

## When Free-Dom Dooms Free Will

Once a person, while driving a car at a square, saw a buffalo walking through the red signal. "Let me go too," he thought. No sooner did he start his car did the policeman stop and fine him. "You didn't fine the buffalo; why are you fining me?" he protested. The policeman retorted, "Because you are bigger buffalo."

We are all spiritual beings, souls, driving the physical vehicles of our bodies. When the soul resides in the non-human bodies, its behavior is governed primarily by instincts; animals have hardly any free will and so need no rules. But when the soul progresses by transmigration into a human body, he is



bestowed free will. Therefore, we humans are given rules to best utilize our free will; for example, we can fast for health, fitness or spirituality.

Just as everyone with a car doesn't automatically know driving, similarly everyone with a human body doesn't necessarily know living – the art of utilizing the free will to drive the human body to the desired destination of life – everlasting happiness. Consequently freedom – acting the way we like – may not always be the best utilization of our free will – the ability to act the way we like.

Imagine a person learning driving from a trainer. The trainee has "freedom"– he can anytime, go right, press the brake or hit the accelerator. Result? Accident. Even in the best-case scenario, he will never experience the joy of driving. But if he obeys his guide, he will gradually gain real freedom to drive – without foolhardily risking his life.

Similarly we need to learn living from a guru. We have the freedom to live whichever way we like. Result? Accident. AIDS due to unregulated sex, for example. Even in the best-case scenario, we will never experience the real joy of living – the unlimited spiritual happiness that we are always longing for. But if we obey the rules given by a bona fide guru in *parampara*, as recommended in the Bhagavad-gita (4.34), we will gradually gain freedom to choose actions that will activate our innate spiritual joyfulness. ❧