

Śrī Kamikā Ekādaśī

Issue no:140

16th July 2020

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His Divine Grace

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TO DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

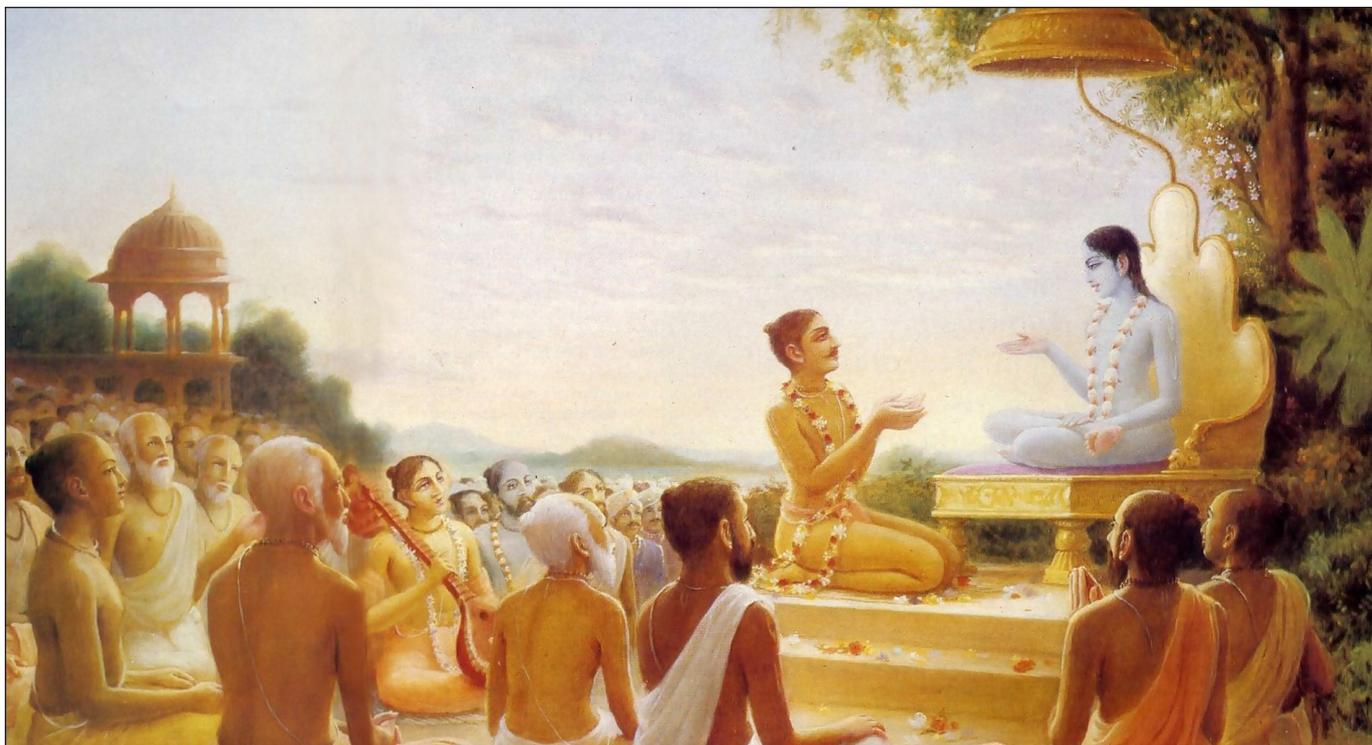
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Circulation 29,810



THE FIVE BRANCHES OF IRRELIGION
Sṛīla Sukadeva Goswami

Sukadeva Goswami said to Maharaja Parikshit: Some *brāhmaṇas* are very attached to fruitive activities, some are attached to austerities and penances, and still others study the *Vedic* literature. Furthermore, very few cultivate knowledge and practice different *yogas*, especially *bhakti-yoga*. A person desiring liberation for his forefathers or himself should give charity to a *brāhmaṇas* who adheres to impersonal monism [*jñāna-niṣṭha*]. In the absence of such an advanced *brāhmaṇa*, charity may be given to a *brāhmaṇa* addicted to fruitive activities [*karma-niṣṭha*]. During the period for offering oblations to the demigods, one should invite only two *brāhmaṇas*, and while offering oblations to the forefathers, one may invite three *brāhmaṇas*. Or, in either case, only one *brāhmaṇa* will suffice. Even though one is very opulent, he should not endeavour to invite more *brāhmaṇas* or make various expensive arrangements on those occasions. If one arranges to feed many *brāhmaṇas* or relatives during the *śraddhā* ceremony, there will be discrepancies in the time, place, respectability and ingredients, the person to be worshiped, and the method of offering worship. When one gets the opportunity of a suitable auspicious time and place, one should, with love, offer food prepared with ghee to the Deity of the Bhāgavata Mahāvīdyālaya

Supreme Personality of Godhead and then offer that *prasāda* to a suitable person -- a Vaishnav or *brāhmaṇa*. This will be the cause of everlasting prosperity. One should offer *prasāda* to the demigods, the saintly persons, one's forefathers, general people, one's family members, one's relatives and one's friends, seeing them all as devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

A person fully aware of religious principles should never offer anything like meat, eggs or fish in the *śraddhā* ceremony, and even if one is a *ksatriya*, he himself should not eat such things. When suitable food prepared with ghee is offered to saintly persons, the function is pleasing to the forefathers and the Supreme Lord, who are never pleased when animals are killed in the name of sacrifice. Persons who want to advance in superior religious principles are advised to give up envy of other living entities, whether in relationship to the body, words or mind. There is no religion superior to this. Because of an awakening of spiritual knowledge, those who are intelligent in regard to sacrifice, who are actually aware of religious principles and who are free from material desires, control the self in the fire of spiritual knowledge, or knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Thus they may legitimately give up the process of ritualistic ceremonies.

Upon seeing the person engaged in performing the sacrifice, animals meant to be sacrificed are
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extremely afraid, thinking, “This merciless performer of sacrifices, being ignorant of the purpose of sacrifice and feeling satisfied at heart by killing others, will surely kill us.” Therefore, day by day, one who is actually aware of religious principles and is not be heinously envious of poor animals should happily perform the daily and periodical sacrifices with whatever food is available easily by the grace of the Lord.

There are five branches of irreligion, appropriately known as irreligion [*vidharma*], religious principles for which one is unfit [*para-dharma*], pretentious religion [*dharmābhāsa*], analogical religion [*upadharmā*] and cheating religion [*chala-dharma*]. One who is aware of real religious life must abandon these five knowing them to be irreligious. Religious principles that obstruct one from following one’s own religion are called *vidharma*. Religious principles introduced by others are called *para-dharma*. A new type of religion created by one who is falsely proud and who opposes the principles of the *Vedas* is called *upadharmā*. And interpretation by one’s jugglery of words is called *chala-dharma*. A pretentious religious system manufactured by one who willfully neglects the prescribed duties of his order of life is called *dharmābhāsa* [a dim reflection or false similarity]. However, putting aside all of these deviations, if one performs the prescribed duties for his particular *āśrama* or *varṇa*, they certainly sufficient to mitigate all his material distress.

Even if a man is poor, he should not endeavour to improve his economic condition just to keep body and soul together or to become a famous religionist. Just as a great python, although lying in one place, not endeavouring for its livelihood, gets the food it needs to maintain its body, one who is desireless also obtains his livelihood without endeavour. One who is content and satisfied and who links his activities with the Supreme Personality of Godhead residing in everyone’s heart enjoys transcendental happiness without endeavouring for his livelihood. Can such happiness be found by a materialistic man who is impelled by lust and greed and who therefore wanders in all directions with a desire to accumulate wealth? For a person who has suitable shoes on his feet, there is no danger even when he walks on pebbles and thorns. For him, everything is auspicious. Similarly, for one who is always self-satisfied there is no distress;

indeed, he feels happiness everywhere. My dear King, a self-satisfied person can be happy even by only drinking water. However, one who is driven by the senses, especially by the tongue and genitals, must accept the position of a household dog to satisfy his senses. Because of greed for the sake of the senses, the spiritual strength, education, austerity and reputation of a devotee or *brāhmaṇa* who is not self-satisfied dwindle, and his knowledge gradually vanishes. The strong bodily desires and needs of a person disturbed by hunger and thirst are certainly satisfied when he eats. Similarly, if one becomes very angry, that anger is satisfied by chastisement and its reaction. But as for greed, even if a greedy person has conquered all the directions of the world or has enjoyed everything in the world, still he will not be satisfied. O King Yudhisthira, many persons with varied experience, many legal advisers, many learned scholars and many persons eligible to become presidents of learned assemblies fall down into hellish life because of not being satisfied with their positions.

By making plans with determination, one should give up desire for sense gratification. Similarly, by giving up envy one should conquer anger, by discussing the disadvantages of accumulating wealth one should give up greed, and by discussing the truth one should give up fear. By discussing spiritual knowledge one can conquer lamentation and illusion, by serving a great devotee one can become prideless, by keeping silent one can avoid obstacles on the path of mystic *yoga*, and simply by stopping sense gratification one can conquer envy. By good behaviour and freedom from envy one should counteract sufferings due to other living entities, by meditation in trance one should counteract sufferings due to providence, and by practicing *hatha-yoga*, *prāṇāyāma* and so forth one should counteract sufferings due to the body and mind. Similarly, by developing the mode of goodness, especially in regard to eating, one should conquer sleep. One must conquer the modes of passion and ignorance by developing the mode of goodness, and then one must become detached from the mode of goodness by promoting oneself to the platform of purified goodness (*śuddha-sattva*). All this can be automatically done if one engages in the service of the spiritual master with faith and devotion. In this way one can conquer the influence of the modes of nature.

WORLDLY TALKS ARE HARMFUL
TO DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

Sṛila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

The spiritual master should be considered to be directly the Supreme Lord because he gives transcendental knowledge for enlightenment. Consequently, the progress of one who maintains the mental conception that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being, is doomed. His enlightenment and his *Vedic* studies and knowledge are like the unproductive bathing of an elephant.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)* » Canto 7: The Science of God
» Chapter Fifteen » Verses: 1-26.

GREED FOR MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

For spiritual advancement, one should be materially satisfied, for if one is not materially satisfied, his greed for material development will result in the frustration of his spiritual advancement. There are two things that nullify all good qualities. One is poverty. *Daridra-doṣo guṇa-rāśi-nāśī*. If one is poverty-stricken, all his good qualities become null and void. Similarly, if one becomes too greedy, his good qualifications are lost. Therefore the adjustment is that one should not be poverty-stricken, but one must try to be fully satisfied with the bare necessities of life and not be greedy. For a devotee to be satisfied with the bare necessities is therefore the best advice for spiritual advancement. Learned authorities in devotional life consequently advise that one not endeavor to increase the number of temples and *maṭhas*. Such activities can be undertaken only by devotees experienced in propagating the Krishna consciousness movement. All the *ācāryas* in South India, especially Sri Ramanujacarya, constructed many big temples, and in North India all the Goswamis of Vrindavan constructed large temples. Sṛila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura also constructed large centers, known as *Gauḍīya Maṭhas*. Therefore temple construction is not bad, provided proper care is taken for the propagation of Krishna consciousness. Even if such endeavours are considered greedy, the greed is to satisfy Krishna, and therefore these are spiritual activities.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)* » Canto 7: The Science of God
» Chapter Fifteen » Verse: 21, Purport.

Sṛiman Mahāprabhu told us to neither hear worldly topics nor discuss them. We should neither eat palatable foods nor wear opulent clothing. He gave those instructions for those who had developed faith in and taste for worshiping Lord Hari. Eating palatable foods is harmful, but it does not inconvenience others or create obstacles in their worship of Hari. Wearing opulent clothing, however, is more harmful to others. When we dress attractively, we draw others' eyes to ourselves. The purpose of gorgeous dress is to distract people's minds and eyes from Lord Hari's worship. Thus it is detrimental to others and indirectly ourselves.

The tongue's greed—its urges—harm our devotional service. Sṛi Mahāprabhu said, *jihvāra lālase yei iti-uti dhāya, śiśnodara-parāyaṇa kṛṣṇa nāhi pāya*: “One who is subservient to the tongue and who thus roams without direction, devoted to the genitals and the belly, cannot attain Krishna.” (C.c. Antya 6.227)

Hearing worldly topics is more harmful to us than eating palatable foods. Similarly, discussing material matters (*prajalpa*) is more harmful to others than our dressing opulently. When we gossip or indulge in worldly topics, we become unrestrained like prostitutes. Gossip contaminates and disturbs people's hearts. The more taste one has for such useless talking, naturally the less taste one has for the topics of the Lord (*hari-kathā*). Sṛila Raghunathadasa Goswami said, “*asad vārtā vesyā visāja mati sarvasyahāriṇiḥ*”: “Worldly topics are like prostitutes. They contaminate and disturb one's mind.” Whenever a few people gather, there is bound to be idle talk. That is why devotees always glorify discussing *hari-kathā*. If we discuss such *kathā*, no one will have the opportunity to gossip. Those who are serious about worshiping Hari should neither listen to nor speak worldly topics, nor should they pay attention to palatable foods or opulent dress. The desire to eat and dress opulently will certainly take us away from our worship of Lord Hari. We cannot worship Hari as long as we desire to eat voraciously and dress attractively. Moreover, if we maintain a taste for hearing and speaking worldly topics, we will be-



come distracted even from the path of worshipping Hari. Such talks will misguide us and force us to forever relinquish our worship. Therefore, persons who are interested in Lord Hari's service must be careful about such things. Otherwise, they will inevitably fall down.

— *AmṛtaVāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality; His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada; Compiled by Sripada Bhakti Mayukha Bhagavat Mahārāja; Adapted and Published by Isvaradasa; Translated from Bengali by Bhumipatidasa.*

ENGAGING LAULYA IN THE SERVICE OF KRISHNA Sriḷa Bhaktivinoda Thakura

A practicing devotee should give up *laulya* which takes the form of restlessness of mind. This can be achieved by fixing one's intelligence in devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Another meaning of the word *laulya* is avarice. If one's greed is directed to material objects, then how can it be applied in relation to the super-mundane? One's desires should be carefully engaged in the service of Krishna. Desire for material enjoyment should be conquered by the above mentioned

method. That is why it is said that persons who are overcome by lust and greed cannot become as pure through the process of *yoga* as they can by serving Krishna. It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.6.35):

*yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ
kāma-lobhā-hato muhuḥ
mukunda-sevayā yadvat
tathātmāddhā na sāmtyati*

"It is true that by practicing restraint of the senses by the *yoga* system one can get relief from the agitation of desire and greed, but this is not sufficient to give satisfaction to the soul, which is solely derived from devotional service to the Personality of Godhead."

It is stated, *śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddher* "Absorbing the intelligence in Me constitutes mental equilibrium." (*Bhāg* 11.19.36) By developing intense desire for the service of Krishna, the service of the Vaisnava, and the chanting the holy names, there will be no greed for inferior material things. Seeing the Vrajavasi's service to Krishna, a person



who becomes covetous of acquiring such sentiments is very fortunate. By the influence of that sacred greed, a person attains the qualification for *rāga-bhakti*. One's material greed is vanquished in proportion to the development of desire for the supermundane sentiments of *rāgātmikā* service. If one is greedy for palatable foodstuffs or drinks, sleeping, smoking, and drinking wine, then one's devotion diminishes. The insatiable inclination to enjoy wine, wealth, and women is very contrary to devotional principles. Those who have a desire for attaining pure devotional service should carefully give up such things. Whether for auspicious things or sinful things, greed for anything not related to Krishna is detestable. However, greed in relation to Krishna is the cause of all auspiciousness. The greed attained by the great souls (*mahājanas*) for hearing topics of Krishna is mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.19) as follows:

*vayaṁ tu na vitṛpyāma
uttama-śloka-vikrame
yac-chṛṇvatām rasa-jñānām
svādu svādu pade pade*

"We never tire of hearing the transcendental pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, who is glorified by hymns and prayers. Those who have developed a taste for transcendental relationships

with Him relish hearing of His pastimes at every moment."

Another name for greed in relation to Krishna is *ādara*, respect. We will discuss this in detail later.

Another meaning of *lauhya* is desire. Desires are of two types—desire for material enjoyment and desire for liberation. Unless one gives up these two types of desires, one cannot practice devotional service. Srila Rupa Goswami has written in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.15):

*bhukti-mukti-sprhāyāvat
piśācīḥṛdivartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra
kathamabhyudayobhavet*

"The dual desires to enjoy the material world and to become liberated from material bondage are considered to be two witches, and they haunt one like ghosts. As long as these witches remain within the heart, how can one feel transcendental bliss? As long as these two witches predominate one's consciousness, there is no possibility of enjoying the transcendental bliss of devotional service."

There are two types of material enjoyments—worldly and heavenly. Worldly enjoyment is based on wealth, women, children, opulence, kingdom, victory, good food, good sleep, associating with women for sense enjoyment, high

birth, and other related pleasures. Ascending to the heavenly realm and drinking nectar there, as well as experiencing dramatically enhanced sense gratification free of old age and disease are heavenly enjoyments. When the heart is dominated by the desire to enjoy, one cannot selflessly worship Krishna. Therefore unless the desire for enjoyment is completely uprooted from the heart, one's progress in devotional service will certainly be obstructed.

— Sri Bhaktyaloka - The Six Faults and Qualities of Bhakti, Translated by Pundarika Vidyanidhi.

SPIRITUAL GREED

Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

Vaidhī-bhakti is devotion inspired by following scriptural rules, whereas *rāgānugā-bhakti* is devotion inspired by *lobhā*, transcendental greed. Inspiration in *bhakti* is manifest externally by single-minded execution of the different processes of *bhakti*. The two ways to foster *bhakti* are primarily by strictly following scriptural rules regarding *bhakti*, and, secondly, activities based on intense greed to serve the Lord (*lobhā - mayī sevā*). Of these two means, Srila Rupa Goswami gives more importance to *lobhā*, as he expresses in his book the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*tat tat-bhava-ādi-mādhurye
śrute dhīr-yad-apekṣate
nātra śāstram na yuktim-ca
tallobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam*

This verse means that after the devotee has heard the detailed descriptions of the sweetness of Lord Krishna's loving spiritual sentiments (*bhāva-mādhurya*) with His associates, he is spontaneously drawn towards those sentiments of Krishna's beloved associates. Such a devotee, desiring to possess those feelings, shakes free the shackles of logic and restrictive scriptural regulations. The first symptom of developing *lobhā* (spiritual greed) is that the devotee no longer feels bound by those injunctions.

Such a devotee becomes intensely desirous of attaining the association of Krishna while hearing about the different ecstatic emotions displayed by His confidential associates (*parikara*) during Krishna's Vraja pastimes. Thus he thinks, “Let this

spiritual emotions also blossom in my heart”. Such meditations are never interrupted by a feeling of need to seek consent from either the scriptures or logical processes. If a devotee feels any such uncertainty, then his desire to possess the spiritual emotions worthy of a *parikara* (*lobhā*) has not matured. No one can ever develop *lobhā* by simply following scriptural injunctions, nor can one obtain that desired spiritual object if his mind is endlessly analyzing whether he is eligible or not. True *lobhā* appears immediately when one sees Krishna or hears about Him from authorised sources.

Spiritual greed is of two kinds according to the two sources from which it may develop: (i) the pure devotee's mercy and (ii) the Supreme Lord's mercy. The first division of *lobhā*, which is owing to the devotee's mercy, is of two kinds: ancient and modern. Ancient *lobhā* appears by the mercy of pure devotees steeped in the same sweet, eternal devotional mellows relished by the eternal associates of Lord Krishna. The *lobhā* which originates from the grace of pure devotees in the present time it is known as contemporary, or modern. When *lobhā* starts from the previous birth and begins to bloom in the present life then the devotee must take shelter of a *guru* who is himself a pure devotee fully fixed in spiritual sentiments (*rāgānuga bhakta*). The second kind of *lobhā*, modern *lobhā*, is developed after the devotee becomes deeply attached to the shelter of his spiritual master enriched with spiritual *rasa*.

The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* confirms:

*kṛṣṇa tat-bhakta kārūṇya-
mātra lobhaika hetukā
puṣṭi-mārga-tayā kaiścid
iyam rāgānugocyate*

Spiritual greed is solely caused by the mercy of Krishna and His pure devotees. Devotion instigated by such *lobhā* is defined as *rāgānuga bhakti*, and sometimes it is termed *puṣṭi-mārga-bhakti*.

When both kinds of devotees, the one yearning for ancient *lobhā*, the other for modern *lobhā*, hear how to acquire the devotional mellows possessed by Krishna's eternal associates (*nitya parikara*) they seek guidance from the proper scriptures. This is



because the authorized method for attaining spiritual sentiments (*bhāva*) is delineated in scriptural injunctions and purports; no other sources for receiving this information are indicated anywhere.

The following analogy illustrates this point. When someone becomes greedy for milk and its products, he will first want to know how to procure milk. He then has to seek advice from a trustworthy person conversant with the subject who will tell him how to purchase a cow and how to take proper care of her in all ways. Thus we can see that even in simple material matters knowledge on a subject cannot be simply invented -- proper guidance is certainly necessary. As Lord Brahma explains in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.6.12):

*yathāgnim edhasy amṛtaṁ ca goṣu
bhuvy annam ambūdyamane ca vṛttim
yogair manuṣyā adhiyanti hi tvāṁ
guṇeṣu buddhyā kavayo vadanti*

As one can derive fire from wood, milk from the udder of the cow, food grains, and water from the land, and prosperity in one's livelihood from industrial enterprises, so, by practise of *bhakti-yoga*, even within this material world, one can achieve Your favour and approach You with intelligence. Those who are pious all affirm this.

For a *rāga-bhakta* (the devotee who is established on the path of spontaneous *rāga-bhakti*) the intense eagerness for hearing and chanting about the all-purifying qualities and activities of Krishna, begins with the *rāga-bhakta's* complete surrender

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to the lotus feet of his *guru* and continues to flourish until he attains his spiritual goals. The more a devotee is purified by hearing and chanting, the more spiritual realisations he will have. Just as medicine applied correctly to diseased eyes cures them, so hearing and chanting about Krishna cures a person of material ignorance and leads him to .

— *Ragavartma-Candrika - Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura; Translated by Sarva-bhavana dasa*



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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