

Responsibly Irresponsible

Can we make our own traffic laws? Yes, we can, but at our own risk; as soon as our 'laws' violate the government laws, we become punishable by law.

Similarly, can we decide our own duties and responsibilities? Yes, we can, but at our risk; as soon as our 'responsibilities' fall short of the responsibilities ordained by the Universal Government under God, we become punishable by the laws of karma.

What are our responsibilities in God's government? God explains them through the Vedic scriptures. Let's understand:

1. Irresponsibility: (*Adharma* or irreligion)
2. Material Responsibility (*Apara Dharma* or mundane religion)
3. Spiritual Responsibility (*Para Dharma* or divine religion)



1. The irresponsible people – like the students who loaf around without studying – are lazy, whimsical and careless.

2. The materially responsible people – like the conscientious students who remember that their parents are paying for their education – are mindful of their obligations to others.

3. The spiritually responsible people acknowledge all that others are doing for them –and they also recognize that ultimately God is doing everything for them through their loved ones. They understand that when a mother breastfeeds her child, it is God who is arranging for the milk in the breasts of the mother to nourish the child that He has sent into this world through her womb. A well-known saying among wise doctors is, "we treat, He heals."

The spiritually responsible people do their needful duties to the people who are acting as instruments of God. And they also do their duty toward God who is doing everything for them through different people and who is also providing heat, light, air and water through nature.

God has revealed in the sacred scriptures that He wants all of us to live harmoniously in this world, awaken our dormant love for Him, help others to

develop that love and ultimately return back to His eternal abode for everlasting happiness.

Unfortunate are those, who due to spiritual ignorance, stay stuck self-righteously at the level of material responsibilities only and claim that there is no need to take exclusive time out to awaken love for God. The Srimad Bhagavatam (SB) warns in no uncertain terms the failures that this mistaken attitude leads to:

1. Individual failure: “The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead.” (SB 1.2.8)

As human beings, it is our duty to care of our souls by developing our love for God and return back to His eternal abode. Otherwise, if we spend our entire life taking care only of our bodies, then how are we better than the animals, who also expertly take care of their bodies?

2. Social failure: “One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband or a mother.” (SB 5.5.18)

Even the animals take care of the bodies of their family members. Only when we care for the souls of our loved ones do our relationships rise to a platform higher than those of the animals.

Thus, in the eyes of the sacred scriptures, even the materially responsible people are still spiritually irresponsible. In other words, they are responsibly irresponsible.

How do we become spiritually responsible?



The easiest and best way is to render devotional service by associating with devotees and chanting the holy names. Therefore, these two activities – association and chanting – are our fundamental spiritual responsibilities.

Let us therefore become holistically responsible and thus receive the supreme grace of God which alone can enrich our life with divine love and eternal fulfillment. ❧