Newsletter of the Hare Krishna Movement Chennai

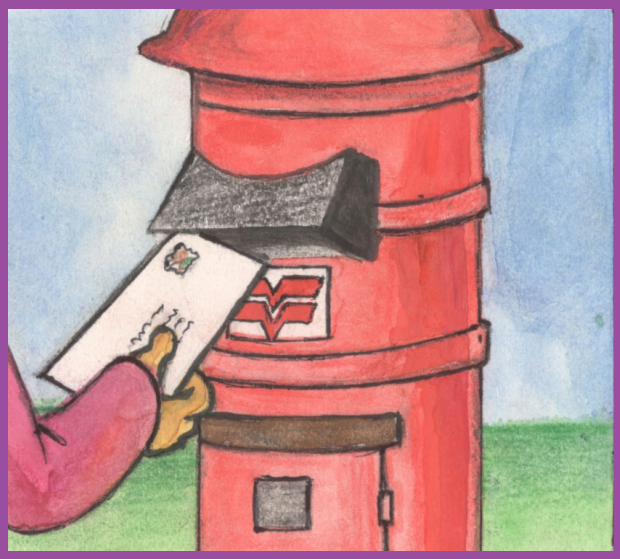
வைகுண்ட வார்த்தை

VAIKUNTA VARTHAI

Divine News from the Spiritual World

Vol. 02 No. 11 November 2017 Rs.20

Sri Govardhana Puja



Art work by Sadachara Dasa

Just as letters posted in an authorized postbox will reach its destination without difficulty, similary God will accept service through his authorized representation in the Deity form called *archa-vigraha*. Ref. B.G. 12.5 purport

Darshan of Sri Sri Krishna Balarama

Chant

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

and be happy !

Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure

By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Kṛṣṇa The Reservoir of Pleasure)

Kṛṣṇa—this sound is transcendental. Kṛṣṇa means the highest pleasure. All of us, every living being, seeks pleasure. But we do not know how to seek pleasure perfectly. With a materialistic concept of life, we are frustrated at every step in satisfying our pleasure because we have no information regarding the real level on which to have real pleasure. For the last few weeks we have been learning that we are not this body; we are consciousness. Not exactly consciousness, for consciousness is actually the symptom of our real identity: we are pure soul, now merged within this material body. Modern material science lays no stress on this; therefore the scientists are sometimes misled in their understanding of spirit soul. But spirit soul is a fact, which anyone can understand by the presence of consciousness. Any child can understand that consciousness is the symptom of the spirit soul.

Now the whole process we are trying to learn from the Bhagavad-gītā (The Song of God) is how to bring ourselves to this level of consciousness. And if we act from the level of consciousness, then we may not be pushed again into the level of this bodily conception; and, if we can continue on that level, if we can continue to act in pure consciousness, then, at the end of this body we shall be free from material contamination, our spiritual life will be revived, and the ultimate result will be that in our next life, after leaving this body, we shall have our full, eternal spiritual life. Spirit, as we have already discussed, is described as eternal. Even after the destruction of this body, consciousness is not destroyed. Rather, consciousness is transferred to another type of body and again makes us aware of the material conception of life. That is also described in the Bhagavad-gītā. At the time of death, if our consciousness is pure, we can be sure that our next life will not be material—our next life will be spiritual. If our consciousness is not pure at the point of death, then, after leaving this body, we shall have to take another material body. That is the process which is going on. That is Nature's law.

We have now a finite body. The body which we see is the gross body. It is just like a shirt and coat: within the coat there is a shirt, and within the shirt there is a body. Similarly, the pure soul is covered by a shirt and coat. The garments are the mind, intelligence and false ego. False ego means the misconception that I am matter, that I am a product of this material world. This misconception makes me localized. For example, because I have taken my birth in India, I think myself Indian. Because I have taken my birth in America, I think myself American. But as pure soul, I am neither Indian nor American. I am pure soul. These others are designations. American, or Indian, or German, or Englishman; cat or dog, or bee or bat, man or wife: all these are designations. In spiritual consciousness we become free from all such designations. That freedom is achieved when we are constantly in touch with the supreme spirit, Kṛṣṇa.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is simply intended to keep us in constant touch with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa can be in constant companionship with us because He is omnipotent. Therefore, He can be fully in touch with us by His words. His words and He are not different. That is omnipotence. Omnipotence means that everything relating to Him has the same potency. For example, here in this material world, if we are thirsty and we want water, simply repeating "Water, water, water, water," will not satisfy our thirst, because this word has not the same potency as water itself. We require the water in substance. Then our thirst will be satisfied. But in the transcendental, absolute world, there is no such difference. Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's quality, Kṛṣṇa's word—everything is Kṛṣṇa and provides the same satisfaction.

Some people argue that Arjuna was talking with Kṛṣṇa because Kṛṣṇa was present before him, whereas in my case, Kṛṣṇa is not present. So how can I get directions? But that is not a fact. Kṛṣṇa is present by His words—the Bhagavad-gītā. In India, when we speak on the Bhagavad-gītā or Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, we regularly perform worship with flowers, or with other paraphernalia, as is required for worshiping. In the Sikh religion also, although they have no form of the Deity, they worship the book Granthasahib. Perhaps some of you are acquainted with this Sikh community. They worship this Grantha. Similarly, the Moslems worship the Koran. Similarly, in the Christian world, the Bible

is worshiped. It is a fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is present by His words. Kṛṣṇa is also present by His words.

These personalities, either God or the son of God, who come from the transcendental world, keep their transcendental identities without being contaminated by the material world. That is their omnipotence. We are in the habit of saying that God is omnipotent. Omnipotence means that He is not different from His name, from His quality, from His pastimes, from His instruction. Therefore, the discussion of Bhagavad-gītā is as good as discussion with Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Kṛṣṇa is seated in your heart, and in my heart too. Īśvaraḥsarva-bhūtānāṁhṛddeśe 'rjunatiṣṭhati [Bg. 18.61]. God is situated in everyone's heart. God is not away from us. He is present. He is so friendly that He remains with us in our repeated change of births. He is waiting to see when we shall turn to Him. He is so kind that though we may forget Him, He never forgets us. Although a son may forget his father, a father never forgets his son. Similarly, God, the original father of everything, everybody, all living entities, will never forsake us. We may have different bodies, but they are our shirt-coats. That has nothing to do with our real identity. Our real identity is pure soul, and that pure soul is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. There are 8,400,000 species of life. Even the biologist and the anthropologist cannot calculate this accurately, but from authoritative, revealed scripture we get this information. Human beings represent 400,000 species, and there are 8,000,000 other species. But Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, claims that all of them, whether beast, man, snake, god, semi-god, demi-god—anything whatever—all of them are, in reality, His sons.The father gives the seed, and the mother receives the seed. The body is then formed, according to the mother's body. And when the body is completely formed, it comes out—either from cats, from dogs, or from man. That is the process of generation. The father gives the seed, and it is emulsified with two kinds of secretion in the womb of the mother, and on the first night the body is formed just like a pea. Then, gradually, it develops. There are nine holes that develop: two ears, two eyes, nostrils, a mouth, a navel, a penis, and an anus.

According to his last karma, or action, one gets this body to enjoy, or to suffer. That is the process of birth and death. And after finishing this life, again one dies, and again one enters into the womb of some mother. Another type of body then comes out. This is the process of reincarnation. We should be very diligent as to how we can discontinue this process of repeated birth and death and change of body. That is the prerogative of the human form of life. We can stop this process of repeated change through birth and death. We can get our actual spiritual form again and be blissful, full of knowledge and eternal life. That is the purpose of evolution. We should not miss this. The entire process of liberation begins just as we have now begun this chanting and hearing. I wish to point out that this chanting of the holy name of God (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, KṛṣṇaKṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, RāmaRāma, Hare Hare) and hearing the truths of the Gītā is as good as bodily association with Kṛṣṇa. That is stated in the Gītā. This process is called kīrtana. Even if one does not understand the language, still, just by hearing, he acquires some piety. His assets lead him to a pious life, even if he does not understand—it has such power.

There are two topics concerning Kṛṣṇa. Two kinds of topics, actually. One topic is this Bhagavad-gītā. It is spoken by Kṛṣṇa. And the other topic concerning Kṛṣṇa is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. That is spoken about Kṛṣṇa. So there are two types of Kṛṣṇakathā (topics), and both of them are equally potent because they are connected with Kṛṣṇa.

Because the Bhagavad-gītā is spoken on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra some people have asked what we have to do with the battlefield. We have nothing to do with any battlefield. We are after knowledge of the spiritual sphere. Then, why should we bother about this battlefield? Because Kṛṣṇa is on the battlefield, and therefore the whole battlefield has become Kṛṣṇa-ized. Just as when an electric current is passed into some metal, the whole metal becomes surcharged with electricity; so too, when Kṛṣṇa is interested in some matter, that matter becomes Kṛṣṇa-ized. Otherwise, there would be no need of discussing the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. That is His omnipotence.This omnipotence is also described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. There are many Kṛṣṇakathās. The Vedic literature is full of them. Vedas mean that they are Kṛṣṇakathās. Scripture, including the Vedas, may appear to be different, but they are all meant for Kṛṣṇakathā. If we simply hear these topics on Kṛṣṇa, then what will be the result? It is pure transcendental vibration, and the result will be spiritual consciousness.

Read Bhagavad-gītā in a submissive spirit

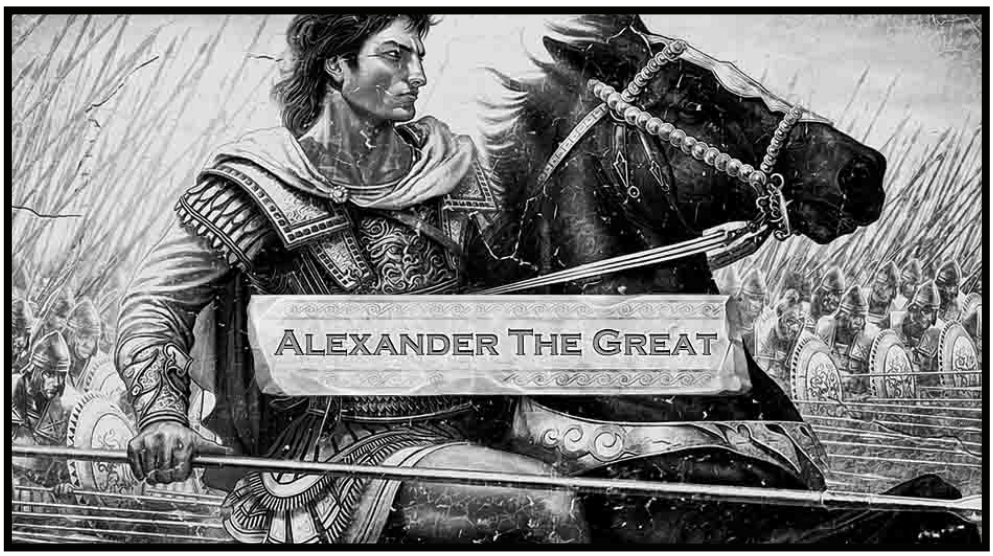
(By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada)

What is so unique about Srila Prabhupada's commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā? Read below from the author himself to know the speciality of the "As It Is" edition of this Vedic literature.

Therefore Bhagavad-gītā should be taken up in a spirit of devotion. One should not think that he is equal to Kṛṣṇa, nor should he think that Kṛṣṇa is an ordinary personality or even a very great personality. Lord ŚrīKṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So according to the statements of Bhagavad-gītā or the statements of Arjuna, the person who is trying to understand the Bhagavad-gītā, we should at least theoretically accept ŚrīKṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and with that submissive spirit we can understand the Bhagavad-gītā. Unless one reads the Bhagavad-gītā in a submissive spirit, it is very difficult to understand Bhagavad-gītā, because it is a great mystery. (Bhagavad-**gītā** As It Is – Introduction)

Big thief and small thief

A short story by Srila Prabhupada



Srila Prabhupada used to narrate wonderful short stories during his lectures and talks to drive home a particular point. Read below one such insightful story.

"You know the story of Alexander the Great and the thief. Alexander the Great arrested one thief, and he was going to punish him.The thief pleaded, "Sir, you are going to punish me, but what is the difference between you and me? I am a small thief, you are a great thief. That's all. You are by force occupying other's kingdom, and you have no right. But because you are strong, or some way or other, you have got the opportunity, and you are conquering country after country, country after... So I am also doing the same thing. So what is the difference between you and me?"

So Alexander considered that "Yes, I am nothing but a big thief, that's all." So he released him, "Yes, I am no better than you."

அறிய இயலாதவரை அறிந்து கொள்ளுதல்

தன்னை உணர்ந்த ஞானிகளிடமிருந்து பரம்பொருளின் பெருமைகளைப் பணிவுடன் கேட்காத ஒருவனால் அவரைப் புரிந்துகொள்ள இயலாது

அகில உலக கிருஷ்ண பக்தி இயக்கத்தின் ஸ்தாபக ஆச்சாரியர், பக்தி வேதாந்த சுவாமி ஸ்ரீல பிரபுபாதா அவர்கள் 1967 ஆம் ஆண்டில் நியூயார்க்கில் ஆற்றிய உரை

ந மே விது: ஸுர-கணா:
ப்ரபவம் ந மஹர்ஷய:
அஹம் ஆதிர் ஹி தேவானாம்
மஹர்ஷீணாம் ச ஸர்வஷ:

"தேவர்களோ மகா ரிஷிகளோ கூட என்னுடைய வைபவங்களை அறிவதில்லை. ஏனெனில், எல்லா விதங்களிலும் தேவர்களுக்கும் ரிஷிகளுக்கும் நானே ஆதியாவேன்" (பகவத் கீதை 10.2)

இப்போது, கடவுளைப் புரிந்து கொள்ளும் கொள்கைகளை நீங்கள் பின்பற்றுவதன் மூலம் என்ன விளைவுகள் ஏற்படும்? பகவத் கீதையின் அடுத்த பதத்தில்(10.3) இது கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது.

யோ மாம் அஜம் அனாதிம் ச
வேத்தி லோக-மஹேஷ்வரம்
அஸம்மூட: ஸ மர்த்யேஷு
ஸர்வ–பாபை: ப்ரமுச்யதே.

கிருஷ்ணர், பிறப்பற்றவர் (அஜம்) என்றும் ஆரம்பமற்றவர் (அனாதி) என்றும் நீங்கள் புரிந்துகொள்வீர்கள். காரணங்களுக்கு எல்லாம் காரண கர்த்தா அவர். ஏனைய யாதொரு காரணத்தாலும் அவர் உருவாக்கப்படுவதில்லை (ஸர்வ காரண காரணம்). எனவே, பரம்பொருளாகிய கிருஷ்ணரைப் புரிந்துகொள்ள, காரணங்கள் அனைத்திற்கும் காரணமானவர் அவரே என்னும் உண்மையை நம்பிக்கையுடன் ஏற்றுக்கொள்வதே முதன்மையாகும்.

பின்னர், ஸர்வ லோக மஹேஷ்வரம்: - கிருஷ்ணரே, இப்பௌதிக உலகம் மற்றும் ஆன்மீக உலகங்களையும் கட்டுப்படுத்துபவர் என்பதை அறிந்து, அவரைப் பற்றிய முழு உணர்வில் இருப்பவர், அஸம்மூட: கடவுள் பற்றிய விஷயங்களில் குழப்பமற்றவர்களாக திகழ்வார்கள். நீங்கள் எதையும் கண்மூடித்தனமாக நம்பிவிடக் கூடாது. கடவுள் உங்களுக்குப் பகுத்தறியும் ஆற்றலையும் விவாதிக்கும் சக்தியையும் அளித்துள்ளார். ஆனால், பொய்யாக விவாதம் செய்யாதீர்கள். தத்வித்தி ப்ரணிபாதேன பரிப்ரஷ்னேன ஸேவயா. இந்த இவ்விஞ்ஞானத்தை நீங்கள் புரிந்து கொள்ள வேண்டுமென்றால், சரணடைதல் என்னும் இக்கொள்கையை நீங்கள் பின்பற்ற வேண்டும். பாகவதத்தில் குறிப்பிடப்பட்டிருப்பதும் இதுவே: 'நமந்த ஏவ'- பணிவுடன் இருத்தல். நீங்கள் பணிவுடையவராக மாறாத வரை, சரணடைந்த ஆத்மாவாக உங்களால் மாற இயலாது. மேலும், பரிபூரண உண்மையைப் புரிந்துகொள்வதற்கு உங்களிடம் இருக்க வேண்டிய முதல் தகுதி என்னவென்றால், அதிகாரப்பூர்வமான நபரிடம் சரணடைவதேயாகும்.

"நான் சரணடைய வேண்டிய நபர் இவரே" என்னும் ஒருவரை நீங்கள் எங்கே காண்பீர்கள்? இதற்கான அறிவை நீங்கள் பெற்றிருக்க வேண்டும். யாதொரு அபக்தனிடமும் நீங்கள் சரணடைந்திடக் கூடாது. அர்த்தமற்றவையிலிருந்து உண்மையான ஆன்மீகத் தலைவர் யாரென்று அறிவது எவ்வாறு என்பது முண்டக உபநிஷத்தில் [1.2.12] இவ்வாறு கூறப்பட்டிருக்கிறது: "தத்விக்ஞானார்தம் ஸ குரும் ஏவாபிகச் சேத் ஷ்ரோத்ரிய் ப்ரஹ்மநிஷ்டம். இதில் ஷ்ரோத்ரியம் என்றால் 'குரு-சீடர் பரம்பரையில் வந்தவர்' என்று பொருள். அவர் குரு-சீடர் பரம்பரையில் வந்தவர் என்பதற்கு என்ன ஆதாரம்? பிரஹ்ம நிஷ்டம்: பரம்பொருளான கடவுளின் சேவையில் தன்னை முழுவதுமாக அர்ப்பணித்தவர்.

எனவே, அத்தகைய அதிகாரமுள்ள நபரை நீங்கள் கண்டறிய நேர்ந்தால், யாதொரு ஐயமுமின்றி உடனே அவரிடம் சரணடையுங்கள். அவரிடம் சரணடைவது, கடவுளிடம் சரணடைவதற்கு ஒப்பாகும். ஏனெனில் அவர் கடவுளின் பிரதிநிதி. அவரைக் குறித்து நீங்கள் விசாரிக்கலாம், உங்கள் நேரத்தை வீணடிப்பதற்காக அல்ல, அவரைப் பற்றிப் புரிந்து கொள்வதற்காக. மேலும், நீங்கள் அவருக்குச் சேவை செய்து அவரை மனநிறைவடையச் செய்ய வேண்டும். பின், கிருஷ்ணர் உங்களிடம் தன்னை வெளிப்படுத்துவார். இது தான் வழிமுறை.

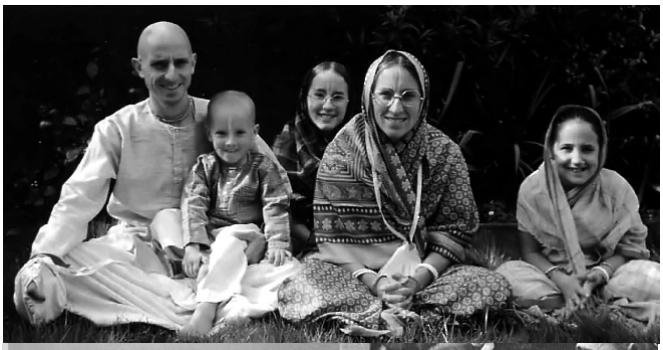
தன்னையறியும் முழு விஞ்ஞான வழிமுறையையும் வேதங்களில் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கின்றன. நீங்கள் அதனை மட்டுமே பின்பற்ற வேண்டும். ஆனால், அச்செயல்முறையைப் பின்பற்றாமல், போதையிலும் கற்பனையிலும் மற்றும் அர்த்தமற்ற அனைத்து வித நடவடிக்கைகளிலும் ஈடுபடுவதன் மூலம் உங்கள் நேரத்தை வீணடித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தால், நீங்கள் கடவுளைப் புரிந்துகொள்ளவே முடியாது. பகவான் கிருஷ்ணர் இங்கே கூறுவது போல், தேவர்களாலும் மகாரிஷிகளாலுமே கடவுளைப் புரிந்துகொள்ள இயலாத போது, அற்ப முயற்சிகளை மேற்கொள்ளும் நம்மைப் பற்றிப் பேச என்ன இருக்கிறது?

கிருஷ்ண பக்திக்கான கொள்கைகளை

நீங்கள் பின்பற்றத் தொடங்கினால், சந்தேகத்திற்கு இடமின்றி, உறுதியாக "ஆம், நான் ஆன்மீக ரீதியாக முன்னேறிக் கொண்டிருக்கிறேன்" என்பதை நீங்கள் புரிந்துகொள்ளுவீர்கள். அக்கொள்கைகளை நீங்கள் பின்பற்றுவதால், மேலும் மேலும் கடவுளைப் பற்றி நீங்கள் புரிந்து கொள்வீர்கள்.

நீங்கள் முறையான ஊட்டச்சத்துள்ள உணவு வகைகளை உட்கொள்ளும் போது, அதிக ஆற்றலைப் பெறுவதையும் பசியாறப் பெறுவதையும் உங்களால் எவ்வாறு உணர முடிகிறதோ அதுபோல, முறையான ஆன்மீக வழியில் நடந்து, இக்கொள்கைகளை நீங்கள் பின்பற்றும் போது, "ஆம், நான் முன்னேறிக் கொண்டிருக்கிறேன்" என்பதை நீங்கள் புரிந்து கொள்வீர்கள். பகவத் கீதையின் ஒன்பதாவது அத்தியாயத்தில் [9.2] ப்ரத்யக்ஷாவகமம் தர்ம்யம் ஸு ஸுகம் கர்தும் அவ்யயம் என்று பகவான் கிருஷ்ணர் கூறியுள்ளவாறு, "கிருஷ்ண பக்திக்கான இந்த வழிமுறை மிகவும் எளிமையானதாகவும், மகிழ்வான மனநிலையில் உங்களால் பின்பற்றத்தக்கதாகவும் இருக்கிறது.

அந்த வழிமுறை தான் என்ன? 'ஹரே கிருஷ்ணா' நாமத்தை உச்சரிப்பதும், அதன் இனிய இசைகளைக் கேட்பதும் கிருஷ்ணப் பிரசாதத்தை உண்பதும் பகவத் கீதையின் தத்துவத்தைப் படிப்பதும் தான் அது. அது மிகக் கடினமானதா? இல்லவே இல்லை.



மேலும், இந்த வழிமுறையால் நீங்கள் அஸம்மூட: அதாவது குழப்பமற்றவராக ஆகிறீர்கள். யாராலும் உங்களை ஏமாற்ற முடியாது. ஒருவேளை, நீங்கள் ஏமாற விரும்பினால், போலித்தனமான வழிமுறைகளை உங்களுக்குக் கற்றுத் தர ஏமாற்றுக் காரர்கள் பலர் இருக்கின்றனர். எனவே, இவ்வகை ஏமாற்றுக்காரர்களின் வலைகளில் சிக்கி நீங்கள் ஏமாற்றப்பட வேண்டாம். குரு-சீடர் பரம்பரையைச் சேர்ந்தவர்களால் அறிவுறுத்தப்பட்டவாறு, வேத இலக்கியங்களில் குறிப்பிடப்பட்டுள்ளவாறு, கிருஷ்ணரால் பரிந்துரைக்கப்பட்டவாறு, கிருஷ்ண பக்திக்கான வழிமுறையை மட்டும் பின்பற்றுங்கள். அதிகாரப் பூர்வமானவர்களிடமிருந்து இந்த விஞ்ஞானத்தைக் கேட்டு, உங்கள் வாழ்வில் அதனைப் பின்பற்ற முயலுங்கள். பின், சந்தேகமின்றி ஆன்மீக முன்னேற்றத்தை உங்களால் அடைய இயலும் (அஸம்மூட: ஸ மர்த்யேஷு). மர்த்யா என்னும் சொல்லுக்கு, "இறப்பதற்கு விதிக்கப்பட்டவர்கள்" என்று பொருள். யார் அவர்கள்? பிரம்மாவிலிருந்து தொடங்கி, சாதாரண எறும்பு வரையிலான அனைத்து கட்டுண்ட ஆத்மாக்களும், மர்த்யா எனப்படுபவை தான். இவையனைத்திற்கும் மரணம் உண்டு. இவ்வாறு மரணம் நிச்சயிக்கப்பட்ட அனைத்து உயிரினங்களிலும் மிகவும் அறிவார்ந்தவராக நீங்கள் மாறுவீர்கள். ஏன்? ஸர்வ பாபை: ப்ரமுச்யதே. உங்களால் பாவச் விளைவுகளிலிருந்து விடுவித்துக் கொள்ள முடியும்.

இப்பௌதிக உலகில், அறிந்தும் அறியாமலும் பாவச் செயல்களையே நாம் செய்து கொண்டிருக்கிறோம். எனவே, அவற்றிலிருந்து நாம் விடுபட வேண்டும். எப்படி? கிருஷ்ணரிடமும், அவரின் அதிகாரம் பெற்ற ஆன்மீகக் குருவிடமும் சரணடைவதன் மூலமாக. பின்னர், ஸர்வ பாபை: ப்ரமுச்யதே: உங்களது பாவ விளைவுகளிலிருந்து தூய்மை பெற இது தான் சிறந்த வழி. மேலும், இந்த வழிமுறையை நீங்கள் தொடர்ந்து பின்பற்றும் போது, நீங்கள் கிருஷ்ணரின் தொடர்பைப் பெற்று, உங்கள் வாழ்வை வெற்றியுடையதாக உங்களால் மாற்ற முடியும். இந்த வழிமுறை மிகவும் எளிமையானதும், அதே நேரத்தில் மிக வலிமையானதுமாகும். எனவே, ஒவ்வொருவரும் இதனைப் பின்பற்ற வேண்டும்.

மிக்க நன்றி.

தமிழாக்கம்: சுபத்ரா ரவிச்சந்திரன்,
உதவிப் பிரிவு அலுவலர்,
தமிழ் வளர்ச்சி (ம) செய்தி (மொழிபெயர்ப்பு) துறை,
தலைமைச் செயலகம், சென்னை.

What is Sin?

By Stoka Krishna Dasa

Often people are ignorant of what really is sin. A common man has his own conception of what is good and what is bad. He thinks that what is bad according to his understanding is actually sin. But sin is based on laws of nature which are inviolable. There are laws of nature which are working in this world. They are enforced by higher authorities, the devatas who are empowered administrators of this world. What is sin should be understood from the scriptures. The scriptures describe sin as that which violates the laws of nature. As human beings we are held responsible for our actions performed through body, words and mind. Civilised life begins when people know the difference between pious activities and sinful activities. According to the Srimad Bhagavatam: "In this material world there are three kinds of activities-those in the mode of goodness, the mode of passion and the mode of ignorance. Because all people are influenced by the three modes of material nature, the results of their activities are also divided into three. One who acts in the mode of goodness is religious and happy, one who acts in passion achieves mixed misery and happiness, and one who acts under the influence of ignorance is always unhappy and lives like an animal. Because of the varying degrees to which the living entities are influenced by the different modes of nature, their destinations are also of different varieties.Just as by executing various pious activities one achieves different positions in heavenly life, by acting impiously one achieves different positions in hellish life. Those who are activated by the material mode of ignorance engage in impious activities, and according to the extent of their ignorance, they are placed in different grades of hellish life. If one acts in the mode of ignorance because of madness, his resulting misery is the least severe. One who acts impiously but knows the distinction between pious and impious activities is placed in a hell of intermediate severity. And for one who acts impiously and ignorantly because of atheism, the resultant hellish life is the worst. Because of ignorance, every living entity has been carried by various desires into thousands of different hellish planets since time immemorial."

The scriptures state that pious activites result in enjoyment and sinful activities result in suffering. SrilaPrabhupada explains: "Though we may live very carefully, trying to avoid sins and strictly follow the path of nonviolence, still our lives are controlled by the cycle of karmic reactions. Hence, unwittingly we are forced to commit many kinds of sin. We commit so many sins in business transactions, common human dealings, daily chores, and especially political and administrative activities. It fine to vociferously support nonviolence, but in actual life one is compelled to commit acts of violence. One may succeed in avoiding many kinds of sin, but it is impossible to escape committing the five great sins called pañca-sūnā. While walking on the street we may crush many ants to death against our wishes. While cleaning house, we may squash many insects to death. While grinding food grains or lighting a fire, we destroy many tiny lives. In this way, while executing our ordinary, daily chores we are forced to commit violence and take many innocent lives. Willingly or unwillingly, we commit sins."

The only way to avoid sin is to take to devotional service. In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna describes three kinds of activities: karma, vikarma and akarma. Karma is pious activites which are performed in accordance with the scriptures for getting good reactions. Vikarma is impious or sinful activities which are performed by violating scriptural injunctions. Akarma is devotional activites which do not give any reaction but result in devotional advancement towards ultimate liberation. Generally, in the scriptures only two kinds of activites are mentioned – karma and vikarma or pious and sinful activities. The people in general are interested in material enjoyment and hence desire good reactions from their activites. But even good reactions are binding the performer of pious activites in this material world. Therefore, an intelligent person should desire complete freedom from material bondage for which he has to perform akarma or devotional activities. In the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna advises: "Work done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu has to be performed, otherwise work binds one to this material world. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, perform your prescribed

duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain unattached and free from bondage."

We have to eat to maintain our body. But according to the Bhagavad Gita, even eating sattvik food is binding us to this material world. Lord Krishna says "The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin." Therefore, sattvik food has to be offered first for sacrifice to Krishna. Accepting such Krishna prasadam or remnants of food offered to Krishna will save us from material bondage.

What about the meat-eaters? Is a person who offers meat in sacrifice freed from the sinful reaction of animal killing? The scriptures say that animal killing is always sinful. In Sanskrit, meat is called "mamsa". Srila Prabhupada explains: "The word māṁsa ("meat") indicates that those animals whom we kill will be given an opportunity to kill us. Although in actuality no living entity is killed, the pains of being pierced by the horns of animals will be experienced after death. Not knowing this, rascals unhesitatingly go on killing poor animals. So-called human civilization has opened many slaughterhouses for animals in the name of religion or food. Those who are a little religious, kill animals in temples, mosques or synagogues, and those who are more fallen maintain various slaughterhouses. Just as in civilized human society the law is a life for a life, no living entity can encroach upon another living entity as far as the Supreme Lord is concerned. Everyone should be given freedom to live at the cost of the supreme father, and animal-killing—either for religion or for food—is always condemned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Regarding cow sacrifice, the Chaitanya Charitamrita says: "In the Vedas and Purāṇas there are injunctions declaring that if one can revive a living being, one can kill it for experimental purposes.Therefore, the great sages sometimes killed old cows, and by chanting Vedic hymns they brought them back to life for perfection.The killing and rejuvenation of such old and invalid cows was not truly killing but an act of great benefit.Formerly there were powerful brāhmaṇas who could make such experiments using Vedic hymns, but now, because of the Kali-yuga, brāhmaṇas are not so powerful. Therefore, the killing of cows and bulls for rejuvenation is forbidden."

Even offering a goat in sacrifice to Kālī as recommended in the Markandeya Puarana is sinful activity. Srila Prabhupada explains: "Due to a lack of qualified brahminical priests in Kali-yuga, it is not possible to perform the ritualistic ceremonies recommended in the Vedas. Consequently, the śāstras instruct us to perform the saṅkīrtana-yajña. By the saṅkīrtana sacrifice, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His form of Lord Caitanya, will be satisfied and worshiped. The entire purpose of performing sacrifices is to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu. Lord Viṣṇu, or Lord Kṛṣṇa, is present in His form of Lord Caitanya; therefore, people who are intelligent should try to satisfy Him by performing saṅkīrtana-yajña. This is the easiest way to satisfy Lord Viṣṇu in this age. People should take advantage of the injunctions in different śāstras concerning sacrifices in this age and not create unnecessary disturbances during the sinful age of Kali. In Kali-yuga men all over the world are very expert in opening slaughterhouses for killing animals, which they eat. If the old ritualistic ceremonies were observed, people would be encouraged to kill more and more animals. In Calcutta there are many butcher shops which keep a deity of the goddess Kālī, and animal-eaters think it proper to purchase animal flesh from such shops in hope that they are eating the remnants of food offered to goddess Kālī. They do not know that goddess Kālī never accepts nonvegetarian food because she is the chaste wife of Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva is also a great Vaiṣṇava and never eats nonvegetarian food, and the goddess Kālī accepts the remnants of food left by Lord Śiva. Therefore, there is no possibility of her eating flesh or fish. Such offerings are accepted by the associates of goddess Kālī known as bhūtas, piśācas and Rākṣasas, and those who take the prasāda of goddess Kālī in the shape of flesh or fish are not actually taking the prasāda left by goddess Kālī, but the food left by the bhūtas and piśācas."

Those addicted to meat-eating can give up all such sinful habits simply by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. This is the mercy of Lord Chaitanya for people of this age of Kali. Chanting the Hare Krishna mantra frees the chanter from all sinful reactions due to past sinful activites and also helps him to develop higher taste of taking Krishna prasadam, by tasting which one is able to competely give up the sinful habit of meat-eating.

Why Bhakti, known as the panchama purushartha, is superior to liberation

compiled by Sudama Vipra Dasa

"We are actually busy with dharma, artha, käma and mokña, but when we transcend these, bhakti begins". – Srila Prabhupada

Generally, people want dharma, artha, käma and mokña, in that order. First of all, people want to become religious (dharma) in order to attain material opulence (artha). People want material opulence in order to gratify their senses (käma), and when they are frustrated in their attempt to gratify their senses, they want liberation (mokña). But a pure devotee never wants anything from the Lord. He does not even want liberation, to say nothing of material things. Why is this so?

Four purushartas are on the material platform

Dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa are the four principles of religion that pertain to the material world. Following dharma for the purpose of artha and kāma only yield temporary benefits for the body and are therefore considered material. However, Mokṣa means to get relief from the material bondage. But if one does not get engagement of spiritual life, then mokṣa is also cheating because one falls down again. Cure of disease is all right, but after curing, if one is not engaged in healthy activities, that mean the disease will relapse. The śāstra says therefore, āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ patanty adhaḥ [SB 10.2.32]. One sometimes, after practicing much severe austerities and penances, he can approach the Brahman, paraṁ padam, that is Brahman realization, or Brahmaloka. Patanty adhaḥ. But from there also you will fall down to the material world. Why? Anādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ. Because they did not care to worship the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Rendering of service is our eternal occupation - Sanatana Dharma

Love of Godhead is the original function of the spirit soul, and it is as eternal as the soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This eternity is called sanātana. When a devotee revives his loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it should be understood that he has been successful in achieving the desired goal of his life – sanatana dharma. The purpose of dharma artha kāma is to come to the platform of bhakti. If one does not come to that platform, the Bhāgavata says, it is simply waste of time. Śrama eva hi kevalam. Therefore, the Bhagavad-gītā which is the preliminary study of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, ends with the words sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja: "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me." (Bg. 18.66)

A devotee is always liberated

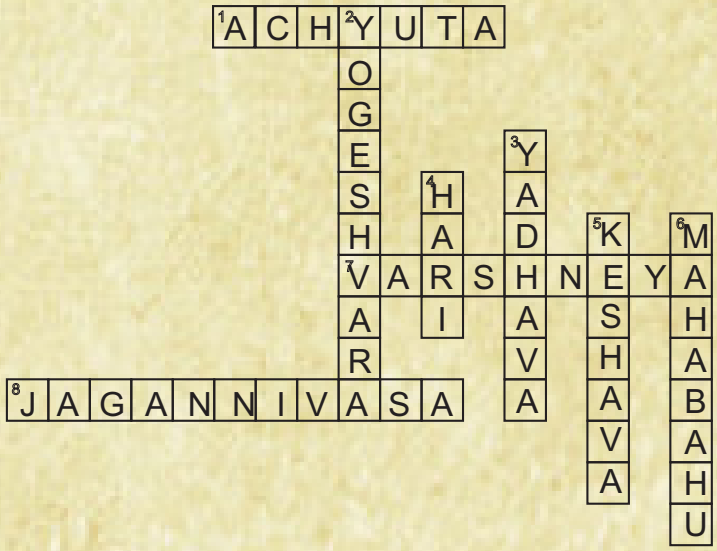
A devotee is always liberated in all stages of life because he is always engaged in the nine items of devotional service (śravaṇam, kīrtanam, etc.). Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy holds that devotional service to Kṛṣṇa always exists in everyone's heart. It simply has to be awakened by the process of śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ [SB 7.5.23]. When a person is actually engaged in devotional service, his eternal relationship with the Lord is awakened. Therefore, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in his Śikṣāṣṭaka says, ""O Almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor to enjoy beautiful women. Nor do I want any number of followers. What I want only is the causeless mercy of Your devotional service in my life, birth after birth." Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, a great devotee of the Lord, stated: "If I have unflinching devotion to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, then Mother Liberation is always engaged in my service. The complete perfection of material enjoyment, religion and economic development is at my command."

Sri Govardhana Puja and Go Puja celebrations on 20th October

Find 12 Properties of the soul

U	E	T	E	R	N	A	L	G	I	W	X	P	E	P
N	I	K	V	N	I	A	S	M	Q	P	Q	L	A	S
B	Q	N	S	L	G	Y	M	Q	I	G	B	M	I	V
R	K	X	C	Y	A	O	P	N	W	I	G	M	T	S
E	J	R	A	O	V	V	V	M	T	J	M	U	Z	I
A	F	M	T	A	N	I	E	C	A	E	N	N	P	O
K	I	R	B	J	S	C	U	M	A	V	E	B	N	X
A	L	L	U	I	I	R	E	S	I	S	F	O	A	I
B	E	Z	B	Z	T	I	U	I	X	R	Y	R	J	U
L	Q	L	N	S	T	R	O	B	V	M	P	N	G	D
E	E	F	E	L	A	G	P	X	N	A	X	I	Q	T
F	P	D	N	B	I	Z	Y	Q	R	I	B	F	L	W
F	N	J	L	L	A	T	R	O	M	M	I	L	P	K
I	M	E	E	L	B	A	T	U	M	M	I	C	E	C
E	L	B	U	L	O	S	N	I	E	W	F	G	O	L

Last month's answers



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