

The Cricket of Life

Did you ever think of participating in cricket – not as a player, but as a cricket ball?

The ball is sometimes kissed, sometimes beaten. Sometimes raised high, sometimes flung down. Sometimes chased after, sometimes thrown away. In the game of life, isn't our plight similar? We are sometimes loved, sometimes hated. Sometimes raised up by success, sometimes flung down by failure. Sometimes adored, sometimes despised.

The ball is everyone's object of attention, but is it anyone's object of love? The players (and the onlookers) give it attention only because they hope to get what they want from it. Similarly, we may sometimes become others' object of attention, but do we become anyone's object of love? The sad truth is that most people are interested not in us *per se*, but in what they can get out of us.

Finally when the ball gets damaged, it is casually tossed away. It becomes reduced from being the cynosure of all eyes to being an unnoticed trash item. Similarly, when our bodies become *tired* by age, we are tossed away, *re-tired*. We become relegated from the center of our homes to an unknown corner.

Teams win and teams lose, but the ball never wins; it just keeps getting beaten. Similarly, the body, school, company, country – the things with which we identify – sometimes win and sometimes lose, but we as souls never win; we just keep getting beaten – beaten by bodily miseries, social miseries and environmental miseries.

But we have one freedom that the cricket ball doesn't have – the ball can't quit the game, we can. The Vedic scriptures explain that our fascination with sports is natural, but misdirected. As eternal spiritual beings, we don't have to play the miserable game of material life. We have a birthright to enjoy eternal sport – in the team of the supreme sport-star, God, Krishna. The kingdom of God is an eternal sporting arena, where Krishna enjoys loving sports with His devotee friends, where "every walk is a dance and every talk is a song." (*Brahma-Samhita*). There all our desires for enjoyable sports are completely fulfilled – not by vicarious imagination, but by vivacious participation. ❧

