

Disk 79, track 9, 25.07.2006, Ignolino, Lithuania, Manah-siksa, 4<sup>th</sup> verse, lecture 1

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I will continue this long-running seminar. This is my fourth year in Lithuania, at the Lithuanian festival. Accordingly, we will be analyzing the fourth verse. Organizers have lied to you, we will study not two verses but only one. We will be reflecting on the "Manah-Siksa" of Raghunatha Das Goswami. I would like that this year after each lecture, we do a small practical exercise by chanting one round of mantra. That is why please go and get your beads with you if you do not have them with you here. Today we will chant with those who have their beads.

I will first recall the contents of the previous lectures and will respectively read the three verses which we have already read.

1.

gurau gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane  
sva-mantre sri-namni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane  
sada dambham hitva kuru ratim apurvam atitara-  
maye svantar bhratas catubhir abhiyace dhrita-padah

2.

na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana-niruktam kila kuru  
vraje radha-krsna pracura-paricaryam iha tanu  
saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam  
mukunda-presthatve smara param ajasram nanu manah

3.

yadiccher avasam vraja-bhuvi sa-ragam prati-janur  
yuva-dvandvam tac cet paricaritum arad abhilaseh  
svarupam sri rupam sa-ganam iha tasyagrajam api  
sphutam premna nityam smara nama tada tvam srnu manah

Finally, verse this year.

4.

asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih  
katha mukti-vyaghrya na srnu kila sarvatma-gilanih  
api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim  
vraje radha-krsnau sva-rati-mani-dau tvam bhaja manah

I will briefly summarize the content of what Raghunatha Das Goswami tells his mind. He teaches his mind attachment to Krishna. And not just attachment but spontaneous attachment which is possible only in Vraja, in Vrindavan. In other words, he is trying to find a way where there is no way. Because spontaneous attachment means that it comes from the heart itself. Nevertheless, he gives instructions to his mind, or rather not to his but to our mind, teaching us how to get attached to Radha and Krishna.

And in the beginning, in the first verse, he says *gurau gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane sva-mantre sri-namni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane*. He explains from the very beginning, in his first instruction, that a person should try to find himself in relation to spiritual things. He says that now we're lost, lost in this sea of material attachments; in the material world, where it is very

easy to become attached to anything. And our material identity is the sum of material attachments. Why is it so hard or so painful for us to give up our material attachments?

All the "Bhagavad-gita" is built on this starting point, on the fact that Arjuna saw in front of him the sum total of all his material attachments. Krishna is telling him, "Kill them, kill them! Don't be afraid! Drona? Kill him! Bhishma? Kill him!" And some people still can't ... (sound interrupted from 6.45 to 6.59)

... bloodthirsty maniac Arjuna. Because every attachment sooner or later will cause violence. Every attachment has its reverse side. Every attachment leads to hatred; where there is love there is hatred. But to kill or give up material attachments, get rid of material attachments. What Krishna wants to say is, "Destroy your false ego." He does not say "Kill your relatives." He is not interested in relatives, He will personally take care of them.

What He wants is that a person gets rid of his false ego which is the sum total of material attachments and which sooner or later will come to an end. Nevertheless, a person is cowardly clinging to these material attachments. And since he is clinging onto his material attachments, since he is the essence of material attachments, he has nothing else. When he is told to give up material attachments, he is terrified because he thinks, "What will remain of me then? Nothing will remain of me, zero. Me minus material attachment equals void."

Therefore, when explaining their philosophy, the Buddhists say that we must give up material attachments; that nothing will be left of us and, thank God for that. At least you will not suffer. Yes, they say that a person suffers from material attachments, but our philosophy is different. Our philosophy is that I have to find my true "self", which is indestructible. We have an eternal ego. There is a false ego that, due to its false identification with matter is constantly suffering. And because of this suffering we are doomed to remain here in the material world.

And our spiritual philosophy begins with the fact that the ego is eternal. The ego consists of two things. Ego means I am the doer and I am the enjoyer. *Bhokta* and *karta*. *Karta* means I am the doer. This is the beginning of the ego. And I am the enjoyer is the second aspect of the ego. This ego is always there in the living being, under any circumstances. What a person should do is give up this false ego, which, in one way or another is defined through its relation to matter; and try to find his true "self", that is, to continue to act and continue to enjoy, but not independently. Our problem is that we are trying to enjoy and we are trying to act, but our activities and our enjoyments are originally false – we want to do this independently from Krishna.

Krishna says: "The solution of everything is to just find your true "self." And true "self" means a self, defined through my relationship with Krishna. Now my "self" is false and therefore gives me nothing but trouble, precisely because it has no substance, it cannot exist long. All the time I have to change my "self" – today I am one, tomorrow I am different. Today, my "self" is a "self" related to some people; these people leave, die, or something else happens, or I die and I have to re-establish my "self". As soon as a little baby is born it already has this false "self". It is related to whom?

- Dad and Mom.

It's me, I am related to my dad and my mom. Actually, it is related to Krishna, but it does not remember that; it remembers how it relates to everything else. Therefore in the first verse, when Raghunatha Das Goswami teaches us how to become attached to Krishna, he says that you

have to get attached to Krishna through something that we see. Because it is easy to say – get attached to Krishna. Who is Krishna? I have never seen Him. Who is Krishna? I do not know Krishna. I have never seen Krishna. Therefore, he says *gurau gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane*. All this is something available to us. And only after that, *sva-mantre sri-namni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane*. First we should get attached to Guru, to someone in saffron clothes. On the mere basis that we can at least see him and on the basis that we can feel true attachment to him. It is easier to get attached to him than to Krishna, Krishna is an abstraction for us.

And he starts talking about all these spiritual things. He explains in what way these attachments are spiritual, that is eternal and how through this attachment I will be able to restore my eternal "self". *Gurau gosthe* – I must get attached to the land of Vrindavan, the holy Vrindavan Dhama. *Gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane* – I must get attached to the devotees of the highest rank (*madhyama-adhikari, kanistha-adhikari*). *Sva-mantre sri-namni* – ultimately, I must get attached to the mantra that purifies my heart and to the holy name: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. And through this chain of attachments, in this way, in the darkness of our consciousness, ultimately find this eternal couple of Vraja and get attached to Them, *vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane*. This is the first verse that explains how to find oneself. The following verses, to a greater or lesser extent, are an interpretation of this verse.

Today we'll chant meditating on the first verse. In the second verse he immediately explains to us or to his mind, how the mind can focus its consciousness. Because when a person takes up the spiritual path, his consciousness is immediately dispersed. And as it is accustomed to this dispersed state in material life, in material life our consciousness is dispersed over a variety of things. *Bhogaishvarya-prasaktanam tayapahrita-cetasam samadhau na vidhiyate* (Bhagavad-gita, 2.44). *Bahu-sakha hyanantas ca* (Bhagavad-gita, 2.41). There are numerous channels of attachments which bind us to this world. And we think that spiritual life is the same, let me I become attached. What to get attached to? Now I get attached to *dharma*, I must be righteous. I have now understood everything and I have repented. I am a repentant sinner.

Therefore, in the next verse he says, *na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana-niruktam kila kuru* – that there is only one object of our attachment; that true spiritual life takes our dispersed mind and directs it to a single goal. And this is meditation.

Like, in various meditative practices a person is told that you must look at a single point, a black point, and you must look at it without blinking. The main thing is not to blink. It is a special technique. You have to set up a little black point at an arm's length – you can try, it is a very exciting exercise – and look at this point. Why? For a very simple reason, at least you will not be looking at anything else and your mind will be focused on something. Mind is dispersed, and being dispersed, the mind has lost its power. But sometimes people with their dispersed mind join Krishna consciousness and think, "Now I will disperse my mind but in a different way. Now I know how to get dispersed – I'll get dispersed over spiritual things."

The day before yesterday I spoke with one person. He was telling me what his altar consists of. He told me, "I have everything on the altar. There is Radha-Krishna, there is Pancha-tattva, there is Nrsimhadev, the Jagannathas are also there, there is Alalath. Any Deity I see I immediately put it there. With luck, one of Them will help, one of Them will work."

In India, people go even further, just in case they put the photo of the prime minister on the altar. If no one else helps, may be the Prime Minister will. Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi,

Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahandas Gandhi, Krishna, Shiva, Durga. And when they are told that we should worship only one of them, they take great offense. In fact, any true religion begins with the understanding that the object of worship is one; that trying to disperse my mind in religion ultimately means that I go on retaining the untidiness of my mind. Our mind, our dispersed mind likes to wander. There is a nice Russian word – to loaf and there is a very rude Russian word derived from it – a whore (laughter). It is a rude Russian word, we all know what it means. But, in fact, this word accurately describes the state of our mind when the mind is ready to worship anyone just to get something. Just like a woman of easy virtue, a slutish woman, is ready to give in to anyone just to get something. And the mind says, "Who shall I give myself to? Whom shall I focus on? Whom shall I give my power?" And there is always a lot of objects of worship, "Come on, come on, come and worship me, worship me, I'll give you everything!"

The essence the spiritual life is to understand that the object of worship is one. An example of this is, of course, Islam. Islam very clearly adheres to this principle. Because, ultimately, God is one. Ultimately, we must understand that there is only one person on whom everything else depends. Respectively, when Prophet Muhammad was establishing his religion, he saw how people were worshipping anyone and anything. There were these idols whom people were performing sacrifices. And according to their needs they would go to one or to the other. And he realized that this was problem, a disease.

At a certain point there was a curious episode in his life. First, he established a strict monotheism and he said that one shall not worship any idols, one must worship Allah alone. And Allah is not visible in this world, Allah is omnipresent but there is a symbolic personification of Allah – the black stone Kaaba. Then some time later, after he practiced for a while, he said, "You can worship someone else." He named a few other so-called gods and among the others he named Goddess Manat. Goddess Manat is actually Goddess Laksmi, originally.

God is one – Vishnu and Vishnu is omnipresent. This is the only God who is said to be omnipresent, to be eternal, even in the "Rig Veda" but He has a wife Laksmi or Manat in Arabic. Even nowadays money in Azerbaijan is called *manats*, i.e. Laksmi. But people immediately forgot about Allah and rushed to worship Manat. And he said, "No, that's enough. Never again, there is only one object of worship."

The second verse explains in what way, on the religious path, a person should try to focus on a single point. He says that if you worship Lord Caitanya, like there are people who worship Lord Caitanya separately from Krishna. "We should worship Lord Caitanya. Okay, Gauranga has come, there is no need to worship Krishna." Raghunatha Das Goswami says, "Who is Lord Caitanya? Who is He? It is Krishna, Sacisuta." *Saci-sunum nandisvara-paty. Saci-sunum*, the son of Mother Saci. In fact, the son of Maharaja Nanda. And when we worship Guru. Who is Guru? Do we worship him separately so that he gives us something? No. *Mukunda prestha*. Guru is someone who is dear to Lord Mukunda. There is only one object of worship and everything else should lead us to this object of worship. And this is how we should teach our mind chastity. The mind is not inclined to chastity. The mind is inclined to be unfaithful to God, to cheat the only Lord who is to be worshiped. The chaste state of this mind should be restored again.

Last year I was explaining to you the third verse at a great length. In the third verse Raghunatha Das Goswami says that if you want to attain love, whom should you serve life after life? Whom should you remember? Who attended last year's seminar, raise your hands, please. That is why this year we will repeat. We will be meditating on these verses. Raghunatha Das Goswami

says, "If you truly want to attain attachment and life after life, again and again live in Vraja, in the spiritual world, where there is only one God – Krishna; Who is not even God, but just an ordinary cowherd boy." Who wants to live life after life in Vraja? Raise your hands, please. Well, at least theoretically, does anyone want? And then he says, "If you want to personally serve the ever young couple of Vrindavan, Radha and Krishna..." Who wants to personally serve Radha and Krishna? Well, Radha and Krishna will soon have lots of new personal servants.

He says, "For this purpose you should very clearly and distinctly remember Svarupa, Sri Rupa, Sanatana and the other associates of Mahaprabhu." Because it was them who taught us how to serve Radha and Krishna personally. Can we go to the spiritual world by ourselves and say, "Let me serve Radha and Krishna." Can we serve Radha and Krishna? We cannot serve anyone properly. Hridayananda das Goswami once introduced a fourth category of suffering in this world. He says that there are three standard sufferings in this world. *Adhidaivika* – from natural disasters, *adhyatmika* – from the body and mind, and *adhibhautika* – from other living beings. He said, "There is a special category of suffering that is called *adhidasika klesa* – sufferings inflicted by servants."

Now, Krishna wants to protect Himself from such servants who will be causing sufferings. Therefore Raghunatha Das Goswami says, "If you want to personally serve Radha and Krishna you should clearly and distinctly remember Svarupa, Sri Rupa, Sanatana and the other associates of Mahaprabhu."

In other words, he explains the first verse step by step. In the first verse he says, "We should worship Guru" and in the second verse he explains who Guru is. Further on he says, "We should worship the land of Vraja." And he explains what the land of Vraja is in the second verse. And in the third verse he begins to explain who the devotees of the highest category are – those who feel *raga*, attachment. That was the third verse. We were explaining it at great length. I explained the different aspects of meditation on the eternal associates of Mahaprabhu and what they have given us, how Svarupa Damodar Goswami, Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami have given substance to the holy name. If you remember, I was saying that even when a person is simply chanting the holy name he may feel something. But they have explained what we should feel; and what is it that a person is supposed to feel. They explained the way this ecstasy evolves. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. It was them who have analyzed *raga* or attachment and have explained how attachment is developed in the heart, how attachment elevates the devotee to the highest level of consciousness – the consciousness which is impossible to attain in any other way.

And today we'll be analyzing the fourth verse. Today we will start analyzing the fourth verse which is very important; where Raghunatha Das Goswami describes the obstacles faced by every person on the spiritual path. These lectures will be, I hope, most relevant, because they help explain to us what we are doing wrong. I will read the Sanskrit once again.

asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih  
katha mukti-vyaghrya na srnu kila sarvatma-gilanih  
api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim  
vraje radha-krsnau sva-rati-mani-dau tvam bhaja manah

He says, "Oh, mind." Again he ends this verse with the same words, *vraje radha-krsnau sva-rati-mani-dau tvam bhaja manah* - "Oh, mind! Worship Radha and Krishna." But this time he explains why we should worship Radha and Krishna. He says, "Who are Radha and

Krishna? They give us something very important: *sva-rati-dau*." *Dau* means give. What do They give us? *Sva-rati*. What is *sva-rati*? Attachment. Attachment to whom? To Themselves – *sva-rati-dau*. He explains where we can ultimately get this attachment from; where and what the source of solutions to all our problems is. We all have problems. Raise your hands those who have problems. You can even raise both hands.

In the "Bhagavad-gita" Krishna explains in great detail that all our problems ultimately arise from our indifference to God. There are no other problems. This is very well explained by Jiva Goswami at the beginning of the "Bhakti-sandarbha" where he says, "All our problems begin from this one thing, the fact that a person turns away from God." As soon as he turns away from God, as soon as this act takes place and we say, generally, "I do not care whether God exists or not." We may not even be atheists. There are militant atheists, but you'd better be a militant atheist like Kamsa or Hiranyakasipu than be just indifferent. The majority of people fall into this category – they do not care whether God exists or not. They do not care a fig about Him. What they care about is what happens to themselves. And from the contents of "Srimad-Bhagavatam", as well as from our own life, we can understand that our main problem is that we have no attachment to Krishna. And since we have no attachment to Krishna, we are wandering in this material world, we are wandering here abandoned. We are not happy in this material world.

Here again, in his last instruction to his mind, Raghunatha Das Goswami says *vraje radha-krasnau sva-rati-mani-dau tvam bhaja manah* - "Oh, mind, worship Radha and Krishna in Vraja, because They can give *mani*." What does *mani* mean? In English that's money, but actually, the English word money is derived from the Sanskrit word *mani* which means a gem, a jewel, treasure. *Mani* means something highly valuable. And he says that, "To solve all your problems you need one thing – attachment to Radha and Krishna." Where can you take it from? Can it be taken by force? Can it be obtained by some artificial means? No, it can't, it must be given to us by mercy. Attachment to God can only be bestowed on us. Therefore, "Worship Radha and Krishna, in the hope that someday They will give you this attachment."

This is the very last instruction in this verse but I started with it for fear that we won't be able to get to it, that we will have many other things. However, notwithstanding the fact that attachment must be given to us... And this is something very important, we must understand that the path of *bhakti* is a path of mercy, that I cannot take *bhakti* by force. I cannot get *bhakti* by my own efforts, *bhakti* should be given to me by Krishna. *Bhakti* is independent, *bhakti* is on the level of God Himself; therefore it is self-willed. God may either come to us or not, nobody can force Him to come. Similarly, *bhakti*, *bhakti* will either come or not; someone must give us *bhakti*.

And this is the very beginning; nevertheless, it does not mean that we should not do something ourselves. As a rule, people have this strange dichotomy; this strange idea that either I'm doing something myself, or this will be given to me by mercy. Actually, people like it when we say that *bhakti* should come by itself, by mercy. What does that mean? That we don't have to do anything, it will come by mercy. One of the most popular religions originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the result of meditation of one very honest and very good monk whose name was Luther. Lutheranism and all Protestant religions ensued from there. Luther hung up his memorandum, his manifesto ... He was a monk and what he resented was actually the trading of indulgences. There is a story behind this that is very dear to my heart.

The Catholic Church was building a big temple, the Temple of St. Peter. And since it had to collect donations, someone had the brilliant idea that why not accept donations, forgiving

people's sins? It was the most brilliant technique for collecting donations that has ever been invented. What can, ultimately, the church give? It can absolve sins. Accordingly, indulgences appeared: you didn't have to do anything, to believe in anything, you just had to give some money to God's work and everything will be fine with you, you will be saved.

When Luther saw this hypocrisy, this abuse of religion, he was innerly outraged. He was a pure and honest monk. He hung a memorandum on the wall of some cathedral, I don't remember which one, due to which the Church declared him a heretic and then a great tragedy followed. But the essence of that memorandum was that a person is saved by faith alone. Not by deeds but by faith alone. You had to believe. His statement was made in a very honest way and with very good intentions, he wanted to stop these abuses, when people were just told, "Just do something, and you will be saved." He said, "You will not be saved until you have faith." But what did that bring about? I must tell you the good news – this memorandum of Luther brought about the onset of Kali-yuga. Actually, it was then that Kali-yuga really began, when Luther hung his memorandum, because people said, "Very well, that's it, now we have to just believe and do nothing."

Our entire civilization is based on this thesis; everything is even better. For the indulgences you had to at least pay some money. Now you don't have to do anything. I believe and that's it! People have carried this thesis to the point of absurdity. And when people are told that everything comes only by God's mercy and that ultimately they just have to believe they immediately say, "Everything's fine with me, I have already believed and now I will just wait for the mercy. If I have the opportunity, I'll show you a clip, which is a good illustration of how people expect mercy. But that's only if I have the opportunity, now I have neither a projector nor anything else.

But the point is that a person should wait for the mercy and simultaneously do everything he can. He should make efforts. People cannot understand this because they think that if I wait for mercy, if I rely on God, then why should I do anything else? If I'm in the ocean and there is a storm raging and I'm on a fragile boat – what should I do? Pray, right? Actually, I must pray and simultaneously row on because God helps those who help themselves. Yes, everything comes by mercy, mercy is the source of everything but this does not mean that I should not do anything.

Here, in this verse, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami says what a person should do so that ultimately this precious stone, the treasure of the attachment to Radha and Krishna, comes to him. The first instruction that he gives is *asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih*. This is the first most important instruction. We'll be talking about it today and partially tomorrow. He says *asad-varta-vesya*. Today I was reflecting on this verse and these words and I realized that it is a prediction; that it is not just an indication, it is a prediction, a prediction about our times, our sad situation here. I will try to explain in what way these statements are predictions.

He says *asad-varta-vesya* - "The first thing a person should do is to get rid of *asad-varta-vesya*, *asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih*." What does *asad* mean? Temporary, unreal. It also means illusory, non-existent, temporary, without true substance, unreal. Thus *asad* is something that does not exist in reality. And *varta* means news; a newspaper in Sanskrit is called *vartapatrika*. *Patrika* means a sheet where the news is shown. *Asad-varta* means news, unreal news, something unreal, some things related to the material world. And who knows what *vesya* means? No, not clothes; clothes is *vasana* or *vesa*, and this is *vesya*. *Vesya* is the exact opposite of clothes, it means a prostitute, *asad-varta-vesya visrja*.

His first instruction here is what we must do to attain this precious stone of attachment to God – *asad-varta-vesya visrja* – I must quit, turn away, leave this prostitute or woman of easy virtue who is *asad-varta-vesya*. Why? *Mati-sarvasva-haranih* – because she steals; women of easy virtue are prone to it. They usually rob their customers. I can't say this from experience, but that's what they are said to be, that when the client has relaxed and fallen asleep he gets robbed, bled white.

Here Raghunatha Das Goswami says, "What do the unreal news of this world do to us? They rob us – *mati-sarvasva-haranih*." *Mati* means mind; they rob one of his spiritual intelligence, absolutely, they bleed him white. Today and basically tomorrow I will be explaining how this process takes place, depriving a person of his reason; how a person is deprived of reason by something seemingly innocent. This is the problem, that sometimes these things seem innocent. Who watches TV? There are a few honest people. It is an innocent thing, right? You can chant *japa*, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare – in front of your object of meditation – Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Raghunatha Das Goswami says, *asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih* - "If you do not give this up, it will rob you, it will deprive you of your spiritual intelligence, completely." Actually, we need to understand how this happens. Because if we do not understand this, then we will sooner or later be deprived of our spiritual intelligence. We know that prostitutes are usually of a very attractive appearance. They look very attractive, they dress beautifully; they dress up, they use make-up and the like. In the same way the news of this world is also attractive; when you open the newspaper, when you start watching TV everything is so attractive. Our mind is drawn to it. The news of this world is just like a whore .. The whore must first seduce the person. And how does she do that? They have special manners, their own tricks. They dress in a particular way, they put on a special make-up. They dress up in a special way to somehow or other attract people. But what is actually their essence? Their intention is to just rob a person, to turn him into a pauper.

There was this story of Akbar and Birbal. Akbar was a great emperor, a Muslim and Birbal was his advisor. And Akbar once asked him, "I have heard from the Indian scriptures of *apsaras*." *Apsaras* are celestial courtesans, the most beautiful women in the world. And it is also mentioned there that there are witches. And Akbar once said, "You can do anything Birbal. Bring here to the palace an *apsara* and a witch. I want to see them." Birbal thought and thought and finally found a way out. He took his wife and went to a prostitute. Then he told both of them, "Cover your face, cover yourselves entirely, tomorrow we are going to Darbar. We're going to the courtroom, where the great Sultan sits." Akbar who was sitting on the throne, asked, "Well Birbal, have you brought me an *apsara* and a witch?" He said, "Yes, I have, your Majesty, here are the two of them." The Shah said, "Show me first the *apsara*. I want to have a look. It is nice to see someone beautiful first."

Birbal went up and told his wife to uncover her veil. The Shah saw an old wrinkled woman with a yellow face in strange clothes. He said, "Is this an *apsara*? Whom have you brought to me, what is this ugly old woman?" Birbal said, "Your Majesty, this is an *apsara*. Believe it or not, this is my wife and she is so chaste; she is so kind and so affectionate. She takes such a nice care of me like no *apsara* would ever be able to. She is a true *apsara*." He said, "Okay well, show me the witch now." He went up to the prostitute, removed her veil and saw a beautiful woman and then said, "Here is the *apsara*! Whom did you show me before that? Here is the real *apsara*." Birbal said, "No, your Majesty, this is a witch. Because as soon as you are left alone with her she will get her teeth into you and won't let you off until she has sucked all your blood. It is a witch."



And here Raghunatha Das Goswami says, *asad-varta-vesya* – the news of this world, the events of this world, the things of this world seem very attractive and we fall an easy prey to it all, we are very easy to tempt. Like, I was in Belarus and I had a lot of very interesting meetings. One man came to me and said, "You know, forgive me, please, I am an aspiring disciple of yours. But I could not resist, I got seduced." At the same time you could see that he very much likes having been seduced. There wasn't a trace of remorse on his face although he was saying, "Please forgive me, I could not resist." At the same time there was this dreamy expression on his face. Why do we get seduced? That is right, Saktiman Prabhu (laughter). We are so easily seduced because we want to be seduced; we are looking forward to being seduced. "Why haven't I been seduced yet?" Because ultimately the desire to be seduced or the desire for fleeting pleasures lives in our heart. We begin to justify ourselves in various ways. Like the man who said that I have been seduced, he hopefully asked me, "Well, may I continue this relationship or not?" I said, "No, no way." And he said, "What if I make her a devotee?"

This is how our mind works. We want to enjoy. We want to enjoy in the material world and this is the problem. Since we want to enjoy in the material world, since we have this deeply hidden desire, rather, it's not even a desire, it's a hope. This is the main and the biggest problem that we have. Why does a person so easily fall prey to a prostitute (*asad-varta-vesya*). Precisely because a hope lives in his heart that he will be able to be happy here. Despite our enormous experience; despite the fact that we have been trying hard, we have been sincerely trying, we have been struggling to be happy. Who has been struggling to be happy in this world? Who has been trying hard by fair means or foul for the sole purpose of becoming happy?

People do not understand that when we do this, when we invite, so to speak, this material happiness, along with it we invite misery; that material happiness and unhappiness are the two sides of the same coin. But since the hope to become happy lives in us, temptation remains. This hope is hidden deep inside. The very moment when we are faced by temptation, this hope immediately pops up in front of us and says, "Yes, I've always known, yes. That's it! You have never had that."

In fact, I wanted to speak a little about this nature of manifestation of temptation in our lives. Srila Prabhupada once made a very nice comparison; he explained what our subconscious mind looks like by using a contemporary example. He says that our subconscious mind is like a film. Of course, nowadays films are practically a thing of the past but not a long time ago people did use photographic films. Do you know what a film is and how the image appears on it? The film is exposed to light for some time and there are silver crystals. As a result of the light exposure these silver crystals undergo a reaction. In some areas, where the silver was, everything turns black.

But what else needs to be done to the film to develop the image? It must first be developed, yes, then it must be fixed. At the beginning there is no image visible. There is an imprint of an image deeply hidden within us. It is the same with our experience in material life. The whisper of enjoyment of material life, so to speak, leaves *samskaras* into our subconscious mind. These *samskaras* are like an undeveloped image on a film. There is a long film inside us with many many shots, we have photographed everything that has happened to us. All the photos of our enjoyments are there in our subconscious mind, it is big album; however, the major part of them are undeveloped, they are there in the form of original imprints.

These *samskaras* is what yoga deals with. All *samskaras* are stored there. But for this image of sensual pleasure to be developed we need what? What serves as its developer? Just like the image of our imprint of past pleasures develops on the film after being immersed into the

developer, what is the developer for the film of our subconscious mind? Memory? No, memory is somewhere there and we do not know what it is. We may not even know that it is there, we may not be aware of the existence of those imprints there. What is the developer? What do we have to immerse it in? yes, environment. The best developer, the active component in this environment is practice. *Prajalpa*. A particular practice of *prajalpa*.

When a person starts talking about this. Words or vibration serve as the developer through which memories of sensual pleasures emerge from the subconscious mind. We need to hear about it, we first need to hear about some sense gratification and immediately the image appears that was already there before. This is one of the surest ways; there are other ways, of course, there are all sorts of other ways to remind us of sensual pleasures but this is the most powerful one. For example, why do people like to read various novels describing, to put it mildly, indecent scenes? It is a huge industry. The best industry is to print out some obscene novel. Everyone is writing about it. Fools write and complete idiots read them. Because as soon as sound comes it brings along an image. Along with that image, an image of my own sensual pleasure pops up and the *samskara* gets activated. The *samskara* that has been sleeping, that has been alive in the subconscious mind for a long time now pops up. This is the film developer of our subconscious mind.

Another example we can refer to is that, as we know, when the spiritual master sows the seed of *bhakti* in our hearts, the seed of faith, it needs watering in order to grow. What should be the water for our seed of faith, the *bhakti-lata-bija*? Yes, hearing and chanting, *sravanam* and *kirtanam*. This is the water, *sravanam* and *kirtanam*. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. But in our abundant and generous heart there are many other seeds. We have there a small seed of *bhakti*, the *bhakti-lata-bija*. But we have a lot of other seeds. We have long been planting them there. To grow, these desire seeds also need watering. We should water them by *sravanam* and *kirtanam*, too, the process is the same. *Sravanam* and *kirtanam* is the water which germinates the seeds of material desires. People make use of that. What is advertising based on? Advertising is always based on one thing. Not even on the image; the image is secondary. Sometimes there is stuff without any image. What is always there? The sound. There might not be an image but the sound must always be there. The image is good if it helps, sound must always be there. In one's mind sound is linked to the image of material enjoyment and when a person hears that sound which evokes a desire in him.

"Pepsi! You feel like a drink?" Using the same process: *sravanam* and *kirtanam*, *sravanam* and *kirtanam*, the seeds of material desires grow very quickly in our heart. Therefore Raghunatha Das Goswami says that the most important thing is *asad-varta-vesya*. One must stop listening to the news of the world, listening to the events of this world because otherwise these images of material pleasures will be constantly growing in our subconscious mind. Krishna also speaks of the same thing.

yada te moha-kalilam  
buddhir vyatitarishyati  
tada gantasi nirvedam  
srotavyasya srutasya ca  
(Bhagavad-gita 2.52)

When a person, his consciousness, his *buddhi* or intellect, goes beyond the boundaries of this material world or when he gets free of the jungle, of the illusion of this material world, when he

gets out of the swamp of this material world, then *srotavyasya srutasya ca* – a person gets rid of the desire to hear this *gramya-katha*.

I think we have to finish before it is too late. There are many other things I wanted to say. I'll tell you that tomorrow, I'll have time. The point is that during these several lectures we'll be trying to understand how our spiritual consciousness is destroyed by this prostitute of the news of the material world; the Internet, the television, the radio – all these are channels through which news of the material world come to us and through which we are deprived of the ability to distinguish between the eternal and the non-eternal.

As promised, at the end I would like us to practice a bit. I'd like us to have a kind of spiritual practice; I'd like us to chant a round of mantra. But not simply chant because every day we chant a lot of round of *nama-aparadha*. We have promised to our spiritual master to chant at least 16 rounds of *nama-aparadha* every day. We have to train in accordance with what Raghunatha Das Goswami teaches us here. He explains to the mind what I must meditate on; what to focus our mind on. Now let's try to chant one round of mantra but with this meditation that we have only one object of worship. We will meditate on the second verse of the "Manah-siksa."

na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana-niruktam kila kuru  
vraje radha-krsna pracura-paricaryam iha tanu  
saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam  
mukunda-presthatve smara param ajasram nanu manah

Now let's try to focus to in order to get to the point. Because we are talking about it, but what's the point if we just talk and do nothing. Here, in this verse Raghunatha Das Goswami says, *sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja*. (Bhagavad-gita 18.66) He practically restates Krishna's concluding words in the "Bhagavad-gita"; he says that neither *dharma* nor *adharm*a will save you, neither *dharma* nor *adharm*a will make you happy, that's not the point. The point is that *vraje radha-krsna pracura-paricaryam*, that I worship Radha and Krishna in Vraja. But how? With abundance of the heart. *Pracura-paricaryam* means that my heart is full of this desire to serve Radha and Krishna, this embodiment of love, happiness and bliss unshadowed by anything material. And he says, *saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam* – we worship Lord Caitanya because he came to give us the most valuable thing in this world. Lord Caitanya came to give us this *vraja-bhakti* or *bhakti* for Krishna. And He is non-different from Krishna Himself because only Krishna can give *vraja-bhakti*. He came and gave something that was not there before. He gave us something we cannot get anywhere else. Lord Caitanya gave us a spontaneous affection for Radha and Krishna when we do not think of any restrictions, of anything else, just of how we can serve Them.

And *guru varam mukunda-preshthatve*. Why do we worship our guru? Because it is through our guru that I can feel this. He says, *smara param ajasram nanu manah* - "Oh, my mind, remember this." Remember that through your spiritual master, you eventually have to attain this attachment to Radha and Krishna and always enjoy there in the spiritual world, in Vraja. And do not try in one way or another to build your life on the shaky and unstable foundation of *dharma* or *adharm*a; that there is only one object of our worship. Let's try to focus on this, on this instruction of Raghunatha Das Goswami, and chant one round of mantra. One round doesn't take long, six minutes. We have all reached perfection in meditation on Krishna, so please try for one round to not think of anything else. Think only of Him and that there is only one object of worship and all the rest is of the evil. Everything else I do not need. Everything

else just disturbs me. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare .....

na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana-niruktam kila kuru  
vraje radha-krsna pracura-paricaryam iha tanu  
saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam  
mukunda-presthatve smara param ajasram nanu manah

Oh, my mind, constantly remember that you will not be saved neither by *dharama* nor by *adharmā*; the only thing that can save you is if you, out of abundance of the heart, worship Radha and Krishna in Vraja, *saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve*. *Saci-sunum* is non-different from *nandisvara-pati*, from Krishna. *Guru-varam* – best of gurus because whose guru is better? My Guru is better. The guru whom I've accepted. *Mukunda-preshthatve* – he is *mukunda-prestha*, he is very dear to Mukunda. He can bestow liberation on you through Him. *Smara param* – always remember. *Param ajasram* – constantly, continuously. *Nanu manah* – remember that there is only one goal, everything else is from the evil. Thank you very much.

Disk 79, track 10, 26.07.2006, Ignolino, Lithuania, Manah-siksa, 4<sup>th</sup> verse, lecture 2

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1.

gurau gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane  
sva-mantre sri-namni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane  
sada dambham hitva kuru ratim apurvam atitara-  
maye svantar bhratas catubhir abhiyace dhrita-padah

2.

na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana-niruktam kila kuru  
vraje radha-krsna pracura-paricaryam iha tanu  
saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam  
mukunda-presthatve smara param ajasram nanu manah

3.

yadiccher avasam vraja-bhuvi sa-ragam prati-janur  
yuva-dvandvam tac cet paricaritum arad abhilaseh  
svarupam sri rupam sa-ganam iha tasyagrajam api  
sphutam premna nityam smara nama tada tvam srnu manah

Finally, verse this year.

4.

asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih  
katha mukti-vyaghrya na srnu kila sarvatma-gilanih  
api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim  
vraje radha-krsnau sva-rati-mani-dau tvam bhaja manah

Translation of the fourth verse:

Oh, mind! Once and for all give up the despicable worldly talks. Like a whore who robs her client of all his savings, they steal a person of his pure mind. Without hesitation, reject all contemplation of liberation; for, like a tigress they are ready to devour any soul. Give up even affection for Lakshmi and Narayana who will lead you to Vaikuntha. Live in Vraja and worship Radha and Krishna, who bestow the priceless treasure of attachment to Themselves (*sva-rati-mani*).

Today I will continue to explain the first line. Yesterday I gave an outline of the first three verses. The essence of all these appeals to the mind are, as Raghunatha Das Goswami says in the very first verse (*sada dambham hitva*), to "once and for all cast away this pride that is manifested in our life as the false ego – in various forms and guises." This *dambha* or arrogance, this lie or attempt to lie to God and yourself spoils our lives. Therefore, appealing to his mind, where an infinite number of self-deception mechanisms are contained, where all these intricate mechanisms that make us proud all the time are hidden to try in one way or another to enjoy in any situation, even in the worst situation in the world, Raghunatha Das Goswami teaches his mind to get rid of false attachment.

And in the very first verse he says an interesting thing: *guru gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane sva-mantre sri-namni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane*, "Oh, mind, develop attachment." *Apurvam rati* – a very strong attachment, unprecedented affection. For what? For things, in relation to which we can not deem ourselves to be the lords. In this world we easily develop affection. We become attached to various things. But mostly we get attached to things that give us pleasure or that we can exploit. We are very attached to our husband, if he can be exploited. If he can't be exploited we are not so attached to him. We easily get attached. But the meaning or the principle which lies behind this attachment is the desire to dominate or rule over.

Therefore, in the very first verse Raghunatha Das Goswami advises his mind, "Mind, get attached. Get attached to that in relation to which even the thought of enjoying it should not occur." Although the thought will still occur; the desire to enjoy your guru is too strong; to squeeze out of him everything he can give. Or enjoy the land of Vrindavan. But these things a priori must hold a very high position in our minds and this is the beginning of reinstating our true genuine identity. I said yesterday that our main problem we must solve lies in our wrong mindset. *Kura rupa iva matir jayata eti* – that as a result of association with saintly persons *rati ankur* appears in me. *Rati ankur* means the seed or germ of attachment. And when a person starts hearing empty and meaningless talks, or repeating empty and meaningless talks, nothing is left of this attachment. We are squandering this attachment or this *matir* – precious intelligence that we have.

Srila Radhanath Maharaj once gave a very nice example. He compared one's tongue to a keel. Does everyone know what a keel is? Big ships have a small blade inside. As this blade turns the whole ship turns. Our tongue is just like that keel. Wherever it turns, there turns our whole life. Our whole life follows our tongue. What our tongue speaks about – there goes our consciousness. As a result of our talks our consciousness *asad-varta-vesya*, the harlot of these worldly talks, our consciousness focuses on the mundane, on the material, on the ephemeral. And the meanest of all this is that it happens unnoticeably to us. We think, "Well, what is that? Nothing special. You can talk a little, you can chat a little, you can gossip a little. It's so nice. Do you know the news? What a piece of news – he fell down together with her; they fell down together."

Srila Jiva Goswami explains that as a result of this we first become indifferent to *bhakti*. In the beginning we find the practice of *bhakti* to be like a life-preserver. We understand that this is something that can save us from the ocean of this material existence. But when we waste our intelligence on worldly talk we become indifferent. Vice versa, the taste for worldly news gets stronger and stronger. We can see that the so-called progress of mankind, especially in Kali-yuga, is the progress in the amount of worldly news. Has anyone noticed what the major progress consists in? First, people wrote books, and they wrote them by hand. Then they invented the printing press. Why have they invented it? To print nonsense, because previously people wrote down only what was most valuable. And books were very valuable. Everyone knew that this is a book, so it must be something of value. In essence, Kali-yuga actually began with the invention of the printing press. And the first printing press was invented to print the Bible. But very soon they figured out, "Why print the Bible? We can print everything else." What was invented after that? No, the Internet was invented last. Then the radio was invented.

"Radio, radio!" And people thought, "Oh, what an invention!" I remember that. I remember when I received my first transistor as a gift. So much nectar was flowing from that box non-stop, 24 hours a day, but it was not enough. People did not stop. Then they invented the TV! This is another hotbed of *asad-varta*. And, finally, the most remarkable achievement of Kali-yuga, the Internet! This word must be pronounced in no other way than with aspiration. "Internet!" The very meaning of the word net – it is meant to catch whom? Us, our minds, our consciousness. And I have read on the internet that last year more than a hundred people died from the Internet simply because they could not stop. They forgot about eating, sleeping, mating and defending. Only one thing was left – the Internet, attachment to the Internet. Very useful information from the Internet again. A person sells his scattered mind to all this to such an extent that he can surf the Internet, this web, for days on end. He gets caught in this web and his mind will never again get out of the web.

Therefore, the first thing that the person following the spiritual path must remember is *asad-varta-vesya visrja*, he needs to be extremely careful. Because it is such an innocent thing, isn't it? Is it such a terrible thing to see the news and at the same time chant *japa*? That's useful, isn't it? Everything is fine, everything is going well. I know how much devotees love the TV. Srila Jiva Goswami says that when a person commits an offense in his practice of devotional service, one of the effects of these offenses is that he gets attached to things that destroy his *bhakti*. And the TV is one of them. That's a most dangerous thing. Actually, I think that we have to introduce a fifth principle in ISKCON that everyone receiving initiation should take – no watching TV. I think immediately those who aspire to become disciples will become much fewer, hardly one will remain.

One must be very careful. Actually, we can look at the saints of different traditions, how careful they were regarding this. I've recently read an interesting story about a Christian saint who was Russian, John of Kronstadt. There was such a saint, he lived relatively recently, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A story is told about him that one day two young men were walking past his house. He lived in a simple hut. And he was a priest, but he was a saintly man. This also happens sometimes. And one of the young men said to the other, "We are going past Father John's house. Shall we drop in?" And the other asked, "What are we going to do there?" He said, "We'll just sit with him and have a chat." So they went. The lady housekeeper came in and said, "Father John cannot come right now, he will come later. Please wait, he will come downstairs later." They started waiting; they waited for 10 minutes, for 20 minutes, for half an hour, for 50 minutes, for an hour ... Their patience was coming to an end. Suddenly, the woman came and said, "Father John has gone to the church for the service, but asked me to give this to you." And she gave them a cup and spoon. They asked her, "What for?" She said, "Let them chat, that is what they wanted to do."

Once again, that's what destroys our spiritual consciousness. *Mati-sarvasva-haranih*, here Raghunatha Das Goswami says that spiritual intelligence is completely gone. And what is, according to you, the most dangerous form of *asad-varta*? This is very important to know. The most dangerous form of worldly news and mundane talks is criticism, yes. The most dangerous, the most horrible, the most despicable form of worldly news that completely destroys our spiritual intelligence is worldly criticism, when we begin criticizing others.

In the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" Krishna speaks a very important verse:

para-svabhava-karmani  
yah prasamsati nindati  
sa asu bhrasyate svarthad  
asaty abhinivesatah  
(Bhag. 11.28.2)

He says *para-svabhava-karmani yah prasamsati nindati* – when a person starts to either glorify or criticize the activities or the nature of other people. *Svabhava* means one's character, one's qualities; or *karmani, para-svabhava karmani*. He either criticizes what a person does, or he criticizes the character of another person, his qualities. *Yah prasamsati nindati* – he either glorifies or criticizes. *Nindati* means to criticize, to offend, to reproach. *Sa asu bhrasyate svarthad* – such a man very quickly, *asu* – falls down and forgets his true interest as a result of criticism and offences, both mundane offenses and mundane criticism; and a person forgets what he really needs. Why? *Asaty abhinivesatah*. He says, "Because his mind is immediately devoured by the ephemeral." *Asat* – by the unreal, by illusion. Our consciousness is devoured by this illusion and this is the meaning of what is happening at the moment when I start criticizing others. One who criticizes others immediately forgets what he needs.

The point is that even when we praise .. Sometimes people think that criticizing others is bad. Here Krishna says that even glorifying others is bad. Why? Because both are actually food for our false ego. When we criticize another person, what do we feel? What happens at that very moment with our false ego? In Sanskrit there is this expression, *ninda-rasa*. There are five major *rasas*: *dasya rasa, santa-rasa, madhurya-rasa, vatsalya rasa, and sakhya-rasa*. And there is a sixth *rasa*, which is called *ninda-rasa*. And the sixth *rasa* is sweeter than all the other *rasas*, when a person offends others, when a person criticizes others. There is even a verse in Sanskrit, oh mind, constantly drink the nectar of *ninda (ninda-rasa piba)*, drink it constantly, drink this intoxicating drink.

Because as soon as I criticize or reproach others, especially behind their backs, when I speak badly of them my false ego gets nourished. My false ego becomes stronger and stronger. And when I praise others.. Usually people either criticize others to pull them down and to feel on top, or people praise others driven, too, by impure motives. Why do people usually glorify the others? To get some benefit. Because praising someone is also food for the false ego, for his false ego. I know, every person can be bought by this. No matter how renounced he is. We know. You just have to find the right words.

There is a good English expression – if someone is praising you this means he or she needs something from you. If I'm not mistaken, I once read the story of Abraham Lincoln, one of America's first presidents, one of the fathers of the American nation. He was telling that he was going to school one day and that he dropped in on a blacksmith's shop. There was some noise coming from there and he got curious, there was some heat. He went to the blacksmith and watched as he worked. It so happened that day that the blacksmith's assistant had not come.



Seeing a boy come in the smith thought: "Let me use him." And he began, "Oh, what a clever boy, he hasn't gone to school, instead he has come here. This is where the real things happen. What a good boy! Come, give me a hand here, hold this." And the boy started holding while the blacksmith was praising him, "What a boy! What a boy! Amazing! I've ever seen such a good and obedient boy." And he kept hitting and hitting. Abraham Lincoln said, "I spent four hours in that shop and I was constantly praised. I thought I'd never escape from there. Since then, when someone praises me I know: he needs something from me, all this is not for nothing."

Therefore Krishna says *asaty abhinivesatah* – "Whether someone criticized the others or praises them, in any case, his mind begins to focus on this ephemeral thing, it is devoured by the ephemeral and such a person loses his spiritual intelligence." Both are based on envy. Both praise and blasphemy are based on the fact that we envy that person. We either want to praise and glorify someone for something he does not have, or we criticize him because we envy him. "Caitanya-caritamrita" explains the mechanism of how human consciousness focuses on matter as a result of *prajalpa*, and especially as a result of this *ninda-rasa*. The result of my criticizing someone is that my material desires gain strength. As I already said, when a person criticizes someone or listens when being praised, his false ego gets nourished. This is the best vitamin for our false ego. Something without which our false ego can not exist. And as soon as I start criticizing someone my material desires become stronger.

Srila Prabhupada explains this with regard to the story of Ramacandra Puri. We all know this story. Last year or the year before Bhakti Caitanya Maharaja told it in his seminar on the lessons of *caitanya-lila*. We know that Ramacandra Puri came to Puri and that Paramananda Puri told Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu the story of Ramacandra Puri. He said that he was an offender, that he had approached the deathbed of his spiritual master Madhavendra Puri who, experiencing the ecstasy of separation from Krishna, kept repeating the same verse over and over again that somehow or other I have not attained my Lord, the Lord of Mathura; he was crying and saying, "Where are you, Krishna?" Ramacandra Puri had approached him and said, 'Why are you crying? You're supposed to be a pure devotee. Krishna says of pure devotees,

brahma-bhutih prasannatma na socati na kanksati  
samah sarvesu bhutesu mad-bhaktim labhate param  
(Bhagavad-gita 18.54)

Krishna says that a pure devotee – *brahma-bhutih prasannatma na socati na kanksati* –neither laments nor desires anything, he is not like that. You must lie and be in complete bliss." And Paramananda Puri explained that, "As soon as he uttered those words, he committed an offence to his guru, because one is not supposed to give instructions to his guru." The disciple should not be so stupid as to approach his guru and say, "You do not understand, you're doing something wrong. Instead of rejoicing in life you're crying."

Srila Prabhupada explains; commenting on the story, he cites Jiva Goswami in his "Bhakti Sandarbha" where he says: "Even if one who has attained liberation as soon as he commits an *aparadha* or an offence his *vasanas* become stronger." *Vasanas* are the material desires hidden in our subconscious mind. And what happens to a person who is following the spiritual path?

Due to our spiritual practice, our *vasanas* or the karma we have accumulated gradually become weaker and weaker. They lose strength. In material life the *vasanas* or the material desires have a practically full control over one. If a person wants something the respective *vasana* starts working.

Yesterday I made the comparison of material talks being like the developer. These *vasanas*, these *samskaras* that are dormant in our subconscious mind, as a result of spiritual practice become weaker. I chant the mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare and everyone knows, everyone is convinced that what was once a problem is not a problem anymore. People give up most terrible habits they used to have. I know people who have given up heroin, although normally that is impossible. Because it is such an intense material pleasure that a person can not give it up. People give it up as a result of their chanting the mantra.

The *vasana* weakens and loses its power over one. But as explained by Srila Jiva Goswami, even if a person has reached the stage of liberation, even if he is at the level of *jivan-mukta* and he exists, he lives at this level, as soon as he commits an offense, especially if it is an offense against a devotee, especially if it is an offense against a pure devotee, a great devotee, the strength of that offense is such that immediately, out of nowhere, the demon of material desires becomes very strong in him. They emerge from the depths of the soul until they completely devour this person.

And in the case of Ramacandra Puri that was exactly what had happened. When Ramacandra Puri offended his spiritual master Madhavendra Puri, when he went to him and gave him that stupid advice, telling him, "What are you doing? God knows what! Instead of rejoicing you're crying. It does not suit you" at that same moment his material desires turned very strong. That very moment he turned into an offender. The trouble is that when a person commits one offense, as a rule, it is like an avalanche, he starts committing offense after offense.

When a person commits an offense his material desires emerge. At the same time he is accustomed to his image of a devotee. He already thinks that in one way or another I am a devotee. I have to make myself out to be someone, I have to lead a certain way of life, I have to maintain my reputation as a devotee, these material desires in a perverted way are manifested in the form of a new desire – to criticize others. His material desires will manifest in that he will be pulling down the others again and again. There is nothing more terrible than the fate of a person who was following the spiritual path and who made offenses and who, in order to compensate for the offenses he had made, to get rid of the feeling of his own failure in his spiritual life; instead of honestly admitting it, he starts criticizing and offending others. Unfortunately, we have seen this, too, that a person who has committed an offense is again victimized by his material desires.

Actually, this is the worst thing that can happen, especially to a *sannyasi* or to any other person who is engaged in spiritual life because he's already used to a certain position in society. And suddenly he feels that he has material desires that devour him, that force him to commit terrible sins. And to somehow get rid of this material desire and to justify himself and these material

desires, he starts offending, offending everyone around. Very often he starts offending his spiritual master making him responsible for the predicament he has found himself in.

This is, unfortunately, the scenario you could have seen from our own experience, the way it all happens. Therefore, the most terrible form of this problem or the most dangerous form of this harlot of material enjoyment, *asad-varta-vesya*, is criticism. Therefore, again and again, if a person does not want his consciousness to degrade ... When a devotee follows the spiritual path, he feels that his consciousness elevates. The farther it elevates the better he feels, the happier he becomes. But if he does not want his mind to again degrade to the material level, in no case should he commit this horrible mistake. He should not sell his mind again to the harlot of material talks and especially material criticism or material praise.

I have a few more minutes. I can try and explain the second part of this verse. I already said that *asad varta-vesya*, when Raghunatha Das Goswami explains what a person on the spiritual path must do, he first says *asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih* if you value your spiritual intelligence, stop talking on material topics. After that he says, *katha mukti-vyaghrya na sru kila sarvatma-gilanih*. The next *katha*, which is highly dangerous to those following the spiritual path is *mukti-katha*, talks of *mukti* or liberation. He says that these conversations are like a tigress; this tigress can devour everything. She can devour your soul, your mind, your intelligence, because all this is *atma* and he says *sarvatma* – she devours you whole. Because in a sense, this *mukti-katha* or *katha*, associated with liberation is even more dangerous than *gramya-katha*, than talks of material enjoyment, material benefits or worldly religion, worldly material duty.

Because as explained at the beginning of "Caitanya-caritamrita" there are four kinds of deception in this world. These are *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa*. The author of "Caitanya-caritamrita", referring to the second verse of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" where Vedavyas says *dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsaranam satam*, says that in "Srimad-Bhagavatam" there is no *kaitava-dharma*, no cheating, no lie. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami begins explaining all that, and he says that false, deceptive *dharma*, or the false goals pursued by people, the goals, seeking which a person squanders his life in a human form – these goals are *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa*. Of all these four, Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami says, the greatest deception is *moksa*. Because, when a person pursues the goals of *artha*, *kama* or *dharma*, he tries at least to become the ruler of a limited scope in this material world. When a person starts pursuing the goal of *moksa*, he wants to become what? He is not satisfied anymore to rule over a limited scope in this world, he wants to rule over everything; he wants to be God. As Srila Prabhupada says, this is the last trap that one's mind can get into. I understand that for us it seems irrelevant. Sometimes people think, "Well, material enjoyment is all clear, we can understand that. But *mukti*, what's so interesting about it? There's nothing interesting."

A story once happened to me. One day I was approached by a devotee who began saying, "I can't understand why Srila Prabhupada said that everybody are impersonalists, that so many people follow the spiritual path and most of them are impersonalists, that they all are seeking liberation." I tried to explain that to him in every possible way. He said, "I do not understand why. Everybody are *bhaktas*, after all. Right?" At that time we lived in the temple where there

were only *bhaktas*. "I do not know but anyone I see, everyone on the spiritual path are all *bhaktas*. They all have *sikhas*, they all wear *dhotis*. Everybody are *bhaktas*." I tried to explain to him in every possible way. He said, "No, I do not agree. I do not understand. I do not agree on this. I know so many people who follow the spiritual path of *bhakti*, towards *bhakti* and they do not need anything else." The most surprising thing was that in less than a year this person turned into a notorious Mayavadi, precisely because he could not understand. And in actual fact it is not such a rare thing, as it may seem.

I talked with a devotee, a professional psychologist, who often consults devotees to help them. And he said, "To my greatest surprise, 95% of the devotees actually want liberation. In fact, they do not want *bhakti*." *Bhakti* is too ephemeral, intangible, whereas *mukti* – that's clear, we all want *mukti*. And we do not understand the extent to which this motive of *mukti*, this desire for liberation, is driving us.

Like, very often devotees wonder, for example, how this can be manifested in our consciousness. Devotees are often surprised, "He's a devotee! Why has misfortune come to him? Why has this trouble happened to him? Why? He is a devotee! Why?" What does that mean? This means that I have become a devotee in order to get rid of suffering. This means that actually I am driven by the motive of *mukti*. And when a person strives for *mukti*, when a person aims at *mukti*, Raghunatha Das Goswami says here – this devours everything, *sarvatma-gilanih*. This tigress of *mukti*, of *moksa*, devours everything. A person loses not only his intelligence. If material talks lead to the fact that a person loses his spiritual intelligence, then here a person loses everything. Ultimately, he develops the desire to be nobody, to dissolve. Those engaged in this kind of spiritual practice, seeking to attain *moksa*, even their appearance becomes somewhat strange. A kind of a standing smile appears on their face and when they speak they are very slippery, there is no way you can catch them.

There is one famous guru. This is perhaps the most famous guru now, in the modern world. I will not, just in case, out of respect for him, because we should not criticize anyone, name him. Because, actually, we do not criticize him personally, we criticize a certain mentality in order to protect yourself against the penetration of this mentality; because all these dangers sometimes penetrate our consciousness in a disguised form therefore we do not notice it. They guise in devotees' clothes. They wear a *dhoti*, they grow a *sikha* and say, "It's me, I am a *bhakta*, Hare Krishna!" However, what is actually there inside is *moksa*, the desire for liberation.

I was told ... It is a very famous guru, he has his own organization, millions of followers, literally all over the world. Presidents come to him and bow down to him. And one devotee told me about his meeting with him. He is the president of a large temple and he was brought to a special meeting with this guru. This guru came out, it is quite a young man, this year he turned only 50. He came out with that smile of his. He constantly keeps it on his face. A few select people, some VIP's, were sitting there. He sat down and everyone was waiting for what he had to say. Everyone waited. Twenty minutes passed. He sat in silence for twenty minutes, his eyes half-closed. Everyone was looking at him and everyone was also trying... A few of them were also sitting with half-closed eyes, others were also trying to think of something like that. The temple president was ardently telling him off, "Why are you pretending?! Enough!" In the end,

he opened his eyes and said, "It is so nice to be silent for a while and associate in a silent way." The temple president thought, "If you only knew how I was associating with you all that time you would not say it is nice."

Because a person turns into a nonentity. A person cannot even speak properly, a person is constantly making himself out to be something, in this way trying to realize his desire for control. Surprisingly, this man, who is supposed to have reached the level of *jivan-mukta* or liberation, constantly teaches his people ... If we ask them, what their goal is, they'll say, "We do not know what our goal is, Gurujī does not tell us what our goal is." Gurujī has not told us. Gurujī forgot to tell us the most important thing, what the goal of what we do is. We are engaged in something, but Gurujī himself has one big dream: he wants to become a Nobel Peace Prize laureate for having brought peace to the whole world. Because material desires still remain. On the contrary, these material desires grow, even if the person really – in this case we are not dealing with a very honest man – but even if we are dealing with a sincere *mayavadi*, his desire is to become God. Therefore this is deception in its worst form.

Therefore, in the second instruction in this verse, when Raghunatha Das Goswami speaks of the obstacles awaiting one on the spiritual path, he says, *katha mukti-vyaghrya na srnu kila sarvatma-gilanih* – stop listening to this *katha* for it's all very beautiful; so beautiful that it all seems true.

I have already told the story about the devotee who could not understand why most people are *mayavadis* at heart. After that I met him and I reminded him of our conversation, "Do you remember, you once could not understand that everyone are *mayavadis*. Now you are a *mayavadi*." He said, "No, I am not a *mayavadi*, I have found the truth, I did know the truth before that." He had started reading this wonderful book, which, to be honest, some devotees secretly read, "Conversations with God." That's another remarkable example of popular *mayavada*. What are all these conversations with God reduced to? "Everything is allowed, everything is good." Ultimately, all *mayavada* is reduced to this vulgar and stupid statement – "everything is fine; no need to do anything, no need to aspire for anything, everything is already fine, everything is wonderful." And he said to me, "Look! The whole truth is written here, isn't it?" If you read, everything is so beautifully written you'll never realize you are being deceived. Again, because that desire lives in your heart you will not hear the deception, you will not see it.

When people read all this, they take it at face value. They are told that ultimately you have to become God and that there is no goal. This is, by the way, one of the characteristic features of *mayavada*, like this Gurujī, he speaks without explaining what the goal is, that's a typical *mayavadi* statement – there is no goal. There is no goal, there is just movement and you just have to go on and on. There is no end to movement. Sounds good, doesn't it? True, right? You just need to go on and on, progress all the time and broaden your experience, acquiring more and more until your experience becomes so great that you become God. And this is the deception you will be told. Everything will be so beautiful that you will not even realize. Everything will be spoken with a smile and you will think that everything is fine with you, "Everything is fine with me!"

I remember, at one time I also read various *mayavada* books. Sai Baba speaks so beautifully! Such a nonsense, but so beautifully. If a person does not understand this he will ultimately be deprived of himself. Because what is a person deprived of on this way? He is deprived of his inner purpose. I am always an eternal servant of Krishna. I am an eternal servant and I am deprived of my true "self", the "self" in which I can exist eternally. Therefore Raghunatha Das Goswami warns us against this.

In the next line he says that there is no point in worshipping *laksmi-paty*, i.e. the Lord of Laksmi, Narayana, because that will bring us to Vaikuntha. But we will speak of that tomorrow. Thank you very much. Srila Prabhupada ki jai!

Now our lecture is over, but if you want us to read one more verse we can train a little. Yesterday I promised you that we will try to chant the mantra with a certain meditation. Yesterday we meditated on the second verse and today I'd like to recall the content of the third verse. Respectively, tomorrow we we'll be meditating in the fourth verse. In the third verse Raghunatha Das Goswami says, *yadiccher avasam vraja-bhuvi* – if you want *avasam vraja-bhuvi* – to live in Vraja, *sa-ragam prati-janur* – life after life, *yuva-dvandvam tac cet paricaritum arad abhilaseh* – if you want to eternally serve the eternally young couple of Vrindavan, *paricaritum arad abhilaseh*; to do this, if you want to life after life in Vrindavan and not just live but live with attachment, if you want to personally serve Radha and Krishna, to serve Their love eternally, then *svarupam sri rupam sa-ganam iha tasyagrajam api sphutam premna nityam smara* – then, oh mind, listen to me, you should always worship and very distinctly remember Srila Rupa Goswami and all his associates: Svarupa Damodara Goswami, who duessed the inner desire of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu; Srila Rupa Goswami, who explained that inner desire; *tasya grajam* – his elder brother Sanatana Goswami and all the other companions of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu; because to attain this *raga* or attachment is possible only by following in their footsteps.

This is our meditation today. I'd like us to chant one round by distinctly remembering Svarupa Damodara Goswami, Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami, the way they lived in Vraja; the way they lived their lives sacrificing them for the worship of the eternally young couple of Vrindavan; the way they ran everywhere, filling the land of Vrindavan with cries of "Where are you, Krishna? Where are you, Radha? Lalita! Visakha! Where are you? Where have you gone?" Let's try to chant one round in this mood.

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1.

gurau gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane  
sva-mantre sri-namni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane  
sada dambham hitva kuru ratim apurvam atitara-  
maye svantar bhratas catubhir abhiyace dhrita-padah

2.

na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana-niruktam kila kuru  
vraje radha-krsna pracura-paricaryam iha tanu  
saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam  
mukunda-presthatve smara param ajasram nanu manah

3.

yadiccher avasam vraja-bhuvi sa-ragam prati-janur  
yuva-dvandvam tac cet paricaritum arad abhilaseh  
svarupam sri rupam sa-ganam iha tasyagrajam api  
sphutam premna nityam smara nama tada tvam srnu manah

The fourth instruction that Raghunatha Das Goswami gives his mind is *asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih* – oh, mind, do not be tempted by the outer beauty of the prostitute of worldly talks because she will rob you of your most precious wealth – the ability to distinguish between matter and spirit. *Katha mukti-vyaghrya na srnu kila sarvatma-gilanih* – if you do not want to lose yourself completely – *sarvatma-gilanih*, if you do not want to be led away by the tigress of talks, *mukti* – of liberation, do not listen to those talks. *Api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim* – give up even the worship of Lakshmi-Narayana, even that you should give up, otherwise you'll find yourself in Vaikuntha. Instead, worship *vraje radha-krsnau*, because They can give you the most precious treasure, *sva-rati-mani* – attachment to Themselves.

During these several days we've been saying that the most important instruction, the first instruction, is particularly relevant to us; and that, ultimately, all our problems come from the misunderstanding of who I am. All our troubles come from the fact that I am not very clear about who I am. I have some theoretical understanding that I am a soul. I also have some – again, rather theoretical – understanding that there is God and that maybe, when He wants to have some fun, He takes the form of Krishna. Because, after all, what else can He do over a whole eternity? We can even believe it to a certain extent, but we do not have a deep understanding of our nature. Accordingly, as a result of this we do not have a clear vision of the goal. Because depending on who I am, on how I see myself, on what I deem myself to be, I'll set myself invisible goals. And what happens? It turns out that we accept this philosophy, but in practice, since our goal has not changed – we remain materialists. And in our practical life and activities we are pursuing quite tangible goals instead of aspiring to some ephemeral goals, Radha-Krishna. Well, it's clear, Radha-Krishna, but what do I care about Them? I have to live. I have to live my own life. It's spring, Vrindavan, what does Krishna care about us? A person gets this

idea that Krishna is too far, whereas all our *acaryas* say that Krishna is our most intimate treasure. We have to understand this and understand it at a very deep level.

The first thing that entirely deprives us of the chance to do this is, respectively, *asat-varta-vesya*, the whore of worldly talks. This woman, outwardly beautiful but empty inside, comes to us and says, "Let's have some fun" and we say, "Yes, yes, sure, of course, what else is there to do?" And this, as Raghunatha Das Goswami says here, *mati-sarvasva-haranih* – ultimately this will totally steal away our intelligence.

Srila Prabhupada explained on several occasions that he took the expression 'Krishna consciousness' from the verse of Ramananda Roy.

krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih  
kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate  
tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam  
janma-koti-sukrtair na labhyate  
(Cc, Madhya 8.70)

He said, *krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih*, he used that same word – *mati-sarvasva-haranih*; *mati* means consciousness. And Srila Prabhupada said that in this verse Ramanada Roy says that if you can get somewhere this *krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih*, this consciousness in which *bhakti-rasa* or the taste of love for Krishna becomes the most important thing, then you must run and be willing to pay any price to get it. Because love is the essence of everything. In "Sri Caitanya-caritamrita" Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami explains that love, *hladini-sakti* ... The essence of all the energies of the Lord – and the Lord in all His splendor that we see and are so tempted by – has an infinite variety of energies. All these energies are before us and we are tempted by them. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami says that the essence of all energies, the quintessence of all energies, the most precious of all the energies of the Lord is *hladini-sakti*. *Hladini-sakti* or the pleasure potency is the topmost energy. All other energies are just nothing compared to *hladini-sakti*. The essence of *hladini-sakti* is *prema* or love. The essence or quintessence, the active principle of pleasure, bliss or happiness, is love, *prema*. The essence of this bliss of love is *bhava* or emotional ecstasy. The essence of *bhava* is *mahabhava*; and the epitome of *mahabhava* is Srimati Radharani.

This is Whom we worship – the queen of all the energies of the Lord: the most precious and rarest of all energies of the Lord. But when a person forgets this and is immersed in worldly talk he eventually forgets his goal. As I said, the false ego or the false mentality, the false position in this world starts to get stronger and stronger and intelligence is completely lost. The day before yesterday I was saying that the most dangerous form of worldly talk, of *asat-varta*, is criticism. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says that a drunkard has every chance to get liberated. He says that generally it is even fine if he drinks. He says that in relation to Jagai and Madhai. They were so drunk that they did not have time to offend the Vaishnavas. They were so drunk and so happy that they did not care about that. That is the reason they got saved, for one simple reason – because they did not have this offensive mood. The boozier can be saved! After all, how much



can he drink? Sooner or later even the drunkard wants to quit, even a drunkard wants to take up *vanaprastha* and give up his addictions.

But he says: *paracarcakera gati nohe kabhu bhale* (Caitanya-Bhagavata, Madhya 13.43). But if a person is *paracarcakera*; *para* means other people; *carcakera* means that he criticizes and blames other people and finds a special taste in that. He says *gati nohe kabhu bhale* – nothing good will ever happen to him. The drunkard can hope that something good will happen to him, he may sometimes say Hare Krishna.

I was recently in Minsk and a tipsy man came to me staggering and said, "I'm back, I'm back, I remember you! I was once a devotee, I kind of fell down, but I came back again!" And Lord Caitanya says, "Such a person may come back." One who offends the devotees will not stop doing it, because the offenses or *ninda-rasa* are the most dangerous and most addictive form of the drug. I said the day before yesterday that *ninda-rasa*, the taste of these offenses, is particular and when a person indulges in offenses without curbing himself, without trying to cut off his tongue when he speaks ill of others he is not going to stop until there is nothing left in his mind except for criticism.

In the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam", (chapter 28, verse 1), Krishna Himself says (I talked about it yesterday) that a person should neither criticize nor praise, because if he criticizes or praises, his intelligence comes in contact with the temporary and he forgets what this world is. This is the mechanism. The mechanism is that as soon as I start praising or criticizing someone, I forget the true nature of this world. This world is a combination of *purusa* and *prakriti*. *Prakriti* is the material nature, it is the feminine principle. *Purusa* is the masculine principle. We all belong to the Purusa, we are all small *purusas*. That is why it is so difficult to live a family life because two *purusas* come together – one *purusa* is in a *sari*, the other *purusa* is in a *dhoti*, but actually they both are in pants and both want to dominate over and exploit each other. They collide and sparks come out. Because we come here as *purusas* to lord over the material nature. The material nature offers herself to us, "Take me, take me, exploit me." And a person forgets that there is a *purusa* and there is *prakriti*, that the whole world is just a combination of these two principles and that there is a certain eternally single principle. God is the single principle that everything else originated from. When I focus on the temporary advantages and disadvantages of other people in order to enjoy here, I will be enjoying life after life, life after life ... We have many lives ahead until the end of Brahma's life. Even to the end of our *maha-kalpa*, to the end of the world, there are 423 000 years left. Just a trifle. Kalki-avatar will come – phooey! – there will be a partial destruction. So, we have enough time to criticize others and there is no way out.

Therefore here Raghunatha Das Goswami says, "Do anything but that. And remember about Jagay and Madhay, who got saved just because they were drunk and did not have time to criticize Vaisnavas."

Then the next thing we talked a little about the day before yesterday: *katha mukti-vyaghrya na sru kila sarvatma-gilanih* – that this tigress of talks about liberation can devour your soul,

*sarvatma-gilanih*. Someone may ask, well, *gramya-katha* or *asat-varta*, talks of *kama*, *artha*, *dharma* is bad, but talk of *moksa* is good. Right? *Moksa* means liberation. Most people, even those who follow the Vaisnava traditions say that the goal of our practice is liberation, right?

What do we need, ultimately? We need to get rid of suffering, everything else will follow. But Krishnadas Kaviraj says that's a lie again, again a person misunderstands his nature and misunderstands the goal. And since he misunderstands his nature and his goal, he sets himself the task of getting rid of suffering. He says that the greatest lie is:

tara madhye moksa-vancha kaitava-pradhana  
yaha haite krishna-bhakti haya antardhana  
(Cc, Adi 1.92)

*Kaitava-pradhana*. *Pradhan* means the main. The main deception is *moksa*, the desire for liberation; *moksa-vancha*, the desire for liberation.

Our *acaryas* do not stint on biting remarks about *moksa*. Like, Srila Rupa Goswami wrote his famous verse in the "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu", *bhukti-mukti-sprhah yavat pisaci hridi vartate* (Cc, Madhya-lila 19.176). The desire of *bhukti* and *mukti* is a witch. What do *pisacis*, witches, do? *Pisacis* seize us and suck out everything from us, all our strength. Valabhacarya, the great founder of Valabha Sampradaya, came to read the manuscript of the "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu" and said, "Everything is fine, everything is written so sweetly, but I do not like this verse. How can you call *mukti* a witch? So many people want liberation and *mukti* is so cool. Mukti Devi bestows liberation. Krishna Himself is called Mukunda. Mukunda is one who bestows liberation. How can you do that? It is all wrong." Rupa Goswami said, "Yes, of course, I will correct that. Let me think, I will edit this verse and write something else." Jiva Goswami, who was standing nearby and was playing the role of a fan for Rupa Goswami, he was fanning him. Jiva Goswami ran out after Vallabhacarya and said, "Dear *acarya*!" And he is already old, he's a contemporary of Lord Caitanya, a respected man, an *acarya*; he has thousands of disciples, he is the founder of a *sampradaya*. And this boy runs out of Rupa Goswami's hut and says, "Dear *acarya*, you are wrong!" Vallabhacarya says, "How is that? I am wrong?" And he began quoting, "*Mukti, mukti, mukti* is the goal, it is the true goal of man. How do you say? This is something that takes us beyond this world." He says, "*Mukti* is all right", what is bad is, as Rupa Goswami says, *bhukti-mukti-spriha* – the desire of *mukti*, because when a person the desire for *mukti*... *Mukti* is good, liberation is good. Do we want liberation? Why do we want liberation? To not suffer? This is a wrong desire. Why do we want liberation? To enjoy, right, everything is clear to you!

Okay, well, it is not us who want it, it is them. Real devotees do want liberation. Srila Rupa Goswami explains, "A devotee may accept liberation." Forms of liberation acceptable to Krishna. Do we want to get to the spiritual world? We do not want to remain here. Although Lord Caitanya says *mama janmani janmanisvare bhavata bhaktir ahaituki tvayi* (Sri Siksastaka, verse 4) – I am willing to stay here life after life. We know that we need to go there. Why? For one reason, because there, in the spiritual world, devotees live. And who lives here? We live here, those who want liberation, who are envious of each other. In this world it is difficult to

practice devotional service. Therefore, we can accept liberation, *mukti*, in order to get to a place where everyone is engaged in devotional service. Man is a gregarious animal. It is easier for a man to do something everyone else does and when he is here he starts doing what everyone else is doing here.

He sees some poster and starts thinking, "I must also do that. This man is so happy on that poster." This is the principle monkeys act under. Has anyone seen how monkeys scratch? They scratch very a great relish. When they scratch they are perfectly happy. And when one monkey is scratching, the other also start scratching. Because if it is scratching and it's so happy, then I must also scratch. And the people in this world live under the same principle, everybody is scratching so I, too, must scratch. Hopefully it will get easier.

Therefore, one's goal is to get into the spiritual world and serve Krishna there. Our only goal ... why we can accept these ... Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami explains this: one accepts liberation only to be able to serve Krishna in a better way, not for any other purpose.

Therefore, Srila Jiva Goswami says, "Dear *acarya*, you are wrong, what is bad is the desire for liberation. Rupa Goswami, my spiritual master, has written *bhukti-mukti-spriha* – the desire for *mukti*, because it is a witch!" Why is it a witch? What does it deprive us of? Yes, it deprives us of ... At least some of you theoretically know the answer. The desire for liberation deprives us of our own nature. One who is obsessed by this desire of liberation, forgets who he is; he forgets that he is a servant and that I can be truly happy only in relationship with someone. And when that desire becomes strong, the desire to simply somehow or other get rid of suffering, then one forgets Krishna, one forgets about devotional service. What remains in him is this single false desire and he thinks, "That's it! I will now become God! I just have to realize that I am God! I'm God! I just have to understand that."

Like Narayana Bhatta. Narayana Bhatta was a contemporary of the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan, who has tremendously contributed to the discovery of the holy *dham* for us. Here Raghunatha Das Goswami repeats time and time again, "Vraje, vraje, vraje." Only in Vraja you can get the topmost. And Narayana Bhatta wrote at the time ... He was the first to introduce the Vrindavan Dham and Vraja Dham Parikrama. He described all the holy places. He discovered a huge number of holy places. He discovered Varsana and the Deities who preside over Varsana.

And he says, "I go through Vrindavan and a thorn pricks me in the heel." Has any of you walked barefoot in Vraja? Has anyone got pricked by a thorn in the heel? He says, "I go through the *dham* and a thorn pricks me in the heel; the pain I feel then makes me thousands of times more blissful than liberation in Brahman. Because I remain a person with this thorn from the holy *dham*. Because it sticks out from my heel reminding me of who I am." Who am I? I am a servant of God! I am a servant of God! And my business, my duty is to be here in the holy *dham* and serve God here. Whereas when I dissolve in Brahman I forget everything. He says, "I'd rather be pricked by thorns but remain who I really am."

Yesterday I gave a small example, without referring to names, about how people who practice these things forget all about everything, they forget about the goal. And this tendency to deception becomes stronger and stronger. I have a wonderful story about a beginner Mayavadi. He lived in the *asram* of his guru and the guru was telling him all the time, "You are God! You are God! You just have to realize that you are God! I am God, too! And you are God, too! We're all God!" That's just an illusion. One day that dawned on him. He was thinking about it again and again and then he suddenly realized, "I am God! Right!" Of course after thinking a lot you can come up with anything. The main point is to keep thinking. *Aham brahmasmi! Aham brahmasmi!* I am a Brahman, I am Brahman.

So, he happily came to his guru and said, "Guruji, I have reached the goal of our practice; I have realized: I am God! I have finally realized that! I am God!" Guruji congratulated him and he said, "That's it, from now on I'm going to practice it. From now on, no one will ever get me to budge from this understanding! I know that I am God! I realized that I am God! I am God, and that's it!" Guruji blessed him and he went. He followed a road that led him to the neighboring town that was full of people. Suddenly he saw them scatter in different directions. An elephant running in the distance, a mahout riding on top of it, spurring it. Everyone scattered in different directions and he thought, "Why are they running? I am God! I am not going to run! That's beneath my dignity. The elephant will see that I am God, it will stop before me and will bow down to me." So, he went on as if nothing happened, "I am God!" The elephant is running, "I am God! I cannot go against my principles. I realized – I am God!" The elephant is running. The mahout on top of the elephant starts shouting, "Hey you, crazy man, get out! Elephant, elephant!" "What do I care about the elephant?! I am God!" The elephant runs up to him in fury, grabs him with its trunk and throws him out. He falls down, gets his arm broken and gets bruised all over.

He gets up and thinks, "How's that? How could that happen to me? I am God, am I not? God!" At that moment his faith was shaken. He returns to the *asram* disappointed and bruised and says, "Guruji, I tried to apply our philosophy in practice. I had finally realized that I am God, I was totally convinced that I am God! I did not have the slightest doubt that I was God. I was walking on the road when suddenly everyone began scattering. Then this elephant flew right at me, it got me up with its trunk and I people shouted something to me. He threw me up. Now, please tell me, how could that happen to me? I'm God!" Somewhat annoyed, the guru said, "You are God, but did not you hear what the God on the top of the elephant was shouting to you? He was shouting to you, 'Get out!' He is also God! Why did not you listen to him?"

The point is that it's all deception! The desire for liberation is deception. When a person wants liberation, it is deception, because he forgets everything. Ultimately, a person goes blind. But the most amazing thing that Raghunatha Das Goswami further writes and what he himself is amazed at, is *api*, *api* means even. He begins the third line by saying, *api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim* – give up even the attachment for Narayana, the Lord of Laksmi. Of course, He is Narayana, He is God. In other words, he answers three questions: what's wrong with this world? And he even goes as far as saying that worship of God with awe and reverence is bad. *Api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim*. Why? *Ito vyoma-nayanim* – because it will you to Vaikuntha.

What's the point here? Why does he say that worshipping *laksmi-paty* is bad? We know that it is good. I am sure that most of our Vaishnavas who follow the Vedic culture, have at home, somewhere there, in the eastern corner, in the icon corner, some *laksmi-yantra* installed. There are also special three-D *laksmi-yantras*. I recently asked whether it helps or not. One devotee came and told me, "I was told I have to get a three-dimensional *laksmi-yantra*, then money will flow like river! It will! Like a river!" I said, "Do get one! You will never regret it! We will build the Moscow temple!" People usually forget about temples and the like.

He says here, *api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim* – give it up before it is too late, otherwise you will find yourself in Vaikuntha. What is wrong with Vaikuntha? It would seem there is nothing wrong? We have just been saying that it is good – Krishna is there! Narayana is there! There is order there! Law reigns there! There is a great enjoyment! Devotees are disturbed by this. When a devotee find himself there he feel ill at ease for he sees all that wealth and does not know what to make of it; for he wants to be closer to God.

In the second part of the "Brihad-Bhagavatamrta" Sanatana Goswami tells how Gop Kumar got to Vaikuntha. He got there and at first there was no end to his happiness. He got into the spiritual world. He began walking around and he saw the wealth of Vaikuntha – the palaces of philosopher's stone and of gemstones and everything of the nature of *sat-cit-ananda*. All the riches there are, everything that we see here. When we find ourselves in such an atmosphere, we think, "What a cool place! Paradise!" Now, can you imagine what Vaikuntha is like? You can't! We cannot even imagine. It is such a wealth and everything is of the nature of *sat-cit-ananda*, of the nature of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

Gop Kumar was walking around and looking ... However, he remained Gop Kumar. He decided that I do not feel like dressing in these clothes, wearing some costumes, wearing hats with gemstones. He was a cowherd boy. By nature he was a cowherd boy. So, he was walking around. Most importantly, Narayana was there. Narayana is the lord of all those riches, He is sitting with Laksmi. And it is nice here, so nice! He went up to Him and shouted, "Hey! Gopal, Gopal! I'm here!" but he was hushed. Several inhabitants of Vaikuntha approached him, took him aside and we can imagine what he was told. And then it's described that when I was playing the flute Narayana was looking at me. I was playing the flute for Him, a shepherd's flute, while Narayana was looking at me and smiling. I know He likes it. I'm so happy! Narayana is seated there on the throne and I am standing nearby playing the flute; I sometimes fan Him. We are next to each other. There is no one happier than me.

But when I called him, "Gopal!" I was taken aside. They have their own police there, too. Public pressure. The public of Vaikuntha was outraged. The inhabitants of Vaikuntha took Gop Kumar to the side and said, "What you say is wrong. He is God! It's all His pastimes. He is playing a role there. Yes, we know, Gopal, Gopal – He is pretending. He is God! You must praise Him in Sanskrit ... Let us teach you the way you should glorify Him. Come, we'll tell you how He should be glorified." Then there were others, there was no unanimity, some started chastising him, but

others started saying, "No, no, do not chastise him, that is one of the *lilas* of our Narayana, too. There is nothing wrong, let him call Him Gopal, we've heard about that."

Still others began saying – even in Vaikuntha there is no unanimity - "No, no, no, he's right. In fact, Narayana is willing to do anything for His devotees! Even to become a cowherd boy. He is rightly glorifying our Narayana for, to save His devotees from the tyranny of Kamsa, He turned into a cowherd boy." Gop Kumar said, "I somewhat do not like all this public pressure because I ..." The Narayana in Vaikuntha guessed Gop Kumar's heart and one morning He woke up and said, "That's it! Today we are going to herd the cows." He jumped off His throne, Lakshmi turned into Candravali and the other inhabitants, all His courtiers, the entourage surrounding Narayana, turned into cowherd boys.

If the Lord plays, we are also supposed to play. They quickly changed dress, decorated themselves with flowers and ran away in a crowd, Narayana ahead. Gop Kumar was delighted, "At last, that's the real thing!" In an instance this *lila* was over and again He is sitting on the throne. I do not understand anything, on one hand I am happy, on the other there is something wrong. In meditation, I go up to Him and embrace Him; but here I cannot approach Him for He is sitting on the throne. In my thoughts I go up to Him and kiss Him because He is mine! He's my friend! But here you can't do this, they will hush you up, you will get expelled from Vaikuntha, you will be told that, "You can't come to the temple, you can't! You can't do this here! What are you doing?"

In the end, Gop Kumar spat upon everything and ... Sometimes he is a happy, sometimes I look at Vaikuntha and everything is fine, but then again, something is wrong. Everything is wrong, everything. Something is lacking. And Narada Muni came to him and said, "You look so awful! You've lost weight? No one loses weight in Vaikuntha. What's the matter? What's wrong, Gop Kumar?" He said, "I do not know what's wrong with me, I seem to be fine. The sun is shining, I seem to be happy. Narayana is sitting here, the God I worship. I can play with Him... However, something is missing."

So, Narada Muni told him, "Go, go, you do not belong here. You belong elsewhere." Because when a devotee sees the Lord's greatness... Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami says that his *priti samghucita*, his *priti* shrinks. He cannot express his love because fear is contrary to love. Fear, awe, reverence is the exact opposite of love; he cannot be himself neither can Krishna fully express His love.

In the Tenth Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" there is this story of Krishna and Balarama going to Mathura. We know that Kamsa has organized a great celebration on the occasion of their arrival, a big festival, and a great sacrifice, a bow sacrifice. The best priests and fighters were invited and there was going to be lots of entertainment for the entire public because all sacrifices are entertainments. Everyone gathered. He even set free Devaki and Vasudeva. He had them imprisoned but then he thought, "Let them see how I am going to kill their son." They also sat there. Krishna came in. At that time Krishna was only 11 years old, a little cowherd boy. Everyone stared at Him unable to take their eyes away. Wrestlers were looking at Him and

thinking, "Our Death has come to us." Kamsa was looking at Him his eyes red with anger. In the end Krishna pulled Kamsa down from his throne. He pulled this terrible demon down from his throne and nothing remained of Kamsa. Everyone saw that, it all happened before their eyes and after that Krishna and Balarama came to Devaki and Vasudeva. They knew they were Their mother and father. They had not seen them since Their birth. Devaki and Vasudeva started trembling because God Himself has come. They had just seen how He manifested His power and killed Kamsa before their eyes. They started praying, "O Supreme Personality of Godhead, You have come to us to save us from Kamsa's wrath." Krishna listened for a while but then started crying. He said, "Mom, Dad, what's wrong with you?"

But that was in Mathura. In Mathura the devotees see His greatness and that greatness carries their minds away. In Vrindavan they see His greatness, but think: "I must be seeing things, it must be just some kind of hallucination." Yashoda Mata looked into Krishna's mouth. Krishna opened His mouth and there she saw the whole universe: all the material elements, the *brahmandas*, all the planets, everything. Astrologers were sitting and calculating there. She was sitting and staring, thinking that she must have got sick, wondering whether she should go and see the doctor. "I'm seeing things. My son's mouth is full of earth and mud." Krishna did not like that, either. At that moment a cat mewed. There was a cat nearby and it said, "Miaou." Krishna heard that and got scared, "Mom, Mom!" grabbing the end of her *sari*; the Yashoda Mata thought, "Everything's fine." She sat Him on her lap and said, "You're my Gopal!" He's mine, there is no one dearer than Him.

Krishnadas Goswami says that ... Sanatana Goswami explains the way "Bhagavatamrita" comments on this story of Gop Kumar. He says that the mood of Vaikuntha ... As Raghunatha Das Goswami says here, "Otherwise, you will go to Vaikuntha. The Vaikuntha mood will poison your love within. It will kill the love in you. It will and there will be no more love!" If we have understood that love is the most important thing ... then that seedling will die and all we'll feel will be just respect. Therefore in the end Raghunatha Das Goswami says, *vraje radha-krsnau sva-rati-mani-dau tvam bhaja manah* – o mind, worship Radha and Krishna Who can give you the greatest treasure.

After all, the only thing we have to understand and can understand is that love for Krishna is the greatest treasure. Love is the greatest treasure. And that Krishna appears in the form His devotee wants to see Him in. Krishna Himself says, *ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajamy aham* (Bg. 4.11). The deeper our love, the more fully God will manifest to us. If our love is superficial, if our love or our desire to serve Him is worthless then God may also appear before us in approximately the same form, He will cheat us.

Again in the "Brihat-Bhagavatamrita" Arjuna says, "Krishna has tricked me." Narada Muni came to him and said, "Arjuna, you are so great! Krishna Himself has told you the 'Bhagavad-gita'" Arjuna said, "Well, 'Bhagavad-gita' ... Krishna has fooled me with this 'Bhagavad-gita', He has fooled me." Just in the same way Krishna can fool us. It all depends on the depth of our understanding and of what I need. Do I need something else or not? If I need love and love only, Krishna will appear before me in His most complete form. Krishna will appear in full,

*svayam-bhagavan* will manifest. But if I'm content with some other, more external, more superficial manifestation of God, if I am tempted by something else then, in the end, I will fool myself.

At the end I wanted to tell you a story. It is a sad story but ultimately it is a very exalted one. This is the famous story of Sri Krishnadas Babaji, who lived in a village near Varsana. That village was called Aravanari. He went there and performed there his *bhajan* over many, many years. When he was 50 years old he thought, "Half of my life is over, who knows how long I am going to live?" He had come to Vraja as a boy. And he thought, "How is that? Everyone is going on a pilgrimage to the holy places and I have never been to other holy places." There are four main holy places. In the South that is Ramesvaram; in the West that is Dwaraka; in the East that is Puri and in the North that is Badarikasrama. He decided to tour the whole of India, to go to all these four places. And as he was about to leave, Srimati Radharani came to him in a dream and said, "Why? You're here, in Vraja, I'll give you everything you need! Here you can get everything. There is nothing you'll get in the other places." He woke up and thought, "Oh, I must have imagined it all. That's hallucinations, it can't be true! After all, what do I want? I want to go to a holy place and get purified."

He left and went everywhere; finally he came to Dwaraka. In Dwaraka, in the temple of Dvarakadis, he got marked as evidence that he has been there. He came back to Vraja. When he fell asleep, that was his first night in Vraja, he returned to his place that he was absent from over such a long time. Srimati Radharani came to him in a dream and said, "Go away, go away. I do not need you. Satyabhama has taken you into her entourage. You are now her servant, you have that mark on your shoulders. Get out of here, here you'll be just bothering everyone, you'll be poisoning the atmosphere of Vraja." And he went to his friends, to the other *mahatmas*, the holy men and started asking them, "What shall I do? What shall I do?" Hearing that, they all got frightened. They said, "Well, Srimati Radharani does not want to know you ... What can we say?" He said, "Accept me, I want to be with you, I want to be with you!" They said, "No, no. How can we go against Her will? Srimati Radharani Herself has rejected you." Then he realized that there was no hope.

He sat in his hut and started fasting. He was fasting and chanting the holy name, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. He was chanting with all his heart. In his heart, he was praying and weeping and repentance was burning him inside. He was appealing to Srimati Radharani, imploring Her. He fasted for three months, for three months he stayed in the hut. After three months he suddenly saw that his body was wrapped in flames. Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, the Babaji on our altar, was in Vrindavan at that time. He sent his servant to see what was going on there. And the servant saw him sitting, his body burning, literally burning, like that of Sati, while he was sitting and chanting the mantra, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

All the villagers came running. They crowded around and began peeping into that window and saw that their saint, whom they worshiped; was burning, that as the flames reached his throat,



he raised his hand so that he could chant the mantra, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Suddenly there was a flash and there was nothing left of him, except for a handful of steaming ashes. Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, who was present, began crying out to Krishna, "*Virahanala, virahanala*. He has burnt in the flames of separation from Krishna." This disappearance day is still celebrated in springtime, like that Babaji in that village. He blessed that village that from now on there will be no hunger or epidemics in this village and that it will prosper. Someone who hears this story may have doubts. Who is Srimati Radharani? She is the *hladini-sakti* of the Lord. She is the manifestation of His mercy. How could She have done that? Could She have done that or not? Why? He repented, didn't he? What was so terrible in his going Dwaraka? What's so special, we go to Dwaraka every year, so what? Why?

Explaining this story, the *acaryas* say, "Radharani was chastising Krishna Himself." Not that She would chastise Her devotee, She was chastising Krishna! When Krishna was at the Kurukshetra, what did She tell Him? She asked Him, "What are You doing? Why have You come here? Are You crazy or what? What are You doing here? Here horses are neighing, hitting the ground with their hooves, elephants are crying. Not to mention Your wives. Everything is so disturbing. Let's go to Vrindavan, because everything here prevents Me from loving You. I am the same, so are You. I love You, You are My beloved. I can see that You are My beloved One. I cannot love You here. Because everything here is against it, everything is preventing it. Let's go to Vrindavan. Only in Vrindavan can I love you."

When this consciousness appears in a devotee's mind Srimati Radharani will not allow him into Vrindavan. She is the Mistress of Vrindavan. She does not recognize anything other than the ultimate, infinite, absolute intimacy that is based on the ultimate, infinite surrender to Krishna. Nothing else does She accept. Everything else for Her is ashes, dust.

Therefore, here, giving instructions to his mind, Raghunatha Das Goswami says, *api tyaktva laksmi-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanim vraje radha-krsnau sva-rati-mani-dau tvam bhaja manah* – worship Radha and Krishna – as a result of that you can attain the greatest treasure in the world. That is your goal! Because that is your inner nature. The nature of the soul is to be a servant of God, fully surrendered to Him. This ideal of our inner nature can only be realized in Vrindavan. This is what Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to give us. No one else has ever given that. Thanks to Him we can attain *svarati-mani*, the gem of attachment to Radha and Krishna. And we must understand that this is the greatest treasure. This is the meaning of the instructions given by Raghunatha Das Goswami in this verse.

Thank you very much! Srila Prabhupada ki ...

Shall we chant a round of mantra? I would like that today we meditated on this verse, on these instructions of Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, where he says, "Do not give in to the temptations of the harlot of worldly talk, *asad-varta-vesya visrja mati-sarvasva-haranih*, because otherwise you'll lose your spiritual intelligence. Do not listen about liberation because that's not what happiness is; for happiness does not mean being free from suffering. And do not even get attracted to the riches of Vaikuntha. All you need to be able to find the deepest, absolute, complete, boundless love is to worship Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan!" Let's try to meditate

on this ... Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare ...

I would like to ask you to take these instructions of Raghunatha Dasa Goswami with you to try to always remember who I am and what I really need. Everything else is also important, it cannot be ignored, either. But if I forget the main point everything else will be a waste of time. However, if I perform all my other duties in relation to the family, children, work, society – all this must be done – if I do that but ultimately forget what the main goal is, I will spend my life in vain. But if I do everything I do as thoroughly and as conscientiously as possible, with all sincerity, all the while remembering that my main goal is that my consciousness is entirely absorbed in these amazing pastimes of Vraja and that all of them can be found in the sounds of the holy name, then everything I do will be a success. I'll be happy here. I will give happiness to everyone else. Ultimately, I will find eternal happiness in the spiritual world. Thank you very much.