



Śrī Devaśayanī Ekādaśī

Issue no:139

01st July 2020

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Circulation 29,777



THE DUTIES OF A HOUSEHOLDER

Srila Narada Muni

Maharaja Yudhisthira inquired from Narada Muni: O my lord, O great sage, kindly explain how we who are staying at home without knowledge of the goal of life may also steadily attain liberation, according to the instructions of the Vedas.

Narada Muni replied: My dear King, those who stay at home as householders must act to earn their livelihood, and instead of trying to enjoy the results of their work themselves, they should offer these results to Krishna, Vasudeva. The means to satisfy Vasudeva in this life can be perfectly understood through the association of great devotees of the Lord. A *grhastha* (householder) must regularly and repeatedly associate with saintly persons. Thus, with great respect he must hear the nectar of the activities of the Supreme Lord and His incarnations as these activities are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *Purāṇas*. In this way one should gradually become detached from affection for his wife and children, exactly like a man awakening from a dream. While working to earn his livelihood simply to maintain body and soul, one who is actually learned should live in human society unattached to family affairs, although externally appearing very much attached. An

intelligent man in human society should make his own schedule of activities very simple. If there are suggestions from his friends, children, parents, brothers or anyone else, he should externally agree, saying, “Yes, that is all right,” but internally he should be determined not to create a cumbersome life in which the purpose of life will not be fulfilled. The natural products created by the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be utilized to maintain the bodies and souls of all living entities. The necessities of life are of three types: those produced from the sky [from rainfall], from the earth [from the mines, the seas or the fields], and from the atmosphere [that which is obtained suddenly and unexpectedly]. One may claim proprietorship to as much wealth as required to maintain body and soul together, but one who desires proprietorship over more than that must be considered a thief, and he deserves to be punished by the laws of nature. One should treat animals such as deer, camels, asses, monkeys, mice, snakes, birds and flies with compassion exactly as one would with his own children. There is actually very little difference between children and these innocent animals. Even if one is a householder rather than a *brahmacārī*, a *sannyāsī* or a *vānaprastha*, one should not endeavour strenuously for religiosity, economic development or satisfaction of the senses. In householder life, one should be

satisfied to maintain body and soul together with whatever is available with minimum endeavour, according to place and time, by the grace of the Lord. One should not engage oneself in sinful work (*ugra-karma*). Dogs, fallen persons and untouchables, including *caṇḍālas* [dog-eaters], should all be maintained with their proper necessities, which should be contributed by the householders. Even one's wife at home, with whom one is most intimately attached, should be offered in service for the reception of guests and people in general. One sometimes so seriously considers his wife to be his own that he may kill himself for her or kill others, including even his parents or his spiritual master or teacher. Therefore if one can give up his attachment to his beloved wife, he conquers the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is never conquered by anyone. Through proper deliberation, one should give up attraction to his wife's body because that body will ultimately be transformed into small insects, stool or ashes. What is the value of this insignificant body? How much greater is the Supreme Being, who is all-pervading like the sky? An intelligent person should be satisfied with eating *prasāda* [food offered to the Lord] or with performing the five different kinds of sacrifice [*pañca-yajña*]. By such activities, one can give up attachment for the body and so-called proprietorship with reference to the body. When one is able to do this, he is firmly fixed in the position of an elevated soul (*mahātmā*). Every day, one should worship the Supreme Being who is situated in everyone's heart, and on this basis everyone should separately worship the demigods, the saintly persons, ordinary human beings, other living entities, one's forefathers and one's own self. In this way one will worship the Supreme Being in the core of everyone's heart. When one is enriched with wealth and knowledge which are under his full control and by means of which he can perform *yajña* (sacrifice) and please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one must perform similar sacrifices, offering oblations to the fire according to the directions of the *sāstras*. In this way one should worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the enjoyer of sacrificial offerings. Yet although His Lordship eats the oblations offered in the fire, my dear King, He is

still more satisfied when pleasing food made of grains and ghee is offered to Him through the mouths of qualified *brāhmaṇas*. Therefore, my dear King, first offer foodstuffs unto the *brāhmaṇas* and the demigods, and after sumptuously feeding them you may distribute that *prasāda* to other living entities according to your ability. In this way you will be able to worship all living entities or, in other words, the supreme living entity situated within them all. A *brāhmaṇa* who is sufficiently wealthy must offer oblations to the forefathers during the dark-moon fortnight in the latter part of the month of *Bhādra*. Similarly, he should offer oblations to the relatives of the forefathers during the *mahālayā* ceremonies in the month of *Āśvina*. One should perform the *śraddhā* ceremony on the *Makara-saṅkrānti* [the day when the sun begins to move north] or on the *Karkāṭa-saṅkrānti* [the day when the sun begins to move south]. One should also perform this ceremony on the *Meṣa-saṅkrānti* day and the *Tulā-saṅkrānti* day, in the yoga named *Vyātipāta*, on that day in which three lunar *tithis* are conjoined, during an eclipse of either the moon or the sun, on the twelfth lunar day, and in the *Śravaṇa-nakṣatra*. One should perform this ceremony on the *Akṣaya-tṛtīyā* day, on the ninth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Kārtika*, on the four *Aṣṭakās* in the winter season and cool season, on the seventh lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Māgha*, during the conjunction of *Māgha-nakṣatra* and the full moon day, and on the days when the moon is completely full, or not quite completely full, when these days are conjoined with the *nakṣatra* from which the names of certain months are derived.

One should also perform the *śraddhā* ceremony on the twelfth lunar day when it is in conjunction with any of the *nakṣatra* named *Anurādhā*, *Śravaṇa*, *Uttara-phalgunī*, *Uttarāśādhā* or *Uttara-bhādrapadā*. Again, one should perform this ceremony when the eleventh lunar day is in conjunction with either *Uttara-phalgunī*, *Uttarāśādhā* or *Uttara-bhādrapadā*. Finally, one should perform this ceremony on days conjoined with one's own birth star [*janma-nakṣatra*] or with *Śravaṇa-nakṣatra*. All of these seasonal times are considered extremely auspicious for all humanity. At such times, one should perform all recommended auspicious activities, for by



doing so a human being attains success in his short duration of life. During these periods of seasonal change, if one bathes in the Ganges, in the Yamuna or in another sacred place, if one chants, offers fire sacrifices or executes vows, or if one worships the Supreme Lord, the *brāhmaṇas*, the forefathers, the demigods and the living entities in general, whatever he gives in charity yields a permanently beneficial result. O King Yudhisthira, at the time prescribed for reformatory ritualistic ceremonies for one's self, one's wife or one's children, or during funeral ceremonies and annual death ceremonies, one must perform the auspicious ceremonies mentioned above in order to flourish in fruitive activities. Now I shall describe the places where religious performances may be well executed. Any place where a Vaisnava is present is an excellent place for all auspicious activities. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the support of this entire cosmic manifestation, with all its moving and non-moving living entities, and the temple where the Deity of the Lord is installed is a most sacred place. Furthermore, places where learned *brāhmaṇas* observe *Vedic* principles by means of austerity, education and mercy are also most auspicious and sacred. Auspicious indeed are the places where there is a temple of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, in which He is duly worshiped, and also the places where there flow the celebrated sacred rivers mentioned in the *Purāṇas*, the supplementary *Vedic* literatures. Anything spiritual done there is certainly very effective. The sacred lakes like Pushkara and places where saintly persons live, like Kuruketra, Gaya, Prayaga, Pulahashrama, Naimisharanya, the banks of the Phalgu River, Setubandha, Prabhasa, Dvaraka, Varanasi, Mathura, Pamapa, Bindu-sarovara, Badarikashrama [Narayanashrama], the places where the Nanda River flows, the places where Lord Ramacandra and mother Sita took shelter, such as Citrakuta, and also the hilly tracts of land known as Mahendra and Malaya - all of these are to be considered very pious and sacred. Similarly, places outside India where there are centers of the Krishna consciousness movement and where Radha-Krishna Deities are worshiped must all be visited and worshiped by those who want to be spiritually advanced. One who

intends to advance in spiritual life may visit all these places and perform ritualistic ceremonies to get results a thousand times greater than the results of the same activities performed in any other place. O King of the earth, it has been decided by expert, learned scholars that only the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, in whom all that is moving or non-moving within this universe is resting, and from whom everything is emanating, is the best person to whom everything must be given in sacrifice. O King Yudhisthira, the demigods, many great sages and saints including even the four sons of Lord Brahma, and I myself were present at your *Rājasūya* sacrificial ceremony, but when there was a question of who should be the first person worshiped, everyone decided upon Lord Krishna, the Supreme Person. The entire universe, which is full of living entities, is like a tree whose root is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *Acyuta* [Krishna]. Therefore simply by worshiping Lord Krishna one can worship all living entities. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has created many residential places like the bodies of human beings, animals, birds, saints and demigods. In all of these innumerable bodily forms, the Lord resides with the living being as Paramatma. Thus He is known as the *puruṣavatāra*. O King Yudhisthira, the Supersoul in every body gives intelligence to the individual soul according to his capacity for understanding. Therefore the Supersoul is the chief within the body. The Supersoul is manifested to the individual soul according to the individual's comparative development of knowledge, austerity, penance and so on. My dear King, when great sages and saintly persons saw mutually disrespectful dealings at the beginning of *Tretā-yuga*, Deity worship in the temple was introduced with all paraphernalia. Sometimes a neophyte devotee offers all the paraphernalia for worshiping the Lord, and he factually worships the Lord as the Deity, but because he is envious of the authorized devotees of Lord Visnu, the Lord is never satisfied with his devotional service. My dear King, of all persons a qualified *brāhmaṇa* must be accepted as the best within this material world because such a *brāhmaṇa*, by practicing austerity, *Vedic* studies and satisfaction, becomes the counterpart body



of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. My dear King Yudhisthira, the *brāhmaṇas*, especially those engaged in preaching the glories of the Lord throughout the entire world, are recognized and worshiped by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the heart and soul of all creation. The *brāhmaṇas*, by their preaching, sanctify the three worlds with the dust of their lotus feet, and thus they are fit to be worshiped even by Krishna Himself.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 7: The Science of God » Chapter Fourteen» Verses: 1-42.*

THE FORMAT FOR GRHASTHA LIFE

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada

The formula for *grhastha* life should be dedication to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.1) it is said: "*anāsritah karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ sa sannyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnir na cākriyaḥ!*" One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and who works as he is obligated is in the renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic, not he who lights no fire and performs no work." Whether one acts as a *brahmacārī*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsī*, he must act simply for the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva-Krishna, the son of Vasudeva. This should be

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the principle for everyone's life. Narada Muni has already described the principles of life for a *brahmacārī*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsī*, and now he is describing how a *grhastha* should live. The basic principle is to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The science of satisfying the Supreme Lord can be learned as described here: *sākṣād upāsīta mahā-munīn*. The word *mahā-munīn* refers to great saintly persons or devotees. Saintly persons are generally known as *munīs*, or thoughtful philosophers concerned with transcendental subject matters, and *mahā-munīn* refers to those who have not only thoroughly studied the goal of life but who are actually engaged in satisfying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva. These persons are known as devotees. Unless one associates with devotees, one cannot learn the science of *vāsudevārpaṇa*, or dedicating one's life to Vasudeva, Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In India the principles of this science were followed strictly. Even fifty years ago, I saw that in the villages of Bengal and the suburbs of Calcutta, people every day heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* at the conclusion of their day's work, or at least in the evening before going to bed. Everyone would hear the *Bhāgavatam*. *Bhāgavata* classes were held in every village, and thus people had the advantage of hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which describes everything about the higher aim of life—libera-

Bhāgavata Mahāvidyālaya



tion or salvation which will be clearly explained in the next verses.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 7: The Science of God » Chapter Fourteen» Verses: 3–4, Purport*

HOW SHOULD WE LIVE AT HOME?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

Proper association with exalted, swanlike personalities rescues us from falling into the blind well of material life. If we associate with liberated souls, we will become qualified as spiritual householders. Those who do not associate with the personified *Bhāgavatas* to discuss the scripture *Bhāgavata*, knowing the two to be non-different, will never find fortune in household life. It is good for devotees to live at home, because it allows them to peacefully worship Lord Hari. Such peace, however, is not available to those who are gross materialists due to being too attached to household life. It is important to enter family life firmly resolved to serve Krishna. This resolution is far superior to practicing false renunciation likened to the lifestyle of the naked, fruit eating, forest dwelling monkey. False renunciation will not help one attain the ultimate goal of life. One should enter family life only if it is favourable for the execution of devotional service to Hari. If family life is unfavourable, it is a dark well and should be rejected. If one separates himself

Bhāgavata Mahāvidyālaya

from family life just to display his expertise in false renunciation, he will not benefit. Immature renunciants soon fall down. Association with the Lord's devotees destroys materialism at its core. Those who enter family life only to satisfy worldly morality will become absorbed in materialism. Just as the Lord's devotee must accept the renounced order, he is also required to enter household life. Family life is favourable for devotees, because when a devotee enters family life, he enters a temple. For a devotee, there is no difference between entering household life and entering renounced life. However, household life is unfavorable for non-devotees. There is a huge difference between attached materialists entering household life and the household life of a devotee. Because a devotee enters family life only to favorably cultivate Krishna consciousness, he should remain aloof from bad association and idle talk. He should faithfully execute the limbs of bhakti—his hearing and chanting—with enthusiasm, confidence, and patience. A householder devotee must serve Hari, *guru*, and the Vaisnavas, chant the Lord's holy name, associate with devotees, and hear *hari-kathā*. If all his endeavours are aimed at satisfying Krishna, his life is auspicious and he will attain good fortune.

— *Amṛta vāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality» His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada » Adapted and Published by Isvaradasa, Touchstone Media.*

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Vaisnavas OF DIFFERENT LEVELS

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

The renunciate Vaisnavas should not think that they are more respect worthy than the *grhastha* Vaisnavas. One should know that the difference in recognition for the Vaisnavas is solely based on the distinction between the *uttama-adhikārī* and the *madhyama-adhikārī*. Both *uttama-adhikārīs* and *madhyama-adhikārīs* are found among the *grhasthas*. This rule also applies to the renunciate Vaisnavas. The glories of the renunciate Vaisnavas are that they have given up the association of women, greed for money, and bodily pleasure. The *grhastha* Vaisnavas have special glories. Many of them work hard to earn money, and after serving Krishna, they serve *grhastha* and *sannyāsī* Vaisnavas. Whether one is a *grhastha* or a *sannyāsī*, the principal cause for respect is the attainment of devotional service. One should be respected as a Vaisnava according to one's advancement in devotional service. There is no other criterion in distinguishing the level of a Vaisnava.

— (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5/11)

HOUSEHOLDER SANNYĀSĪ & HOUSEHOLDER BĀULA

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

*sei grāme grhastha-sannyāsī eka āche
pathera samīpe ghara jāhnavīra kāche.*

“In that village lived a householder *sannyāsī*. His house was on the side of the road near the Ganges.”

The phrases householder *sannyāsī* and householder *bāula*, refer to those who identify themselves as *tyāgīs* (renunciants) while maintaining extreme attachment to home. The *tamasic tantras* encourage such immoral behavior giving them the name *dārī sannyāsī*. As per the logic of *soṅāra pāthara bāṭī*—“stone bowls made of gold,” and with the support of *Śākta* philosophy, householder *bāulas* who are extremely attached to home and yet dress themselves as renunciants, by wearing red cloth claim that maintaining maid-servants and wives is approved by the *śāstras*. Accepting the saffron dress of a renunciant is among the rules for a *sannyāsī* on the path of regulative principles. Thus all Vaisnava *ācāryas* of the me-

dieval age used saffron cloth. In the course of preaching their own spontaneously manifested *paramahansa*, Sri Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis, who inaugurated *anurāga-mārga*, the path of attachment, were not inclined towards Sri Gaurasundara's *ekadaṇḍa sannyāsa*. Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami's spiritual master, *Tridaṇḍi sannyāsī* Srila Prabodhananda Sarasvati, exhibited the superiority of *paramahansa* dress and the path of attachment by wearing saffron dress befitting an *ācārya*. Srīman Jivacarana, who followed Sri Rupa, has in the course of imparting instructions befitting an *ācārya* preached *svakīya-rasa* to help others easily understand the concept of *parakīya-rasa* and to uproot the poisonous teeth of the fraudulent followers of *parakīya-rasa*. Actually the concept of *svakīya-rasa* preached by Sri Jivapada has simply established the supremacy of *parakīya-rasa* of the spiritual world.

— Purport to *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata Madhya-khaṇḍa Chapter 19, Text 43* by *Srīmad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaja, Vrajaraṇa Press, Translated by Bhūmipati Dāsa*



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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Bhagavata Mahavidyalaya

is a branch of

International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Founder-Acārya: His Divine Grace

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Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhakti Vedānta Swami Prabhupada

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