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THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

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His Divine Grace

A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

THE DUTY OF A HOUSEHOLDER

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THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

Sukadeva Goswami said: After hearing about the activities and character of Prahlada Maharaja, which are adored and discussed among great personalities like Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva, Yudhisthira Maharaja the most respectful king among exalted personalities, again inquired from the great saint Narada Muni with great satisfaction.

Maharaja Yudhisthira said: My dear lord, I wish to hear from you about the principles of religion by which one can attain the ultimate goal of life - devotional service. I wish to hear about the general occupational duties of human society and the system of social and spiritual advancement known as *varṇāśrama-dharma*. O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, you are directly the son of Prajapati [Lord Brahma]. Because of your achievements in austerities, mystic *yoga* and trance, you are considered the best of all of Lord Brahma's sons. No one is superior to you in mental quietude and dissemination of mercy, and no one knows better than you how to execute devotional service or how to become the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. Thus, you know all the

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principles of confidential religious life - no one knows this matter better than you.

Sri Narada Muni said: After first offering my obeisance unto Lord Krishna, who is the protector of the religious principles of all living entities, let me explain the principles of the eternal religious system, of which I have heard from the mouth of Narayana. Lord Narayana, along with His partial manifestation Nara, appeared in this world through the daughter of Daksa Maharaja known as Murti. He was begotten by King Dharma solely for the benefit of all living entities. Even now, He is still engaged in executing great austerities near the place known as Badarikashrama. The Supreme Being, the Personality of Godhead, is the essence of all *Vedic* knowledge, the root of all religious principles, and the principle of the revealed scriptures. O King Yudhisthira, this principle of religion is to be understood as axiomatic truth. On the basis of this religious principle, everything is satisfied, including one's mind, soul and even one's body.

These are the general principles to be followed by all human beings: truthfulness, mercy, austerity (such as observing regular fasts), bathing twice a day, tolerance, discrimination between right and wrong, control of the mind, control of the senses, non-violence, celibacy, charity, reading of scripture, simplicity, satisfaction, rendering service to saintly persons, gradually taking leave of unnecessary engagements, observing the futility of the unnecessary activities of human society, remaining silent and grave and avoiding unnecessary talk, considering whether one is the body or the soul, distributing food equally to all living entities (both men and animals), seeing every soul (especially in the human form) as a part of the Supreme Lord, hearing about the activities and instructions given by the Supreme Personality of Godhead (who is the shelter of the saintly persons), reciting and always remembering these narrations, rendering service to the Lord, performing worship, offering obeisance, becoming a servant of the Lord, becoming His friend, and surrendering one's whole self to Him. O King Yudhisthira, these thirty qualities must be acquired in the human form of life. Simply by acquiring them, one can satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



Those who have been reformed by the *garbhādhān* ceremony and other prescribed reformatory methods, performed with *Vedic mantras* and without interruption, and who have been approved by Lord Brahma, are known as *dvijas*, twice-born. Such *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*, purified by their family traditions and by their behavior, should worship the Lord, study the *Vedas* and give charity. In this system, they should follow the principles of the four *āśramas* [*brahmacharya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*].

For a *brāhmaṇa* there are six occupational duties. A *kṣatriya* should not accept charity, but he may perform the other five of these duties. A king or *kṣatriya* is not allowed to levy taxes on *brāhmaṇas*, but he may make his livelihood by levying minimal taxes, customs duties, and penalty fines upon his other subjects. The mercantile community (*vaiśyas*) should always follow the directions of the *brāhmaṇas* and engage in such occupational duties as agriculture, trade, and protection of cows. For the *śūdra* the only duty is to accept a master from a higher social order and engage in his service.

As an alternative, a *brāhmaṇa* may also take to the *vaiśyas* occupational duty of agriculture, cow protection, or trade. He may depend on that which he has received without begging, he may beg grains in the paddy field every day, he may

collect paddy left in a field by its proprietor, or he may collect food grains left behind in the shops of grain dealers. These are four means of livelihood that may also be adopted by *brāhmaṇas*. Among these four, each of them in succession is better than the one preceding it. Except in a time of emergency, lower persons should not accept the occupational duties of those who are higher. When there is such an emergency, of course, everyone but the *kṣatriya* may accept the means of livelihood of others. In time of emergency, one may accept any of the various types of professions known as *ṛta*, *amṛta*, *mṛta*, *pramṛta* and *satyāṇṛta*, but one should not at any time adopt the means of living of a dog by accepting a master. The profession of *uñchaśila*, collecting grains from the field, is called *ṛta*. Collecting without begging is called *amṛta*, begging grains is called *mṛta*, tilling the ground is called *pramṛta*, and trade is called *satyāṇṛta*. Engaging in the service of low-grade persons, however, is called *śva-vṛtti*, the propensity of the dogs. Specifically, *brāhmaṇas* and i should not engage in the low and abominable service of *śūdra*. *Brāhmaṇas* should be well acquainted with all the *Vedic* knowledge, and *kṣatriyas* should be well acquainted with the worship of demigods.

The symptomatic characteristics of a *brāhmaṇa* are control of the mind, control of the senses, austerity and penance, cleanliness, satisfaction, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, mercy, truthfulness, and complete surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To be influential in battle, unconquerable, patient, conquering others and yet charitable, to control the bodily necessities, to be forgiving, to be respectfully and affectionately attached to the *brahminical* class and to be always jolly and truthful - these are the symptoms of the *kṣatriya*. Being always devoted to the demigods, the spiritual master and the Supreme Lord, Visnu; endeavoring for advancement in religious principles, economic development and sense gratification [*dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*]; believing in the words of the spiritual master and scripture; and always endeavoring with expertise in earning money - these are the symptoms of the *vaiśyas*. Offering obeisance to the higher sections of society [the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*], being always very clean, being free from duplicity, serving one's master,



performing sacrifices without uttering *mantras*, not stealing, always speaking the truth and giving full protection to the cows and *brāhmaṇas* - these are the natural symptoms of the *śūdra*.

To render service to the husband, to be always favorably disposed toward the husband, to be equally well disposed toward the husband's relatives and friends, and to follow the vows of the husband - these are the four principles to be followed by women described as chaste. A chaste woman must dress nicely and decorate herself with golden ornaments for the pleasure of her husband. Always wearing clean and attractive garments, she should sweep and clean the household with water and other liquids so that the entire house is always pure and clean. She should collect the household paraphernalia and keep the house always aromatic with incense and flowers and must be ready to execute the desires of her husband. Remaining modest and truthful, controlling her senses, and speaking in sweet words, a chaste woman should engage in the service of her husband with love, according to time and circumstances. A chaste woman should not be greedy, but satisfied in all conditions of life. She must be very expert in handling household affairs and should be fully conversant with religious principles. She should speak pleasingly and truthfully and should be careful in executing her duties and always clean and pure. Thus a chaste woman should engage with affection in the service of a husband who is not fallen. The woman who engages in the service of her husband, following strictly in the footsteps of the goddess of fortune, surely returns home, back to Godhead, with her devotee husband, and lives very happily in the Vaikuntha planets.

Among the mixed classes known as *saṅkara*, those who are not thieves are known as *antevasāyī* or *caṇḍālas*, and they also have their hereditary customs. My dear King, *brāhmaṇas* well conversant in *Vedic* knowledge have given their verdict that in every age the conduct of different sections of society according to their material modes of nature is auspicious both in this life and after death. If one acts in his natural profession according to his position in the modes of nature and gradually gives up

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attachment to these activities, he attains the *niṣkāma* (desireless) stage.

My dear King, if an agricultural field is repeatedly cultivated, the power of its production decreases, and whatever seeds are sown there are lost. Also, just as drops of ghee will never extinguish a fire but a flood of ghee may, similarly, repeated indulgence in material pursuits may eventually eradicate such desires entirely. It should also be known that if a person shows the symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa*, *ṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, as described above, even if he has been born in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification and not his birth caste.

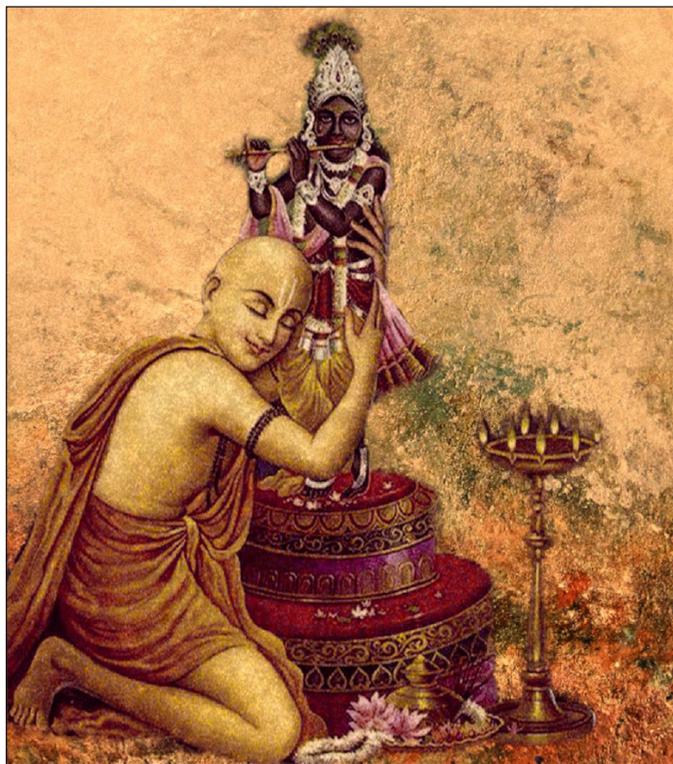
— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)» Canto 7: The Science of God » CHAPTER ELEVEN Verses: 1-35.

PEACEFUL HOUSEHOLDER LIFE

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

It is very important for peaceful householder life that a woman follow the vow of her husband. Any disharmony with the husband's vow will disrupt family life. In this regard, Chanakya Pandita gives a very valuable instruction: *dampatyoh kalaho nāsti tatra śrīḥ svayam āgatāḥ*. When there is no quarrel between husband and wife, the goddess of fortune spontaneously gives visitation to the home. A woman's education should be conducted along the lines indicated in this verse. The basic principle for a chaste woman is to be always favorably disposed toward her husband. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (1.40) it is said, *strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ*: if the women are polluted, there will be *varṇa-saṅkara* population. In modern terms, the *varṇa-saṅkara* are the hippies, who do not follow any regulative injunctions. Another explanation is that when the population is *varṇa-saṅkara*, no one can know who is truly situated on which platform. The *varṇāśrama* system scientifically divides society into four *varṇas* and four *āśramas*, but in *varṇa-saṅkara* society there are no such distinctions, and no one can know who is who. In such a society, no one can distinguish between a *brāhmaṇa*, a *ṣatriya*, a *vaiśya* and a *śūdra*. For peace and happiness in the material world, the *varṇāśrama* institution must be intro-



duced. The symptoms of one's activities must be defined, and one must be educated accordingly. Then spiritual advancement will automatically be facilitated.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāna) Canto 7: The Science of God* » CHAPTER Eleven Verses: 25, Purport.

THE DUTY OF A HOUSEHOLDER

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

To please the Supreme Lord, the householder devotees should associate with and serve the spiritual master and other qualified saints with love and devotion. This will enable them to become spiritual householders. If householders do not associate, serve, and discuss about both the book *Bhāgavata* and the devotee *Bhāgavata*, they cannot attain auspiciousness. They should live at home with the resolution, “I will serve Krishna with all respect.” Otherwise their household life, devoid of Hari’s service, will lead them to hell.

If family life is favorable to the cultivation of Krishna consciousness, then it is acceptable and praiseworthy. If it unfavorable to that divine service, then that family life, which is compared to a deep, dark well, should be rejected. There is no net difference between devotees living at home or at the *Matha*, because in either case they are constantly engaged in the Lord’s service.

But one should not confuse the life of an attached householder with the life of a detached devotee who lives at home. By serving and associating with pure devotees who have made *guru* and Krishna their life and soul, attachment for family life and material existence is destroyed. There is no way to become free of family attachment without sincerely serving the spiritual master.

One should live at home only to serve Krishna under the *guru*'s guidance. The householders should refrain from eating too much or accumulating more than he needs. He should not excessively exert himself for material purpose, gossip, become overly attached to following the rules and regulations, associate with non-devotees, or be greedy. He must also maintain his enthusiasm, confidence, determination, patience, taste for hearing and chanting Hari’s holy name, and firmness in service to *guru* and Krishna.

A householder has no business indulging in illicit sex, in becoming overly attached to his wife, or in becoming henpecked. He should give up bad association and tolerate the urges of speech, mind, anger, tongue, belly, and genitals. A householder should not only refrain from sinful activities but should also avoid the pious activities that are not conducive to devotional service. By engaging in sinful activities he will definitely not be able to serve Hari. The desire to accumulate piety will also block his worship of the Lord. A householder devotee must not become indifferent to the service of Hari, *guru*, and the Vaisnavas on the pretext of chanting the holy name. This is nothing but cheating, and it will lead to greater feelings of family attachment rather than devotion. Unless the living entity serves *guru* and Krishna, they cannot develop love of God. A householder should always try to assist those devotees who are constantly engaged in Krishna’s service.

— *Amṛta Vāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhuṇpāda Adapted and Published by Īsvara dāsa Touchstone Media.*

AN IDEAL GRHASTHA VAISNAVA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

A *grhastha* Vaisnava should model his character after that of Lord Caitanya and His followers.



He should follow the ways of life and obtain his means of livelihood as exhibited by Lord Caitanya and His followers. If one desires Krishna in all his activities, then those activities are auspicious. By endeavouring to gratify one's senses and attain irrelevant results, one becomes a materialist. For a devotee, to remain a householder or to become a renunciate is the same thing. Srila Ramananda Raya, Sri Punandarika Vidyanidhi, Sri Srivasa Pandita, Sri Sivananda Sena, Sri Satyaraja Khan, and Sri Advaita Prabhu were all *grhasthas* and have shown us the way of faultless living. The difference between a householder and a renunciate is due to their different means of livelihood. If the home is favorable for a devotee's devotional service, then he should not leave. It is his duty to remain a *grhastha* with detachment. But when the home becomes un conducive to his service of the Lord, he then becomes eligible to leave home. At that time the detachment he develops for his house through his devotional service is accepted. For this reason, Srivasa Pandita did not leave home. And for this same reason, Svarūpa Damodara took *sannyāsa*. All genuine devotees have remained either at home or in the forest (the position of renunciation) based on this consideration. Whoever has left home due to this consideration is called a genuine renunciate. He

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is always careful not to commit offenses against the holy name.

—*Śrī Bhaktyāloka - The Six Faults and Qualities of Bhakti* by Srila Bhaktivinod Thakura.

THE HOUSEHOLDER AND HIS PRESCRIBED DUTIES

Śrīla Jagadananda Pandita

Raghunatha dasa once again humbly approached Svarupa Damodara Goswami with folded hands. "I have another question. Please enlighten me. The highest and purest form of devotional service is above the prescribed religious practices of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Therefore, why is the householder bound by prescribed duties according to his *āśrama*, when he can easily transcend the duties of his social order and render spontaneous devotional service?"

Svarupa Damodara Goswami replied, "Listen, dear brother, I will disclose to you the essence of everything by enunciating the principles of pure devotional service. It is simple to live one's life following one's prescribed duties, but if one tries to execute someone else's prescribed duties, his life becomes artificial and burdensome to the world."

"From the many prescribed duties of *varṇāśrama* the sincerely devoted person intelligently executes only those actions which are conducive to pure devotional service. And by diligently rejecting those duties which are detrimental, he attains the platform of pure devotion. Therefore, one should not be overly attached to stringently following the prescribed *varṇāśrama* duties. Rather, he should unflinchingly render unalloyed devotional service, for by so doing, he emulates the hallowed path of the saintly persons. Rejecting the overly rigid rules and regulations of *varṇāśrama* assists in elevating one to the platform of pure unalloyed Vaisnavism.

—*Prema-Vivarta - Śrīla Jagadananda Pandita Translated by Sarva-bhāvama dāsa.*

THE NOBLE HOUSEHOLDER

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura

*kona-dina sannyāsī āise daśa biśa
sabā' nimantrena prabhu haiyā hariṣa*

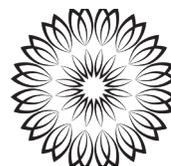


Sometimes ten or twenty *sannyāsīs* would come to Mayapura, and the Lord would happily invite them all for lunch.

Because the noble householder residents of Navadvīpa normally followed the principles of *varṇāśrama*, many renounced *sannyāsīs* from various places came to their houses as guests. On one hand, the Lord removed the poverty of the poor, the distressed, and His guests, and on the other hand, He exhibited ideal pious householder pastimes by serving the renounced *sannyāsīs* of the fourth *āśrama*. In order to establish that every pious householder is obliged to respect the principles of *āśrama-dharma*, the Lord gave shelter and food to *sannyāsīs* and thus set the perfect example of pious householder behavior. It is the unavoidable duty of every householder who follows the principles of *varṇāśrama* to provide food and shelter according to their means to the fourth *āśrama* renounced *sannyāsīs*, who travel all over the country for the householders' benefit. In the course of time, the attached householders enviously cheated the *sannyāsīs* from their rightful share. Thus, the real principles of *āśrama-dharma* have gradually become slackened and distorted. What to speak of this, some householders even think that their highest occupational duty is simply to cheat munificent minded *sannyāsīs* who always desire the householders' welfare of their rightful share of alms from them. Although the Lord did not exhibit the pastimes of a prosperous or wealthy

householder; He sometimes invited ten or twenty *sannyāsīs* to His house for meals in order to teach householders to serve the *sannyāsīs*.

—*Sri Caitanya Bhagavata of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura; Adī-līla, Chapter 14, text 14, veres and purport with English Translation of the Gauḍīya-bhāṣya Commentary and Chapter Summaries of His Divine Grace Oṅ Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrajakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Translated by Bhūmipati Dāsa.*



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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