

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Bhāgavatam Rasamālayam

The Abode of Supreme Nectar

Meditations & Reflections from the lectures of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami

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Srila Prabhupada's Gifts to this world

"mahatām̐ bahu-mānena
dīnānām anukampayā
maitryā caivātma-tulyeṣu
yamena niyamena ca"

"The pure devotee should execute devotional service by giving the greatest respect to the spiritual master and the ācāryas. He should be compassionate to the poor and make friendship with persons who are his equals, but all his activities should be executed under regulation and with control of the senses." [SB 3.29.17]



"In Bhagavad-gītā, Thirteenth Chapter, it is clearly stated that one should execute devotional service and advance on the path of spiritual knowledge by accepting the ācārya. Ācāryopāsanam: one should worship an ācārya, a spiritual master who knows things as they are. The spiritual master must be in the disciplic succession from Kṛṣṇa. The predecessors of the spiritual master are his spiritual master, his grand spiritual master, his great-grand spiritual master and so on, who form the disciplic succession of ācāryas.

"Your constitutional position is that you are pure living soul," the Lord told Sanātana. "Your material body is not your real self, nor is your mind your real identity, nor your intelligence, nor your false ego. Your identity is that of an eternal servitor of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Your position is that you are transcendental. The superior energy of Kṛṣṇa is spiritual in constitution, and the inferior, external energy is material. Since you are between the material energy and the spiritual energy, your position is marginal. Belonging to the marginal potency of Kṛṣṇa, you are simultaneously one with and different from Him. Because you are spirit, you are not different from Kṛṣṇa, but because you are only a minute particle of Kṛṣṇa, you are different from Him." [Sri Prabhupada's purport.]

Bhakti Charu Swami: Prabhupada's personality is a such a wonderful personality with so many wonderful achievements and he bestowed his mercy upon all of us in such a wonderful way that it naturally makes him very close to us and we feel extremely indebted to him for all that he has done for us. How many of you feel grateful to Śrīla Prabhupāda? And if I ask you why do you feel this gratitude for Śrīla Prabhupāda? What has he given to all of us? Ever since you started to practice Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings and mould your lives, according to Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings did the quality of your life improve? How many of you think that the quality of life has improved? And do you feel more happy? Do you feel more satisfied within yourself? In simple words I would say because Śrīla Prabhupāda solved all our problems and the way he saw the problems is very simple. He gave us a very wonderful shelter. The first shelter that Śrīla Prabhupāda created for us is his temples and his institution, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. And when we became situated in ISKCON we felt sheltered, we felt protected. It comes with a wonderful realization and that is the real shelter that we found, the shelter of Krishna's Lotus feet.

Now these are all not some imaginary sentimental concepts. It is real. Is Krishna taking care of us? Just let's consider all the food that we are eating, who is providing all those fruits, foodstuff? Let us consider what a wonderful arrangement Krishna made. A seed falls on the ground. A seed of an apple and what happens - a tree comes out from that in course of time. Then in the tree we get apples. Then in the apples there are fruits, in the fruits there are seeds. And those seeds fall on the ground, a tree comes up. And in those seeds there are apples and in those apples that are seeds in those seeds there are trees, in those trees there are apples.

What an amazing arrangement? And it applies to every single aspect of our food. Whether it is, fruits, grains, nuts, they all are Krishna's arrangement. More important than food is actually water, without food we can go on for a few days, but without water, we cannot. Now, just consider although this planet - three fourth of this planet is actually water, but that water is not drinkable. Or we cannot even use that water for cultivation of land: growing food. But see what wonderful arrangement He made, the sun makes the water evaporate. Then, then it forms the cloud, the wind disperses the clouds all over and then the clouds comes down in the form of rain, distilled water, pure water, distilled water and that fills up all the water bodies as a source of supply of water.

What is even more important than water? Oxygen. We are taking oxygen and giving out carbon dioxide. If this process continued what would have happened? The whole atmosphere would have been filled with carbon dioxide. But did it ever happen? The trees and plants are taking carbon dioxide and giving us oxygen. Now are all these someone's arrangements or just some accidental happening? Who thinks that all these are just accidental happenings? Who thinks that they are all someone's divine arrangement? Who is that "someone"? Krishna. Now a simple consideration - just these are some simple considerations - 3 simple considerations, but doesn't it actually prove the fact that Krishna is taking care of anything that we need? This is actually Krishna's divine arrangement, just consider if the sun was not there. Can you imagine what would have happened? Just the presence of one sun - had the sun not been there, there wouldn't have been any light. The whole world would have been in darkness, not only it would have been in darkness there wouldn't have been any vegetation. The vegetables are growing, the plants are growing because of the presence of the sun. And if the vegetation was not there, we wouldn't have survived. As I said, how we are very much dependent upon the trees and plants.

Topmost of Teachings - God is a Person

Our whole existence - we can see that our existence is dependent upon the presence of the trees and plants. Had they not have been there, there wouldn't have been any transformation of carbon dioxide into oxygen. Had there been no trees, there wouldn't have been any food for us. Somebody could say - we could eat meat, but those animals that we are eating, they are (also) eating. They also wouldn't have been there if the trees and plants were not there. So this is how Krishna is taking care of us and this is actually a display of Krishna's love for us. Why is Krishna taking care, going out of his way to make all these arrangements? Because He loves us. Can there be any doubt about that? And Srila Prabhupada made us aware of it.

Before you came into contact with Srila Prabhupada's teachings, how many of you were aware of all these facts? To some extent. Did you ever consider that all these arrangements were made by Krishna? We may have read in the books of biology that the trees and plants are transforming the carbon dioxide into oxygen and so forth but we never really considered how wonderful it is that the seed falls on the ground, a tree comes up, in the tree there are fruits, in the fruit there seeds, in the seeds there are trees. At least, I don't think I ever considered that although I have seen it, but it never occurred to me. So that's why - yes, to some extent the awareness was there but that awareness was not really complete or appropriate. Srila Prabhupada came to us and made us aware that these are all Krishna's arrangements, they are Krishna's arrangements. I came across Srila Prabhupada through his book - The Nectar of Devotion.

So the first thing that I understood from that book was that God is a person and He is Krishna and that came to me with such a profound realization. I knew Krishna, I considered Krishna to be the hero, my role model so on and so forth. But no one ever told me that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. God is a person. Prior to that, at least, my understanding was that God is some light so on and so forth. But that He is a person - that happened just by coming across Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Another realization that came at the time while reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books was, I was thinking - what is the goal of life? Although it became influenced by the Vedic literatures and vedic scriptures to some extent, but the understanding was impersonal. The (previous) understanding was - the goal of life is actually to achieve liberation. Moksha. Mukti- liberation. But when I started to read the Nectar of Devotion - the first thing that occurred to me or rather I became aware of was that there are five kinds of liberation. That really struck me with an amazement - how profound a realization: five kinds of liberation and out of those five kinds of liberation four are positive, one is negative.

And I realized that the course of liberation that I was pursuing was the negative course of liberation because that impersonalism just leads to that sāyujya mukti, the impersonal liberation. So that is how Prabhupāda's books actually comes with an amazing awareness and a profound realization- straight away it gives you a very clear understanding. There was no awareness of the soul. What to speak of the awareness of the soul, we did not even have any understanding of this material body - having two types of material bodies, a gross body and a subtle body. Although, I heard at the time of when they perform the Śrāddha ceremony, they do mention about the subtle body and even say that the subtle body is being assisted in his journey to the other world, and so forth. But there was no clear understanding what that subtle body actually was, and it is through Prabhupāda's books, Prabhupāda's explanations, we became aware that yes - we have two types of bodies, one is the gross body and the other is the subtle body.

The gross body is made up of five gross elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether. And the subtle body is made up of three subtle elements - mind, intelligence and false ego. And also the gross body dies at the time of death. We actually become free from the gross body's bondage, but the subtle body doesn't die. Another awareness - how do we recognize that we have a subtle body? A simple understanding is when you are sleeping, your gross body is inactive, you are not at all aware of your gross body but you're dreaming. In your dream you are present? And in what kind of body are you present in your dream? That's the subtle body.

Bodies in Motion - Making "Subtle" Sense



Further understanding — the gross body dies, subtle body doesn't die. Subtle body, after death actually carries one to the next body according to the shape of the subtle body. And, the subtle body takes the shape according to the activities of an individual. Every single action leaves its imprint on the subtle body. For example, when you do something good, how do you feel? Good, you feel elated right? When you do something wrong -? Even though no one saw you were doing that. How do you feel? You feel heavy. You feel guilty. So this is how our actions leave their impressions on the subtle body. Don't you sometimes say - that person is like an angel? Why do we say that? Because his actions are like that of an angel and those actions of that individual affects the subtle body and he gets a shape of an angelic body. His subtle body takes the shape of an angelic body. And sometimes we say - that person is like an animal. Why do we say that? Because his activities are like that of an animal. And as a result of that, his actions makes his subtle body take the shape of an animal's. And when one dies, by the arrangement of mother nature, that individual's subtle body carries the soul into an appropriate (gross) body. The person who lived, who acted like an angel, whose body will take the shape of an angel's - he gets put into an appropriate womb by the arrangement of mother nature and there he develops a gross body. And he comes out. Similarly, when somebody has acted like an animal, he will have developed the subtle body of an animal's. Accordingly, he will be placed in an animal womb and gets an animal body.

So this is how our actions are leading ourselves. This is how our actions are leading us into our next destination and that principle is called karma - as you sow, so shall you reap. And again this leads to the next consideration. We have the subtle body, the subtle body doesn't die. Then how can we become free from the bondage of subtle body? The subtle body consists of the mind, intelligence and false ego. Krishna is saying that with your mind you constantly think of me. man-manā bhava (Bg. 9.34). So, in this way when the mind is engaged in thinking about Krishna all the time, then what happens? The mind - the apparently material mind is spiritualized, the subtle body doesn't die, the subtle body is transformed, the mind becomes spiritualized when one is constantly engaged in serving Krishna through devotional service. Then Krishna gives dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ tam (Bg. 10.10) and in this way buddhi or the intelligence is spiritualized. And when one becomes engaged in serving Krishna then he becomes situated in his actual identity - svarūpa. He becomes free from his false ego — mistaken identity and becomes situated in his actual identity.

Instructions That Inspire

And that is jīvera 'svarūpa' haya-kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa' (Cc. Madhya 20.108) so now that person doesn't have a subtle body that state is called jīvan mukta stage or svarūpa siddhi -

**īhā yaśya harer dāsyē
karmaṇā manasā girā
nikhilāsv apy avasthāsu
jīvan-muktaḥ sa ucyaṭe
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.187)**

Although he is situated in his gross body, but he doesn't have a subtle body. In that apparently gross body there is a pure spirit - svarūpa-siddhi, achievement of the spiritual perfection. He is "apparently" situated in his body. I said apparently because that gross body is not a gross, material body anymore. It is spiritualized. Therefore, Prabhupāda gives the example - you remember? Iron and fire. When iron is on fire and it becomes red hot is it iron or fire? It is fire. Somebody kind of reacted responded by saying - Prabhupāda, it is still iron. Prabhupāda said - touch it. So, what an amazing clarity, clarification of our spiritual perfection. Devotional service frees us from the bondage of our subtle, material body and situates us in our spiritual identity, pure spiritual identity — as a servant of Krishna and in that pure state of mind, we are constantly engaged in thinking about Krishna. In that pure stage, our intelligence is applied perfectly in serving Krishna and that is the spiritual perfection.

Another realization from Prabhupāda's teachings - the process of aṣṭāṅga-yoga and the difference between that process and the process of devotional service. Process of aṣṭāṅga-yoga is gradually taking a yogi, making him rise, his spiritual energy rises from the base of the source of that energy, which is situated at the base of the spinal column called mūlādhāra. And because that energy is in a coiled up stage it is called kundalini. Kundalini means coiled up. Aṣṭāṅga-yoga makes that energy rise from the base or muladhara to higher and higher chakras. The first chakra is svadhithana, then manipura, then anahata, ajnah and so forth and finally, sahasrara, the brain centre. And it is a very, very difficult process, very difficult process. The process was meant for the living entities in Satya yuga who used live for thousands of years and they could practice this process for a long, long time to achieve perfection. And even then they used to have difficulties.

We know Visvamitra, a great sage was practicing this process for 64,000 years and then he just happened to hear the ankle bell of a celestial damsel, Menaka — he fell down and his meditation broke. Shakuntala was born. So these are all historical facts. We can see that such qualified individuals after so many thousands of years of practice could not really achieve perfection. Some eventually did achieve perfection. But these are some very rare individuals and this process, an ascending process is a very, very arduous and difficult process.

But there is another process that Prabhupāda gave us - the descending process. The mercy is coming down whether we are qualified or not, the mercy is coming down and perfection is achieved. We don't have to practice this aṣṭāṅga-yoga and trying to make the kundalini rise through susumna, penetrating through different chakras and coming into the sahasrara, the brain centre. We don't have to strive, we can simply depend upon the Lord's mercy. Now here also there is another important point. According to the aṣṭāṅga-yoga, the ultimate consideration is sahasrara — the thousand petalled lotus. Now, let us consider the Brahma Samhita, how is the Brahma Samhita describing the spiritual world?

**sahasra-patra-kamalaṁ
gokulākhyam mahat padam
tat-karṇikāram tad-dhāma
tad-anantāṁśa-sambhavam [Bs. 5.2]**

**tat-kiñjalkam tad-amśānām
tat-patrāṇi śriyām api [Bs. 5.4]**

The spiritual world is a thousand petaled lotus. So the achievement of yogic perfection that is taking a yogi to the point of this thousand petaled lotus but what is there on the thousand petaled lotus? That thousand petaled lotus is actually the abode of Radha-Krishna. So we have a direct elevation to that spiritual world where Radha-Krishna are situated on the thousand petaled lotus. What the yogi is try to achieve after thousands of years of practicing, as a devotee, we receive the mercy of a bona fide spiritual master. We have been elevated to that point, which is beyond the yogi's perfected understanding. So, that is Srila Prabhupāda's mercy.



Again Brahma Samhita:

**Panthās tu koṭi-śata-vatsara-sampragamyo
 vāyor athāpi manaso muni-puṅgavānām
 so 'py asti yat-prapada-sīmny avicintya-tattve
 govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi [Bs. 5.34]**

Muni pungavanam, muni means sage and pungava means the best of the sages. muni pungava - the word pungava means the crest jewel of that person, the crest jewel of the personalities or sages, moving with the speed their mind can move with the speed - their consciousness can move with the speed of wind vāyor athapi . Even faster than the movement of wind. Travelling for millions of years, for millions of years cannot even attain the toenail of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. See how rare it is to achieve the Supreme Lord, but by Prabhupāda's mercy, we have the opportunity to become situated at the Lotus feet of the Lord directly. But the munis, the best of the munis, the yogis cannot achieve by millions of years of spiritual practice, they cannot achieve the toenail of the Supreme personality of Godhead, we get direct access to the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda. These are not just some sentimental presentations. These are factual. They are authentic facts. This is what Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us. There is no need to speculate anything, the way he has given, simply by practicing the process, we can achieve our spiritual perfection. We can go on and on like that. These are the gifts of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

