

Just A Few Extra Notes

Further Illuminations by Śrīla Prabhupāda

Work/Prescribed Work

The living entity has to work for his livelihood because that is the law of material nature, and if he does not act according to his prescribed duties, he transgresses the law of nature and binds himself more and more to the cycle of birth and death in the many species of life.

Other life forms are also subject to the cycle of birth and death, but when the living entity attains a human life, he gets a chance to get free from the chains of karma. Karma, akarma and vikarma are very clearly described in the Bhagavad-gītā. Actions that are performed in terms of one's prescribed duties, as mentioned in the revealed scriptures, are called karma. Actions that free one from the cycle of birth and death are called akarma. And actions that are performed through the misuse of one's freedom and that direct one to the lower life forms are called vikarma. Of these three types of action, that which frees one from the bondage to karma is preferred by intelligent men.

— Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Mantra 2p



Factually, no one has to do anything more than render devotional service to the Lord. However, in the lower stages of life one cannot immediately adopt the activities of devotional service, nor can one completely stop fruitive work. A conditioned soul is accustomed to working for sense gratification.

— Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Mantra 2p



If our endeavor (prayāsa) is not to inquire about the Absolute Truth, we will simply increase our endeavor to satisfy our artificial needs.

— Nectar of Instruction, Verse 2p

Sacrifice

By nature's law, this human form of life is specifically meant for self-realization, in either of the three ways — namely karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, or bhakti-yoga. There is no necessity of rigidly following the performances of the prescribed yajñas for the transcendentalists who are above vice and virtue; but those who are engaged in sense gratification require purification by the above-mentioned cycle of yajña performances. There are different kinds of activities. Those who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious are certainly engaged in sensory consciousness; therefore they need to execute pious work. The yajña system is planned in such a way that sensory conscious persons may satisfy their desires without becoming entangled in the reaction of sense-gratificatory work.

— Bg 3.16p



Of all sacrifices, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the purest representation of Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes animal sacrifices are recommended, but in the sacrifice of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, there is no question of violence. It is the simplest and the purest.

— Bg 10.25p



Of sacrifices, the sacrifice performed according to the directions of scripture, as a matter of duty, by those who desire no reward, is of the nature of goodness.

The general tendency is to offer sacrifice with some purpose in mind, but here it is stated that sacrifice should be performed without any such desire. It should be done as a matter of duty. Take, for example, the performance of rituals in temples or in churches. Generally they are performed with the purpose of material benefit, but that is not in the mode of goodness. One should go to a temple or church as a matter of duty, offer respect to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and offer flowers and eatables without any purpose of obtaining material benefit. Everyone thinks that there is no use in going to the temple just to worship God. But worship for economic benefit is not recommended in the scriptural injunctions. One should go simply to offer respect to the Deity. That will place one in the mode of goodness. It is the duty of every civilized man to obey the injunctions of the scriptures and offer respect to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

— Bg 17.11+p



But the sacrifice performed for some material benefit, or for the sake of pride, O chief of the Bhāratas, you should know to be in the mode of passion.

Sometimes sacrifices and rituals are performed for elevation to the heavenly kingdom or for some material benefits in this world. Such sacrifices or ritualistic performances are considered to be in the mode of passion.

— Bg 17.12+p



Any sacrifice performed without regard for the directions of scripture, without distribution of *prasādam* [spiritual food], without chanting of Vedic hymns and remunerations to the priests, and without faith is considered to be in the mode of ignorance.

Faith in the mode of darkness or ignorance is actually faithlessness. Sometimes people worship some demigod just to make money and then spend the money for recreation, ignoring the scriptural injunctions. Such ceremonial shows of religiosity are not accepted as genuine. They are all in the mode of darkness; they produce a demoniac mentality and do not benefit human society.

— Bg 17.13+p