the secret, what is the center of our attraction. This is the point that is very, very difficult for karmis and jnanis to understand. Maharaja Prthu, what is he doing here, he is showing the way to develop attraction, make the center of one's attraction in life Krsna. *Ananya-visaya*, to be firmly fixed without deviation in *bhagavat-dharma*, in pure devotional service. How can one become firmly fixed under all circumstances? It is only when one has this powerful attraction to Krsna. It is a question of love in the end, direct personal love for this specific Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, as we see Him depicted

here in all these nice paintings. Therefore Srila Prabhupada is stressing in this purport, dedicating practically two paragraphs, out of the purport three paragraphs, to point out the difference between those who worship impersonal brahman and those who worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This impersonal brahman conception, it is divine conception, but it is conception that allows us to impose our own speculations upon it. Those who are fond of speculating on the spiritual path, depicting the object of religious worship in this way or that way... and there are many paths, there are many teachers, many this and many that... actually they are all impersonalists. Even they appear to be personalist, they will speak of some personal object, but unless they have this *nija-bhakti*, which is a term defined in Caitanya-Caritamṛta, specific devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, then they do not know what... actually what is personal spiritual life. They can not know it.

People, who are fond of all this theoretical, theological, theosophical approach, they have hard time with that statement. They will think it is sectarianism, "How can you say that only by worshipping Kṛṣṇa alone can we actually understand the full meaning of personal spiritual life?" And the answer is that only Kṛṣṇa, only the original Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself is engaging all of the senses of His devotees in loving devotional service. Where only the mind is engaged or where only the few stereotyped sensory activities are engaged then the balance, what is left over, where will that be engaged? This is the question. The tendency, which is known in this material world as a tendency to sin, the tendency to engage in those things which are forbidden in the scriptures, universally forbidden, where does that tendency come from? This is the interesting point. As I have been reading, they hypothesize some enemy of God, the adversary, the devil, satan, and he is... as much as God is supposedly good, satan is evil, and human being is in the middle. And so from the good side are coming all the stereotyped religious activities, avoiding sin and going to the church or temple and praying and all these nice activities. And all the bad things, the adultery, and so on and so forth, breaking of regulative principles that is coming from satan. This philosophy is called dualism. This dualism, in other words this division, this dividing the reality into the realm of light and into the realm of darkness is inevitable for the impersonalists. This is the amazing thing. The impersonalists, those who worship brahman, apparently their philosophy is "everything is one", but practically speaking, everything is not one. Therefore they have to divide, they have to speak of realm of oneness, of pure light and this dark material world in which we are fallen. And they have to radically divide the two. And the connection between the two is a very, very difficult problem for them, is very, very difficult, and where one stands between these two is also very, very difficult to ascertain, because even one comes to the side of the so-called light, the spirit, and is engaging those stereotyped spiritual activities, religious activities then it is seen that he can be tempted by the devil. So they can never rid themselves of this dark side. Why is that? Because they don't

know where to put it. They can not coherently explain why is it there in the first place, like some spook, some ghost that they can not get rid of. They try everything, you know, to wrap themselves in holiness, but the spook is still there.

In this Srimad-Bhagavatam we learn that everything comes from Krsna, and the deepest, the most profound state of Krsna consciousness, there is... the so-called sinful activities, which is seen in the conjugal rasa with the Lord. The gopis they are apparently married, and yet they leave their religious life at home, as properly married women, they escape from that situation to run away in secret to meet Krsna. This is very, very, very profound. That means that there is something within of each one of us as spirit soul, because we are all part and parcel of Krsna, and we all belong with Krsna, we are all meant to engage in loving devotional service to Krsna. So there is something within us that wants to run away from the stereotyped affairs of so-called good life, the good life, the proper life, the lawful life. There is something within us, and something goes right to the soul, wants to run away from that for something that is secret, that is hidden, that is ecstatic, that is just wonderful, but that nobody in that moral milieu wants to talk about. This tendency is manifest in the realm of pure devotional service, but this is a tendency, put it in this way, to surrender to Krsna on a more, and more, and more profound level.

This is the meaning of that pastime that the gopis, Lord Krsna's most intimate devotees, they are always finding newer and newer ways to escape to Krsna. They find one way, and then that way would be blocked... the relatives would find out about that. They will make some arrangement. But then they will find another way, another way, and another way. In this way, the propensity is fully taken of in love of God, love of Krsna.

This pastime is only available in relationship with Krsna, not even with Lord Vasudeva-Krsna at Dwaraka, not with Lord Narayana in Vaikuntha, nowhere else except in Goloka Vrndavana.

If one does not come... what to speak of other more vague conceptions of God, as one finds other religious scriptures, other religious traditions... unless we come to the standard of Krsna consciousness as presented by Sukadeva Gosvami in the Srimad-Bhagavatam, and as explained by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Krsna Himself, who has established right flavor of understanding of Srimad-Bhagavatam, unless we come to this then that propensity there in the soul to run away, to escape from the stereotyped definition of lawfulness and holiness, to escape to something else which is hidden, which is ecstatic, which is forbidden yet most relishable relationship, that will remain within us without any transcendental outlet. There is no way to exercise this propensity on the spiritual platform. That's where the spook comes from. That's where the devil comes from (laughs). Because that propensity will linger, will always be there in the heart, and thus spiritual life will always

remain a problem. To remain fixed in spiritual life will always... there will be so many, many, many, many difficulties. They call it, actually, this problem of evil, they call it. And they have no explanation for it, ultimately. They can see that there is good and there is evil, but why there is evil, they don't know. That's a big problem. This is why the Christian religious tradition has become so weak in recent times, because of not having satisfactory answer to this problem. But in Krsna consciousness, actually, that problem is clearly explained and clearly solved by those who take up *anyabhilasita-sunyam jnana-karmady-anavrtam*, who rid themselves of all other engagement, all other ways of satisfying their inward propensities *anukulyena krsnanu-silanam bhaktir uttama*, and who accept the process of *uttama bhakti*, pure devotional service. In other words, as stated here *anukulyena krsnanu-silanam*, they do only that which is favorable for advancing their relationship with Krsna. And the ultimate example of that, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, is in the gopis. This is the supreme demonstration of love of Krsna. This is the complete engagement of the person, the spiritual person in love of Godhead. Until one comes to that platform then that complete person is not engaged fully, and that which is left over becomes a problem, that is subject to being captivated by illusion.

OK. So I'll stop here. Are there any questions?

Q: I was wondering what is the relationship of the gopis' husbands to Krsna?.

They have their relationship in the *sakhya-rasa*, the friendship *rasa* to Krsna, and it's a little mysterious that this relationship between the gopis' husbands and the gopis themselves it is said to be apparent. It is apparent, it is not, actually, factual. The acaryas explain that this apparent connection of the gopis to the cowherd men, as wives to husbands, is a kind of manifestation of obstructions in pure devotional service. Not that they are not pure devotees, but... the depth of love of Godhead is unlimited. In other words, as advanced as any devotee may be, he has unlimited advancement before him, because the process is always expanding, and so they are always newer and newer obstacles that must be overcome, and this is all arranged by Krsna. It's not like in the material world where the obstacle is of material nature. In the spiritual world there are also obstacles but they are presented by spiritual nature, and we have to overcome them. This is one such obstacle that the gopis have their duty to their apparent husbands, but it is only apparent, and so as they overcome that, they enter into deeper and deeper loving exchanges with Krsna.

In Goloka Vrndavana, this is a good point, indirect point in your question, devotees reside there, who have other relationships with Krsna besides this *madhurya* relationship. There is Nanda Maharaja, Mother Yasoda, Krsna's parents, and there are Krsna's friend, and there are also those who assume the role of Krsna's friend, and even there are those

who are in the *santa rasa*, like the cows and trees and so on. One may ask that "Oh, but what about them?" But the thing is that predominant *rasa* in Goloka Vrndavana is *madhurya rasa*, and all these other *rasas* serving that *rasa*, and they also in the ocean of *madhurya rasa*. Other devotees in Goloka Vrndavana, of course they another different relationship with Krsna, they may not be going to directly dance with Krsna in the *rasa* dance, but they are serving that, and thus the nectar of these most intimate pastimes are flooding all of Goloka Vrndavana, everyone is tasting that nectar.

In the end, in Goloka Vrndavana, that is the predominant *rasa*. Even Lord Krsna's... rather Srimati Radharani's mother in law and sister in law, Jatila and Kutila, they are always criticizing Krsna, they are always trying to protect Radharani from having any contact with Krsna, they are very, very sharp tongued. These wonderful pastimes, how they are trying to interfere with Krsna's meeting with Radharani in different ways, but even here, their activities are only enhancing the *rasa*, the intimate relationship. That's making it only sweeter and sweeter. Even in this way... they become mad, Jatila, Kutila, when they are criticizing Krsna for His meeting the gopis in the forest, they are glorifying those pastimes in a critical way. Like women who gossip about love affairs of other women, they heard about, and they in a very scandalized way (imitates the gossip) (everybody laughs) They are actually tasting the same *rasa*, but in that way. This is a wonderful feature of Goloka Vrndavana that everybody is absorbed in this relationship from their different standpoints, and even there are different devotees who are completely scandalized by it. (laughs) It's just like... it's reflected in the material world... these women, house wives, who are speaking in such a scandalized way about some affairs of some other women that they know that, some neighbor women, she is married, but we know that she is seeing another man too, and they talk for hours and hours about it in such outrageous tone of voice, but actually they are enjoying the whole thing. (everybody laughs) They are always saying how horrible it is, but you just see, they can't stop talking. (laughs) This is reflected in the material world. The origin is in the spiritual world.

Everyone in Goloka Vrndavana, ultimately, they are absorbed in this one *rasa*, this one relationship between Krsna and Radharani, the gopis. That is the life and soul of every one, that is the subject matter every one is talking about. That is the nectar every one is tasting.

Anything else?

Srila Prabhupada ki! Jaya!
(THE END)