



Home Deity Worship Course

The Nectar of Instruction, text 2



ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry

NOI 2

*atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyam ca
ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati*

ati-āhāraḥ — overeating or too much collecting; *prayāsaḥ* — over-endeavoring; *ca* — and; *prajalpah* — idle talking; *niyama* — rules and regulations; *āgrahaḥ* — too much attachment to (or *agrahaḥ* — too much neglect of); *jana-saṅgaḥ* — association with worldly-minded persons; *ca* — and; *laulyam* — ardent longing or greed; *ca* — and; *ṣaḍbhiḥ* — by these six; *bhaktiḥ* — devotional service; *vinaśyati* — is destroyed.

One's devotional service is spoiled when he becomes too entangled in the following six activities: (1) eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required; (2) over-endeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain; (3) talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters; (4) practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically; (5) associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; and (6) being greedy for mundane achievements.

Purport

Human life is meant for plain living and high thinking. Since all conditioned living beings are under the control of the Lord's third energy, this material world is designed so that one is obliged to work. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has three primary energies, or potencies. The first is called *antaraṅga-śakti*, or the internal potency. The second is called *taṭastha-śakti*, or the marginal potency. The third is called *bahiraṅga-śakti*, or the external potency. The living entities constitute the marginal potency, and they are situated between the internal and external potencies. Being subordinate as eternal servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the *jīvātmās*, or atomic living entities, must remain under



the control of either the internal or external potency. When they are under the control of the internal potency, they display their natural, constitutional activity – namely, constant engagement in the devotional service of the Lord. This is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.13):

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha
daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso
jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam*

“O son of Prthā, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible.”

The word *mahātmā* refers to those who are broad-minded, not cripple-minded. Cripple-minded persons, always engaged in satisfying their senses, sometimes expand their activities in order to do good for others through some “ism” like nationalism, humanitarianism or altruism. They may reject personal sense gratification for the sense gratification of others, like the members of their family, community or society – either national or international. Actually all this is extended sense gratification, from personal to communal to social. This may all be very good from the material point of view, but such activities have no spiritual value. The basis of such activity is sense gratification, either personal or extended. Only when a person gratifies the senses of the Supreme Lord can he be called a *mahātmā*, or broad-minded person.

In the above-quoted verse from *Bhagavad-gītā*, the words *daivīm prakṛtim* refer to the control of the internal potency, or pleasure potency, of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This pleasure potency is manifested as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, or Her expansion Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune. When the individual *jīva* souls are under the control of the internal energy, their only engagement is the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu. This is the position of a *mahātmā*. If one is not a *mahātmā*, he is a *durātmā*, or a cripple-minded person. Such mentally crippled *durātmās* are put under the control of the Lord’s external potency, *mahā-māyā*.



Indeed, all living entities within this material world are under the control of *mahā-māyā*, whose business is to subject them to the influence of threefold miseries: *adhidaivika-kleśa* (sufferings caused by the demigods, such as droughts, earthquakes and storms), *adhibhautika-kleśa* (sufferings caused by other living entities like insects or enemies), and *adhyātmika-kleśa* (sufferings caused by one's own body and mind, such as mental and physical infirmities). *Daiva-bhūtātma-hetavaḥ*: the conditioned souls, subjected to these three miseries by the control of the external energy, suffer various difficulties.

The main problem confronting the conditioned souls is the repetition of birth, old age, disease and death. In the material world one has to work for the maintenance of the body and soul, but how can one perform such work in a way that is favorable for the execution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Everyone requires possessions such as food grains, clothing, money and other things necessary for the maintenance of the body, but one should not collect more than necessary for his actual basic needs. If this natural principle is followed, there will be no difficulty in maintaining the body.

According to nature's arrangement, living entities lower on the evolutionary scale do not eat or collect more than necessary. Consequently in the animal kingdom there is generally no economic problem or scarcity of necessities. If a bag of rice is placed in a public place, birds will come to eat a few grains and go away. A human being, however, will take away the whole bag. He will eat all his stomach can hold and then try to keep the rest in storage. According to scriptures, this collecting of more than necessary (*atyāhāra*) is prohibited. Now the entire world is suffering because of it.

Collecting and eating more than necessary also causes *prayāsa*, or unnecessary endeavor. By God's arrangement, anyone in any part of the world can live very peacefully if he has some land and a milk cow. There is no need for man to move from one place to another to earn a livelihood, for one can produce food grains locally and get milk from cows. That can solve all economic problems. Fortunately, man has been given higher intelligence for the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or the understanding of God, one's relationship with Him, and the ultimate goal of life, love of God. Unfortunately, so-called civilized man, not caring for God realization, utilizes his intelligence to get more than necessary and simply eats to satisfy the tongue. By God's arrangement there is sufficient scope for the production of milk and grains for human beings all over the world, but



instead of using their higher intelligence to cultivate God consciousness, so-called intelligent men misuse their intelligence to produce many unnecessary and unwanted things. Thus factories, slaughterhouses, brothels and liquor shops are opened. If people are advised not to collect too many goods, eat too much or work unnecessarily to possess artificial amenities, they think they are being advised to return to a primitive way of life. Generally people do not like to accept plain living and high thinking. That is their unfortunate position.

Human life is meant for God realization, and the human being is given higher intelligence for this purpose. Those who believe that this higher intelligence is meant to attain a higher state should follow the instructions of the Vedic literatures. By taking such instructions from higher authorities, one can actually become situated in perfect knowledge and give real meaning to life.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.9) Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī describes the proper human *dharma* in this way:

*dharmasya hy āpavargyasya
nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate
nārthasya dharmaikāntasya
kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ*

“All occupational engagements [*dharma*] are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service [*dharma*] should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification.”

The first step in human civilization consists of occupational engagements performed according to the scriptural injunctions. The higher intelligence of a human being should be trained to understand basic *dharma*. In human society there are various religious conceptions characterized as Hindu, Christian, Hebrew, Mohammedan, Buddhist and so on, for without religion, human society is no better than animal society.

As stated above (*dharmasya hy āpavargyasya nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate*), religion is meant for attaining emancipation, not for getting bread. Sometimes human society manufactures a system of so-called religion aimed at material



advancement, but that is far from the purpose of true *dharma*. Religion entails understanding the laws of God because the proper execution of these laws ultimately leads one out of material entanglement. That is the true purpose of religion. Unfortunately people accept religion for material prosperity because of *atyāhāra*, or an excessive desire for such prosperity. True religion, however, instructs people to be satisfied with the bare necessities of life while cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Even though we require economic development, true religion allows it only for supplying the bare necessities of material existence. *Jīvasya tattva jijñāsā*: the real purpose of life is to inquire about the Absolute Truth. If our endeavor (*prayāsa*) is not to inquire about the Absolute Truth, we will simply increase our endeavor to satisfy our artificial needs. A spiritual aspirant should avoid mundane endeavor.

Another impediment is *prajalpa*, unnecessary talking. When we mix with a few friends, we immediately begin unnecessary talking, sounding just like croaking toads. If we must talk, we should talk about the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Those outside of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are interested in reading heaps of newspapers, magazines and novels, solving crossword puzzles and doing many other nonsensical things. In this fashion people simply waste their valuable time and energy. In the Western countries old men, retired from active life, play cards, fish, watch television and debate about useless socio-political schemes. All these and other frivolous activities are included in the *prajalpa* category. Intelligent persons interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should never take part in such activities.

Jana-saṅga refers to associating with persons not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One should strictly avoid such association. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has therefore advised us to live only in the association of Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees (*bhakta-sane vāsa*). One should always engage in the service of the Lord in the association of the Lord's devotees. Association with those engaged in a similar line of business is very conducive to advancement in that business. Consequently materialistic persons form various associations and clubs to enhance their endeavors. For example, in the business world we find such institutions as the stock exchange and chamber of commerce. Similarly, we have established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to give people an opportunity to associate with those who have not forgotten Kṛṣṇa. This spiritual association offered by our ISKCON movement is increasing day by day. Many people from different parts of the world are joining this Society to awaken their dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura writes in his *Anuvṛtti* commentary that too much endeavor to acquire knowledge on the part of mental speculators or dry philosophers falls within the category of *atyāhāra* (collecting more than needed). According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the endeavor of philosophical speculators to write volumes of books on dry philosophy devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is entirely futile. The work of *karmīs* who write volumes of books on economic development also falls within the category of *atyāhāra*. Similarly, those who have no desire for Kṛṣṇa consciousness and who are simply interested in possessing more and more material things – either in the shape of scientific knowledge or monetary gain – are all included under the control of *atyāhāra*.

Karmīs labor to accumulate more and more money for future generations only because they do not know their future position. Interested only in getting more and more money for their sons and grandsons, such foolish persons do not even know what their position is going to be in the next life. There are many incidents that illustrate this point. Once a great *karmī* accumulated a vast fortune for his sons and grandsons, but later, according to his *karma*, he took his birth in a cobbler's house located near the building which in his previous life he had constructed for his children. It so happened that when this very cobbler came to his former house, his former sons and grandsons beat him with shoes. Unless the *karmīs* and *jñānīs* become interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they will simply continue to waste their life in fruitless activities.

Accepting some of the scriptural rules and regulations for immediate benefit, as utilitarians advocate, is called *niyama-āgraha*, and neglecting the rules and regulations of the *śāstras*, which are meant for spiritual development, is called *niyama-agraha*. The word *āgraha* means “eagerness to accept,” and *agraha* means “failure to accept.” By the addition of either of these two words to the word *niyama* (“rules and regulations”), the word *niyamāgraha* is formed. Thus *niyamāgraha* has a twofold meaning that is understood according to the particular combination of words. Those interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should not be eager to accept rules and regulations for economic advancement, yet they should very faithfully accept scriptural rules and regulations for the advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They should strictly follow the regulative principles by avoiding illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling and intoxication.

One should also avoid association with Māyāvādīs, who simply blaspheme Vaiṣṇavas (devotees). *Bhukti-kāmīs*, who are interested in material



happiness, *mukti-kāmīs*, who desire liberation by merging in the existence of the formless Absolute (Brahman), and *siddhi-kāmīs*, who desire the perfection of mystic yoga practice, are classified as *atyāhārīs*. To associate with such persons is not at all desirable.

Desires to expand the mind by perfecting mystic yoga, to merge into the existence of Brahman, or to attain whimsical material prosperity are all included within the category of greed (*lauhya*). All attempts to acquire such material benefits or so-called spiritual advancement are impediments on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Modern warfare waged between capitalists and communists is due to their avoiding the advice of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī regarding *atyāhāra*. Modern capitalists accumulate more wealth than necessary, and the communists, envious of their prosperity, want to nationalize all wealth and property. Unfortunately the communists do not know how to solve the problem of wealth and its distribution. Consequently when the wealth of the capitalists falls into the hands of the communists, no solution results. Opposed to these two philosophies, the Kṛṣṇa conscious ideology states that all wealth belongs to Kṛṣṇa. Thus unless all wealth comes under the administration of Kṛṣṇa, there can be no solution to the economic problem of mankind. Nothing can be solved by placing wealth in the hands of the communists or the capitalists. If a hundred-dollar bill is lying on the street, someone may pick it up and put it in his pocket. Such a man is not honest. Another man may see the money and decide to let it remain there, thinking that he should not touch another's property. Although this second man does not steal the money for his own purposes, he is unaware of its proper use. The third man who sees the hundred-dollar bill may pick it up, find the man who lost it and deliver it to him. This man does not steal the money to spend for himself, nor does he neglect it and let it lie in the street. By taking it and delivering it to the man who has lost it, this man is both honest and wise.

Simply transferring wealth from capitalists to communists cannot solve the problem of modern politics, for it has been demonstrated that when a communist gets money, he uses it for his own sense gratification. The wealth of the world actually belongs to Kṛṣṇa, and every living entity, man and animal, has the birthright to use God's property for his maintenance. When one takes more than his maintenance requires – be he a capitalist or a communist – he is a thief, and as such he is liable to be punished by the laws of nature.



The wealth of the world should be used for the welfare of all living entities, for that is the plan of Mother Nature. Everyone has the right to live by utilizing the wealth of the Lord. When people learn the art of scientifically utilizing the Lord's property, they will no longer encroach upon one another's rights. Then an ideal society can be formed. The basic principle for such a spiritual society is stated in the first mantra of *Śrī Īśopaniṣad*:

*īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā
mā grdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*

“Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.”

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees know very well that this material world is designed by the complete arrangement of the Lord to fulfill all the necessities of life for all living beings, without their having to encroach upon the life or rights of one another. This complete arrangement affords the proper quota of wealth for everyone according to his real needs, and thus everyone may live peacefully according to the principle of plain living and high thinking. Unfortunately, materialists who have neither faith in the plan of God nor any aspiration for higher spiritual development misuse their God-given intelligence only to augment their material possessions. They devise many systems – such as capitalism and materialistic communism – to advance their material position. They are not interested in the laws of God or in a higher goal. Always anxious to fulfill their unlimited desires for sense gratification, they are conspicuous by their ability to exploit their fellow living beings.

When human society gives up these elementary faults enumerated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*atyāhāra*, etc.), all enmity will cease between men and animals, capitalists and communists, and so forth. In addition, all problems of economic or political maladjustment and instability will be solved. This pure consciousness is awakened by the proper spiritual education and practice offered scientifically by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.



This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement offers a spiritual community that can bring about a peaceful condition in the world. Every intelligent man should purify his consciousness and rid himself of the above-mentioned six hindrances to devotional service by taking wholehearted shelter of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

