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ETERNAL VARNĀSRAMA

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When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vamanadeva, heard Bali Maharaja speaking in this pleasing way, He was very satisfied, for Bali Maharaja had spoken in terms of religious principles. For this reason, the Lord began to praise him.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: O King, you are indeed exalted because your present advisors are the *brāhmaṇas* who are descendants of Bhr̥gu and because your instructor for your future life is your grandfather, the peaceful and venerable Prahlada Maharaja. Your statements are very true, and they completely agree with religious etiquette. They are in keeping with the behaviour of your family, and they enhance your reputation. I know that even until now, no one taking birth in your family has been poor-minded or miserly. No one has refused to give charity to *brāhmaṇas*, nor after promising to give charity has anyone failed to fulfill his promise. O King Bali, never in

your dynasty has the low-minded king been born who upon being requested has refused charity to *brāhmaṇas* in holy places or a fight to *kṣatriyas* on a battlefield. And your dynasty is even more glorious due to the presence of Prahlada Maharaja, who is like the beautiful moon in the sky. It was in your dynasty that Hiranyakṣa was born. Carrying only his own club, he wandered the globe alone, without assistance, to conquer all directions, and no hero he met could rival him. When delivering the earth from the Garbhodaka Sea, Lord Viṣṇu, in His incarnation as a boar, killed Hiranyakṣa, who had appeared before Him. The fight was severe, and the Lord killed Hiranyakṣa with great difficulty. Later, as the Lord thought about the uncommon prowess of Hiranyakṣa, He felt Him-self victorious indeed. When Hiranyakṣipu heard the news of his brother's being killed, with great anger he went to the residence of Viṣṇu, the killer of his brother, wanting to kill Lord Viṣṇu. Seeing Hiranyakṣipu coming forward bearing a trident in his hand like personified death, Lord Viṣṇu, the best of all mystics and the knower of the progress of time, thought as follows.

Wheresoever I go, Hiranyakṣipu will follow Me, as death follows all living entities. Therefore, it is better for Me to enter the core of his heart, for then, because of his power to see only externally, he will not see Me. O King of the demons, after Lord Viṣṇu made this decision, He entered the body of His enemy Hiranyakṣipu, who was running after Him with great force. In a subtle body inconceivable to Hiranyakṣipu, Lord Viṣṇu, who was in great anxiety, entered Hiranyakṣipu's nostril along with his breath. Upon seeing that the residence of Lord Viṣṇu was vacant, Hiranyakṣipu began searching for Lord Viṣṇu everywhere. Angry at not seeing Him, Hiranyakṣipu screamed loudly and searched the entire universe, including the surface of the earth, the higher planetary systems, all directions and all the caves and oceans. But Hiranyakṣipu, the greatest hero, did not see Viṣṇu anywhere. Unable to see Him, Hiranyakṣipu said, "I have searched the entire universe, but I could not find Viṣṇu, who has killed my brother. Therefore, He must certainly have gone to that place from which no one returns. [In other words, He must now be dead.]" Hiranyakṣipu's anger against Lord Viṣṇu

persisted until his death. Other people in the bodily concept of life maintain anger only because of false ego and the great influence of ignorance. Your father, Virocana, the son of Maharaja Prahlada, was very affectionate toward *brāhmaṇas*. Although he knew very well that it was the demigods who had come to him in the dress of *brāhmaṇas*, at their request he delivered to them the duration of his life. You also have observed the principles followed by great personalities who are householder *brāhmaṇas*, by your forefathers and by great heroes who are extremely famous for their exalted activities. O King of the *Daityas*, from Your Majesty, who come from such a noble family and who are able to give charity munificently, I ask only three paces of land, to the measurement of My steps. O King, controller of the entire universe, although you are very munificent and are able to give Me as much land as I want, I do not want anything from you that is unnecessary. If a learned *brāhmaṇa* takes charity from others only according to his needs, he does not become entangled in sinful activities.

Bali Maharaja said: O son of a *brāhmaṇa*, Your instructions are as good as those of learned and elderly persons. Nonetheless, You are a boy, and Your intelligence is insufficient. Thus, You are not very prudent in regard to Your self-interest. I am able to give You an entire island because I am the proprietor of the three divisions of the universe. You have come to take something from me and have pleased me by Your sweet words, but You are asking only three paces of land. Therefore, You are not very intelligent. O small boy, one who approaches me to beg something should not have to ask anything more, anywhere. Therefore, if You wish, You may ask from me as much land as will suffice to maintain You according to Your needs.

The Personality of Godhead said: O my dear King, even the entirety of whatever there may be within the three worlds to satisfy one's senses cannot satisfy a person whose senses are uncontrolled. If I were not satisfied with three paces of land, then it is sure that I would not be satisfied even with possessing one of the seven islands, consisting of nine *varṣas*. Even if I possessed one island, I would hope to get others. We have heard that although powerful kings like Maharaja Prthu and Maharaja Gaya achieved proprietorship over the seven *dvīpas*, they could not achieve satisfaction or find the end of their ambitions. One should be

satisfied with whatever he achieves by his previous destiny, for discontent can never bring happiness. A person who is not self-controlled will not be happy even with possessing the three worlds. Material existence causes discontent in regard to fulfilling one's lusty desires and achieving more and more money. This is the cause for the continuation of material life, which is full of repeated birth and death. But one who is satisfied by that which is obtained by destiny is fit for liberation from this material existence. A *brāhmaṇa* who is satisfied with whatever is providentially obtained is increasingly enlightened with spiritual power, but the spiritual potency of a dissatisfied *brāhmaṇa* decreases, as fire diminishes in potency when water is sprinkled upon it. Therefore, O King, from you, the best of those who give charity, I ask only three paces of land. By such a gift I shall be very pleased, for the way of happiness is to be fully satisfied to receive that which is absolutely needed.

Sukadeva Gosvami continued: When the Supreme Personality of Godhead had thus spoken to Bali Maharaja, Bali smiled and told Him, "All right. Take whatever You like." To confirm his promise to give Vamanadeva the desired land, he then took up his waterpot. Understanding Lord Visnu's purpose, Sukracarya, the best of the learned, immediately spoke as follows to his disciple, who was about to offer everything to Lord Vamanadeva.

Sukracarya said: O son of Virocana, this *brahmacārī* in the form of a dwarf is directly the imperishable Supreme Personality of Godhead, Visnu. Accepting Kasyapa Muni as His father and Aditi as His mother, He has now appeared in order to fulfill the interests of the demigods. You do not know what a dangerous position you have accepted by promising to give Him land. I do not think that this promise is good for you. It will bring great harm to the demons. This person falsely appearing as a *brahmacārī* is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, who has come in this form to take away all your land, wealth, beauty, power, fame and education. After taking everything from you, He will deliver it to Indra, your enemy. You have promised to give Him three steps of land in charity, but when you give it to Him, He will occupy the three worlds. You are a rascal! You do not know what a great mistake you have made. After giving everything to Lord Visnu, you will have no means



of livelihood. How then shall you live? Vama-nadeva will first occupy the three worlds with one step, then He will take His second step and occupy everything in outer space, and then He will expand His universal body to occupy everything. Where will you offer Him the third step? You will certainly be unable to fulfill your promise, and I think that because of this inability your eternal residence will be in hell. Learned scholars do not praise that charity which endangers one's own livelihood. Charity, sacrifice, austerity and fruitive activities are possible for one who is competent to earn his livelihood properly. [They are not possible for one who cannot maintain himself.] Therefore, one who is in full knowledge should divide his accumulated wealth in five parts – that which will be used for religion, for reputation, for opulence, for sense gratification and for the maintenance of his family members. Such a person is happy in this world and in the next.

One might argue that since you have already promised, how can you refuse? O best of the demons just take from me the evidence of the *Bahvṛca-śruti*, which says that a promise is truthful preceded by the word *om* and untruthful if not. The *Vedas* enjoin that the factual result of the tree of the body is the good fruits and flowers derived from it. But if the bodily tree does not exist, there is no possibility of factual fruits and flowers. Even if the body is based on untruth, there cannot be factual fruits and flowers without the help of the bodily tree. When a tree is uprooted it immediately falls down and begins to dry up. Similarly, if one doesn't take care of the body, which is supposed to be untruth the body undoubtedly becomes dry. The utterance of the word *om* signifies separation from one's monetary assets. In other words, by uttering this word, one becomes free from attachment to money because his money is taken away from him. To be without money is not very satisfactory, for in that position one cannot fulfill one's desires. In other words, by using the word *om* one becomes poverty-stricken. Especially when one gives charity to a poor man or beggar, one remains unfulfilled in self-realization and in sense gratification.

Therefore, the safest course of action is to deny him charity. Although it is a falsehood, it protects one completely, it draws the compassion of others

toward oneself, and it gives one full facility to collect money from others for oneself. Nonetheless, if one always pleads that he has nothing, he is condemned, for he is a dead body while living, or while still breathing he should be killed.

My dear Bali, in flattering a woman to bring her under control, in joking, in a marriage ceremony, in earning one's livelihood, when one's life is in danger, in protecting cows and brahminical culture, or in protecting a person from an enemy's hand, falsity is never condemned.

- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) > Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creation > Chapter 19: Lord Vama-nadeva begs charity from Bali Maharaja, Verses: 1-43

SCIENTIFIC SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

His Divine Grace

A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

If happiness is the ultimate goal of life, one must be satisfied with the position in which he is placed by providence. This instruction is also given by Prahlada Maharaja (SB 7.6.3):

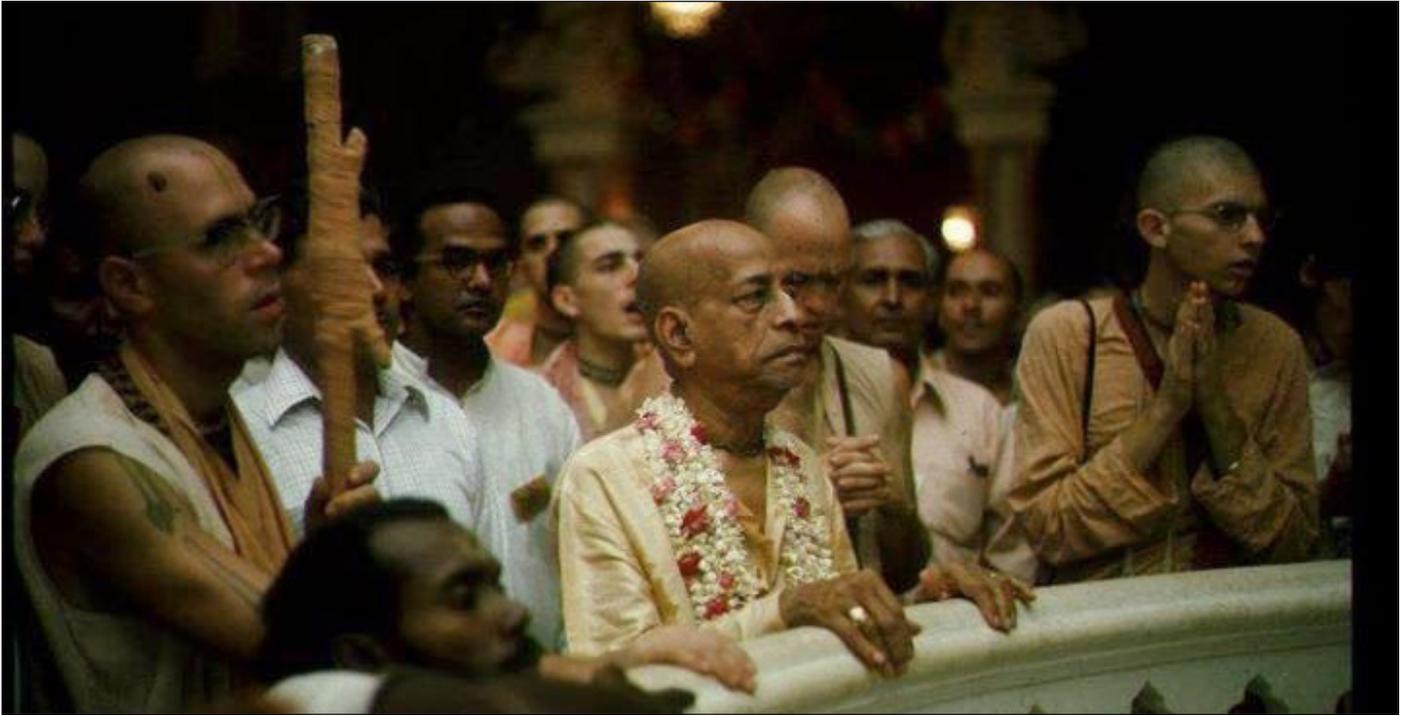
*sukham aindriyakaṁ daityā
deha-yogena dehinām
sarvatra labhyate daivād
yathā duḥkham ayatnataḥ*

"The happiness perceived with reference to the sense objects by contact with the body can be obtained in any form of life, according to one's past fruitive activities. Such happiness is automatically obtained without endeavour, just as we obtain distress." (SB 7.6.3) This philosophy is perfect in regard to obtaining happiness.

Real happiness is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.21):

*sukham ātyantikam yat tad
buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam
vetti yatra na caivāyam
sthitaś calati tattvataḥ*

"In the spiritually joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys



himself through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth."

One has to perceive happiness by the spiritual senses. These "supersenses" are not the senses of the material elements. Every one of us is a spiritual being (*aham brahmāsmi*), and every one of us is an individual person. Our senses are now covered by material elements, and because of ignorance we consider the material senses that cover us to be our real senses. The real senses, however, are within the material covering. *Dehino'smin yathā dehe*: [Bg. 2.13] within the covering of the material elements are the spiritual senses. *Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam*: [CC. Madhya 19.170] when the spiritual senses are uncovered, by these senses we can be happy. Satisfaction of the spiritual senses is thus described: *hr̥ṣikeṇa Hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*. When the senses are engaged in devotional service to Hrsikesa, then the senses are completely satisfied. Without this superior knowledge of sense gratification, one may try to satisfy his material senses, but happiness will never be possible. One may increase his ambition for sense gratification and even achieve what he desires for the gratification of his senses, but because this is on the material platform, he will never achieve satisfaction and contentment.

According to brahminical culture, one should be content with whatever he obtains without special endeavour and should cultivate spiritual

consciousness. Then he will be happy. The purpose of the Krishna consciousness movement is to spread this understanding. People who do not have scientific spiritual knowledge mistakenly think that the members of the Krishna consciousness movement are escapists trying to avoid material activities. However, the opposite is true - we are engaged in real activities for obtaining the ultimate happiness in life. If one is not trained to satisfy the spiritual senses and continues in material sense gratification, he will never obtain happiness that is eternal and blissful. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.1) therefore recommends:

*tapo divyam putrakā yena sattvaṁ
śuddhyed yasmād brahma-saukhyam tv anantam*

One must practice austerity so that his existential position will be purified and he will achieve unlimited blissful life.

- *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāna) > Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creation > Chapter 19 : Lord Vamanadeva begs charity from Bali Maharaja, Verses: 24, Purport.

ETERNAL VARṆĀSRAMA
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

In the *varṇāśrama* system human beings are divided according to their nature into the follow-

ing divisions: *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *sūdra*, *śaṅkara*, and *antyaja*. Even though the system of *varṇāśrama* is not clearly present in some countries, it still exists in a seedling form. According to one's nature, he develops his occupation and, accordingly, his means of livelihood. By accepting the livelihood and occupation of others, one meets with misfortune. What to speak of misfortune, it especially obstructs one's devotional service. Birth is not the only criteria; the only criteria is one's nature. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35) it is stated:

*yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ
puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta
tat tenaiva vinirdiśet*

"If one shows the symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *sūdra*, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification."

In his commentary, Sridhara Swami has written: *śamādibhir eva brāhmaṇādi vyavahāro mukhyaḥ, na jāti mātrād ity āha-yasyeti. yad yadi anyatra varṇāntare 'pi dṛśyeta tad varṇāntaraṁ tenaiva lakṣaṇa nimittenaiva varṇena vinirddiśet, na tu jāti nimittenty arthaḥ* "The *brāhmaṇas*' main characteristics are qualities such as peacefulness, not simply birth. If these main characteristics are seen in persons other than those born as *brāhmaṇas*, then such persons should be considered *brāhmaṇas*. They should not be considered according to their caste by birth." This kind of eternal *varṇāśrama-dharma* is always to be followed. It is often useful for devotional service. Members of the four *varṇas* and the lower castes should be eager to progress their higher *sāttvic* nature. For example, if an outcaste becomes fortunate due to his pious deeds, then he should progress his cultivation of goodness while following the conduct of a *sūdra*. Everyone should give prominence to devotional service and progress the cultivation of goodness to the platform of *nirguṇa*, transcendence, by the mercy of the devotees. These are the stages of *sanātana-dharma*. With devotion, the member of any *varṇa* is considered the best of the *brāhmaṇas*; without devotion, the life of a *brāhmaṇa* fixed in goodness is useless.

For example, let us consider the statement: Srila Narottama dasa Thakura has opined (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*):

*mahājanera yei patha, tā 'te ha 'ba anurata,
pūrvāpara kariyā vicāra*

"I will be attached to the path chalked out by the previous and present *mahājanas*."

The *ṛṣis* and *mahatmas* who have taught devotional conduct before the appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are counted among the previous *mahājanas*. The second mode of behaviour exhibited by the later *mahājanas* who came after the appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The conduct of these later *mahājanas* is superior and should be adopted. The devotional behaviour of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His followers is meant to teach all people, and so that is the standard which should be followed in all respects.

- Śrī Bhaktiyāloka - The Six Faults and Qualities of Bhakti, Translated by Srila Pundarika Vidyanidhi Das.

THE GARLANDS OF BIRTH AND DEATH Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

By good fortune and the Lord's mercy we have been given a human birth. The human form of life is extremely rare, and there is no guarantee that in our next life we will again become humans. By some misfortune we might become a ghost, witch, hobgoblin, animal, bird, or insect. It is not possible to worship Hari in those species. Therefore we should not use whatever time we have left in our present body for pointless activities.

Life is temporary. Still, human life can award spiritual salvation. Therefore as long as we are alive, we should quickly earn our spiritual perfection. Human beings proudly consider themselves *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, or *sūdras*; then again *brahmacārīs*, *grhasthas*, *vānaprasthas*, or *sannyāsīs*. Those who are intelligent, however, should not claim these false identities. We are simply the Lord's servants. We are not products of this world. To consider the body the self is an illusion. Sri Mahaprabhu said:

*jīvera svabhāva, kṛṣṇa-dāsa'-abhimāna
dehe ātma-jñāne ācchādita sei 'jñāna'*

The original nature of every living entity is to consider himself the eternal servant of Krishna. But under the influence of *māya* he thinks of himself in terms of his body and bodily identity, and thus his original consciousness is covered. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 24.201*)

Lord Hari's holy name does not appear on the tongues of persons puffed up with the false ego of material proprietorship. We are eternally conditioned souls. Due to our forgetfulness of Krishna we have fallen into illusion. Now we have no alternative but to give up our false ego and take complete shelter at the lotus feet of *guru* and Krishna. Elephants think themselves pachyderms and dogs identify themselves as canines, but humans should not think like this. Rather, they should be proud of their real identity. Sri Mahāprabhu said, *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'*: "It is the living entity's constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Krishna" (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 20.108*)

Lord Hari is situated in every atom, and He attracts fools and the learned alike. However, only those who have no desire for material enjoyment, nor aspire for becoming a lord and master, nor desire to command respect as *sādhus*, are qualified to hear His instructions. Those who are attached to something so insignificant as their own foolish pride, will never hear the Lord's call.

Still, such persons should know that death is inevitable. *adya vābda śatānte vā mṛtyur vai prāninām dhruvaḥ*: either today or in a hundred years every living entity must die. We are cognizant, but if despite our cognizance we did not approach the Lord's devotees and hear their instructions attentively, we are surely destined for ruination.

There is no chance to worship the Supreme Lord in any form of life other than the human form. Therefore, giving up all other engagements, we should engage ourselves in His devotional service (*hari-bhajana*) until we die. That is the only way we can attain the ultimate goal of life.

Everyone in this world is ready to ruin us. In this land of false friendship, our so-called relatives are

unfavourable for actual devotional service to the Lord. We therefore have no alternative but to take shelter of the *Vaiṣṇavas*. In truth the *Vaiṣṇavas* are our actual family and relations. We do not need to do anything for anyone. Rather we should simply serve the Lord's devotees along with other devotees. Let everyone serve the Lord with their knowledge, intelligence, academic qualification, physical strength, wealth, and expertise. The more we delay doing so, the more trouble we will find ourselves in.

People who follow *non-Vaiṣṇava* religious principles cannot attain auspiciousness. All auspiciousness is held in the hand of those who take shelter at the lotus feet of a *Vaiṣṇava*. The *non-Vaiṣṇavas* are decorated only with the garlands of birth and death. Persons attached to *hari-bhajana* no longer enter the wombs of mothers. What to speak of *Vaiṣṇavas*, even those who have the opportunity to see the lotus feet of an extraordinary *Vaiṣṇava* will not take birth again.

- *Amṛta Vāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality of His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada; Published by Isvara dasa of Touchstone Media.*



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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