

From Sri Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir

Date: February 11, 2015

Speaker: HG Vaisesika Das

Verse: SB 6.4.5

drumebhyah krudhyamanas te tapo-dipita-manyavah

mukhato vayum agnim ca sasrjus tad-didhaksaya

TRANSLATION: Because of having undergone long austerities in the water, the Pracetas were very angry at the trees. Desiring to burn them to ashes, they generated wind and fire from their mouths.

PURPORT: Here the word tapo-dipita-manyavah indicates that persons who have undergone severe austerity (tapasya) are endowed with great mystic power, as evinced by the Pracetas, who created fire and wind from their mouths. Although devotees undergo severe tapasya, however, they are vimanyavah, sadhavah, which means that they are never angry. They are always decorated with good qualities. Bhagavatam (3.25.21) states:

titiksavah karunikah suhrdah sarva-dehinam

ajata-satravah santah sadhavah sadhu-bhusanah

A sadhu, a devotee, is never angry. Actually the real feature of devotees who undergo tapasya, austerity, is forgiveness. Although a Vaisnava has sufficient power in tapasya, he does not become angry when put into difficulty. If one undergoes tapasya but does not become a Vaisnava, however, one does not develop good qualities. For example, Hiranyakasipu and Ravana also performed great austerities, but they did so to demonstrate their demoniac tendencies. Vaisnavas must meet many opponents while preaching the glories of the Lord, but Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommends that they not become angry while preaching. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu has given this formula: trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna/ amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih [Cc. adi 17.31]. "One should chant the holy

name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly." Those engaged in preaching the glories of the Lord should be humbler than grass and more tolerant than a tree; then they can preach the glories of the Lord without difficulty.

HG Vaisesika Das: (Pranama Mantras)

Here the Pracetas have performed severe austerities for thousands of years within the water. After emerging from the water, they became angry at the trees that have taken over the Earth planet. Out of anger, and by the power of their austerities, they began to burn the trees. We find a few verses hence that Soma comes to intervene and stop the Pracetas from burning the trees. He tells them that they should see that they are actually related to the trees and that the trees are also divine beings that come from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

There is a way in which to perform tapasya in order to control the senses. It is a kind of combat between the practitioner and the desires and emotions within. But after all, we are sentient beings, which means we have emotions and we have desires. Therefore, the abject denial of desires and emotions can make the heart hard. From a hard heart, anger may arise. Therefore, we as Vaisnavas, perform yukta vairagya. That is, we perform austerities by rejecting anything that cannot be used in the service of Krishna.

In the prosecution of the Krishna Consciousness movement, practically everything can be used in the service of Krishna. Srila Prabhupada states in this verse about the kinds of austerities devotees perform. The result of those austerities is that their hearts become more forgiving. There are different qualifications for taking to various paths to enlightenment.

In the eleventh canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam, Krishna tells Uddhava that there are three paths - jnana, karma, and bhakti. He says that those who are nirvinna, who are disgusted with the material world, take to the path of jnana. Those who are anirvinna, which means that they are not disgusted at all with the material world, they take to the path of karma. But those who are yad drchaya mad-katha jata, they have awakened their faith by hearing about Me, Krishna says. They are neither disgusted with the material world, nor are they attracted to it, and are qualified to take to the path of bhakti.

In the process of bhakti, specifically following in the footsteps of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, our mood is giving. When we give Krishna Consciousness to others, our heart grows larger. In the attempt to give Krishna Consciousness to those who may not be fully interested, we also grow. One's heart becomes refined. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said that the spiritual body is nourished by spiritual blood. In the process of teaching Krishna Consciousness to others, one will be opposed, misunderstood, and neglected.

When people come up to me now and say, "How are you doing?" I'll say, "I'm misunderstood, opposed, and neglected. How are you?"

One who desires to fulfill the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to communicate Krishna Consciousness to others, may at first be misunderstood. But with a sincere desire, one refines one's vocabulary and one's message so that it may be understood by those who he or she is speaking to. When one is opposed, one becomes stronger. It is in the tension of opposition that we actually grow. As we go from one person to the next introducing Krishna Consciousness, we will learn how to present it in the face of opposition.

In my service of book distribution, I often met people who told me something that I didn't know how to answer. They say, "I'm all right. I'm good." How does one answer this opposition? So I asked a superior authority, Vijaya Prabhu, the sankirtana minister. I said, "When people say, 'I'm all right, I'm good.' what do you say?" He said, "I know you're good. You can always be better, right?"

When one is neglected, one learns to be *vimanyava*, without false ego, prestige. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says *amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa ksantir arjavam*. He begins enumerating the path of knowledge by saying that one must be without false prestige. In the fifteenth chapter of Bhagavad Gita Krishna says *nirmana-moha jita-sanga-dosa*. He says one must be without this false prestige.

In America we have a saying, "You're the man." Or sometimes when people are very conceded, like great athletes, they'll say, "I'm the man." *Nirmana* means don't be the man.

I was once distributing books in San Francisco. In a very difficult place along the downtown strip. I approached one man and he walked by me like I didn't exist. It wasn't that he said no or was rude to me. He just acted like I didn't exist. Complete neglect. I actually felt it very deeply. At first my feelings were hurt. Then I looked down to see if I actually existed. In justifying what had happened, I grew stronger thinking that I have no right to be recognized when I approach people. They have every right to have their privacy.

One also sees miracles when one approaches people to give them Krishna Consciousness. These miracles sustain the heart of the bhakta. Every living entity in this world is a miracle. *Ashcharya vat pashyati kaschit enam*. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says that the soul is amazing. And throughout his writings, Srila Prabhupada commonly uses the word *tabernacle* when he describes the body of the living entity. This word *tabernacle* is a biblical word. Originally it comes from Latin. It means tent, a temporary dwelling.

However, in the religious sense it's meant to house the holiest of all holy documents and articles. Tablets that contain the teachings of Moses, for instance. Mormons, Catholics, Jews, they all have tabernacles, movable shrines. Now think of the point of view of Srila Prabhupada when he translates the word *dehe*, meaning the physical body, into the word tabernacle. It means that he's seeing everybody as a shrine which is holding the holiest of all holy within. Therefore, one who participates in the austerity of spreading Krishna Consciousness, comes in contact regularly with the divine within everyone, and sees that although they may be overcome by the spell of the modes of material nature, by the sound of the mahamantra, or by reading the literary kirtan in books, they may be awakened. Sometimes even immediately. It is in using everything to connect these living entities with Krishna, that we perform our greatest tapasya.

Once in Tokyo, I was participating in a nagar harinam sankirtan party. We distributed books and sang the holy name in public. I noticed that we had stopped right next to a butcher shop. As we chanted outside, I saw that someone came to the window and looked outside. A couple of minutes later someone came out and stood right in front of the harinam sankirtan. I thought that maybe he wants us to stop. But he asked if we had any literature. I gave him an "Easy Journey to Other Planets." He went back in the butcher shop. I wondered what he was doing in there. I went in and looked and he was sitting behind the counter reading this "Easy Journey to Other Planets." I was amazed. That from any environment, a soul can become attracted to Krishna.

In this purport Srila Prabhupada says that our austerity must make our heart soft. We must become more forgiving. What does it mean to be forgiving? There are three ways of seeing people. One way is according to their past. This is the most conservative. Such and such has sinned in the past therefore they are not qualified. Someone more liberal might look at someone only in the present. They may say to forget the past. What is he doing now? But the most liberal person sees the future potential of the living entity. Those who know the miracle of distributing the holy name and the literary kirtan of the holy name written down on pages to people all over the world believe in the power of this literature and the names of God. Therefore they become forgiving of what has been done in the past or

even what they are doing right now.

Sukadeva Goswami says kirata, to believe it that anyone from any section of society, even the most degraded, can come to the topmost position because of the power of Lord Vishnu that comes through his devotees.

Now we will take reflections. Reflections mean one thing that you heard that stuck in your mind. One thing that if you walk out of this building and someone grabs you by the arm and asks, "What

was that guy talking about in there?” One thing. Dravida Prabhu. Now we need someone very expert at running the microphone because we’re running out of time and the mobile microphone which is somewhere in this building, must manifest now. Please. And until it does and a fast runner passes it around, I’ll repeat. Please go ahead.

Dravida Das: What stuck out in my mind was your reaction when someone neglected you; how for a moment you felt that you had to check with yourself to see if you really existed. But that you got through that and you tolerated it and when on distributing. I got from that that they didn’t say no. They weren’t rude. They didn’t even recognize your existence. I inferred from that that the other reactions would be easier to tolerate. But being totally neglected is the most difficult. Then I thought that Srila Prabhupada had to go through so much of that also. But he persevered. I see you carrying on that position to continue even though you were being neglected.

Vaisesika Das: Thank you Dravida Prabhu. Just one follow up comment. We are experimenting with our consciousness as we go through this life, under the guidance of Bhagavad Gita and the great acharyas. What other lesson is there in neglect? What is it that I’m neglecting Krishna? That inattention actually hurts when you’re speaking with someone else you divert your attention even for half a second. It makes a difference and it hurts the exchange.

Following the theme I brought up about cid-rakta, cit-sarira that is that you get spiritual blood for your spiritual body by being opposed, neglected, and misunderstood. In Bhagavad Gita Krishna says

atmaupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati yo 'rjuna
sukham va yadi va dukkham sa yogi paramo matah

The supreme yogi, the highest yogi, is one who has empathy for others happiness and distress. They feel for others. They actually hurt when others hurt.

One of the great lessons of the material world is sensitivity training. The question is always, “Well, how do you like it?” The devotee has a mantra. I learned this mantra recently and I’m going to pass it on to you. It will change your life forever if you use this mantra. Should I say what it is? “I live to be corrected.” Everyone please repeat. Now the next time you have an argument with your spouse or significant other, try this mantra and see how it works. The point is that being misunderstood, opposed, and neglected sensitizes us to how it feels when we do to others. It makes us more refined in our practice of devotional service.

Prahladananda Swami: I was reflecting on how you said that after your reflection when he neglected you, you thought how he has his right to privacy. The very fact that Krishna gives everyone free will is very significant. Mostly we think that we are the doer and that everyone should respond as we demand or as we desire. But Krishna is actually the doer. He's manifesting the whole creation. Although we have a desire, and it may be a sincere desire, to help the person, even to give them the highest benediction, we have to appreciate that Krishna gives everyone free will. We should also allow others free will and not become overly involved in the creation to the point that we think everything should go on to make us happy rather than simply do our service to Guru and Gauranga. It was beautiful.

Thank you very much.

Vaisesika Das: In that regard, I'd like to enter the following passage into evidence. From the Caitanya Caritamrita, Adi Lila, Chapter 7, text 99. Sri Caitanya has met the Mayavadi Sannyasis at Benares. In doing so, he took a very humble role sitting in the lowest place possible amidst all the other sannyasis. He was very unaggressive in his approach. In that regard, Srila Prabhupada writes the following:

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, however, as a preacher, turned the minds of the Mayavadi sannyasis. They were melted by the sweet words of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and thus became friendly and spoke to Him also in sweet words. Similarly, all preachers will have to meet opponents, but they should not make them more inimical. They are already enemies, and if we talk with them harshly or impolitely their enmity will merely increase. CC, Adi Lila, 7.99

Devotee: Hare Krishna. Thank you, Prabhu. There were many things that you spoke about that inspired me and that I'll take away, including the ones that you were just discussing about neglect and treating people with indifference. What I'll take away in particular is that when you how every time you approach a person to deliver Krishna Consciousness, a miracle happens.

Vaisesika Das: Thank you very much.

Badrinarayana Swami: Actually, I appreciate many things. I appreciated the mantra you gave us. Now I was using a different mantra and getting a different response, so I'm glad you cleared it up for me. Would you like to know the mantra that I've been using, unsuccessfully? "I live to correct others!" It's been a real disaster.

Naveen: Hare Krishna. You spoke about forgiveness. On sankirtan we are fortunate because we are forced to accommodate people. In our own sanga, personally speaking, I am less accommodating than when I'm on the street. The expectations are more. Especially towards seniors, one has very high expectations. What is the cause of this and how can I overcome this?

Vaisesika Das: Sankirtan is holistic. It's not meant only for when we go out. Our mood of accommodation, communication, and giving must start within our own circle.

Therefore, Srila Prabhupada says that our organization spreads by giving. Giving grows. It's the best occupation that you can get. Don't try and see what you can get or give from the world or others, but see what you can give them. Changing that one perspective changes the world immediately. If we have that wherever we live, then we can export it externally. Otherwise it becomes artificial. We can utilize everything in the service of spreading Krishna Consciousness and tax our brains to see how to engage as many people as possible is the best tapasya.

I will end with a story that touched me, personally. In San Francisco, I went with a group of devotees to chant Hare Krishna and distribute books and prasadam downtown. It was the most busy day of the year, called Black Friday. If anyone's heard of Black Friday, please say Haribol.

In a crowd of people coming down the street who were watching the Harinam Sankirtan, I saw a couple, a young man and a young woman together. They were dressed like the hippies of old. As soon as they saw the Sankirtan party they stopped, as if mesmerized. They just stared and did not move.

I went over and introduced them to the Bhagavad Gita. They were so interested that they sat down right on the sidewalk in the middle of the whole crowd. They began to go through the Bhagavad Gita. I suggested at one point that they keep the book and asked if they could give a donation. When someone gives some hard earned money in return for a book, it qualifies them to read the book.

They searched up and down the many pockets that they had in their clothes. They couldn't find any money at all. The man pulled out a blue cigarette lighter and he looked at me and said, "You don't want this." I said, "Yes I do, give it to me." It turned out that it was their most valuable possession. They needed it to.

I realized how important it was about a half an hour later when some of their friends came up to me. They said, "My friends are over there but they sent us over here because we need a light." But it made me realize that they had given up something very important to them.

So I took that blue lighter home. And I cleaned it more than I've ever cleaned any item before. I keep it with my puja paraphernalia. Every day when I light a ghee wick or an incense to offer to the Saligram or to Giriraja, I think of that couple. I pray that their service will be accepted.

So all over the world we have opportunity to see how we can engage everyone, including ourselves first, in this process of Krishna Consciousness. If we keep this mantra on our lips, we will be open to every circumstance. Every opportunity. I live to be corrected.

Gaura Premanande Haribol!