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Topic: Dhyana Yoga, Bhagavad Gita Ch.6

Verse: Text 17

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*yuktāhāra-vihārasya
yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya
yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā*

(BG 6.17)

TRANSLATION: He who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system.

Here in this sixth chapter Lord Krishna is describing meditation and the need for regulation in our activities. Without regulating the activities it becomes very difficult to control the senses. **In every Spiritual Practice there has to be control of the senses.** The particular sense activity Lord Krishna talks about is eating. In the previous verse Lord

Krishna had also spoken about eating mentioning that a Yogi should not eat too much, but that they should also not eat too little. There has to be regulation in eating. **Srila Prabhupada explains this by saying, “a devotee will not eat anything that is not Krishna prasadam”.** Neither Lord Krishna nor Prabhupada said that one should eat only 2 meals or that one should not eat after 6 o’ clock. At times, people take a vow that they will only accept 8 mouthfuls of food. Some people may even think about eating less than that. However, **Lord Krishna does not say anything like that. He says don’t eat too much, don’t eat too little and be regulated in eating. According to Prabhupada, regulation means to eat only Krishna prasadam.** In the purport, **Prabhupada also talks about people like Haridas Thakur and Rupa Gosvami who were eating very little. They were so busy chanting and serving Krishna that they forgot about eating.** In a similar manner, we also become so busy when there are big festivals, like the upcoming Janmastami that we forget about eating. Devotees are so busy chanting, dancing and doing kirtana that sometimes they forget to eat. We should be careful not to forget to eat and we should try to stay regulated.

We are not only vegetarian, but we prefer to eat food that has been offered to Lord Krishna. You can eat 1 meal, 3 meals or even 5 meals a day, but be regulated and don't eat too much or too little. How do we know that we have eaten too much or too little? We will know because we will fall sick and diseased. Regulations not only apply to eating, but to the other activities also. **Lord Krishna mentions sleeping-we should not sleep too much or too little. Srila Prabhupada recommends we sleep 6 hours a day and the rest of the time should be used in service of Krishna.** We don't want to spend the whole day sleeping and if we do so, that means we are sick. When we are sick, we can take more rest, but a person with proper health will not want to sleep for more than 6 to 7 hours a day. **Prabhupada explains that sleeping is like death because when we sleep it is very difficult to remember Krishna.** In our sleep we will have many dreams, every night. Doctors and psychiatrists say that on average people have up to 30 dreams in a night. A devotee should take care to sleep only as much as is sufficient to keep the body healthy.

Next are the activities of recreation and work, which also need to be regulated. A devotee is very careful to make proper use of his time. He is careful in ensuring that time is not wasted. Canakya Pandit, a famous

moralist from India says time is like **gold**. We should not waste a moment of our time. **In China they also say the same thing: You can buy an inch of gold, but you cannot buy an inch of time.** Time is very valuable to a devotee. Time is known as Kala, which is Krishna. In the 11th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita Krishna shows the universal form, in which He shows His form of time. Then **Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: “I am time”**. Time is one of the many features of Lord Krishna. That is why time is something that we are eager to regulate. To keep regulated devotees take part in the morning and evening programs. In this way, the devotees regulate their activities. One may say that since I don't live in the temple, how can I be regulated? Then it is better that we come and live in the temple (Laughs). If we cannot get regulated living outside the temple, then come and live in the temple and get regulated. It does not matter if we are in the temple or outside the temple but we have to be regulated in our activities.

Krishna is describing meditation, which is also important for devotees. Devotees may say that they are not doing Yoga and do not need meditation. They may claim that bhakti Yoga is service to Lord Krishna and does not require us to meditate. However even while doing Bhakti Yoga we need to control our senses. We have to use our senses in the

service of Krishna. When we are very regulated in our activities then it is easier to think of Krishna. Now people are all watching the football matches every night, the World Cup, so they stay up all night and have a party. In Thailand also it is a major event. Everywhere in Thailand people watch the football matches, thus are not going to be regulated. They are going to be awake all night. When we are not regulated the mind is very disturbed, it will not be peaceful. We will be thinking what will I do now, what should I eat now. When we are not regulated we eat all varieties of food and this is not healthy.

When we sleep during the day, we will not be able to sleep in the night. Medical science says that one has the best sleep in the night. It is said that 1 hour of sleep before midnight is equal to 2 hours of sleep after midnight. Those people who know the science sleep early in the evening and wake up early in the morning. The early morning is the best time for spiritual practice. It is a very auspicious time of the day, it is the time of the mode of goodness. A devotee of Krishna is careful to take advantage of that auspicious time of the day. **When we are regulated in all of these activities then Krishna says that we will be free from the pains of material life.**

Let every devotee experience this. When we follow this process, we feel relief from all stress. **Krishna is recommending us to adapt to regulated life for our material and spiritual benefit.** A devotee does not neglect the material body. He takes care of the body, a devotee regulates his body to make it Krishna conscious. We don't go here and there eating all kinds of food. We will eat only food which has been offered to Krishna. We sleep to keep the body healthy so that it can be used to serve Krishna.

Devotees also work or they may do business. We see Krishna telling Arjuna that he should work. Arjuna wanted to give up work but Krishna told Arjuna "no, you should work." If there is all work and no recreation then that is also not good. It is not a healthy life style. There has to be some time for work and some time for recreation. Today, we are having some recreational activities in this centre by chanting, dancing and taking Prasadam. Recreation does not mean we have to go to the football match. Recreation should be in Krishna Consciousness, such activities as Hari Nama Sankirtan, where we are on the streets chanting and distributing books. We are engaged in Krishna Conscious activities while doing this. This is regulation; this is how we control the mind and the senses.

One who does Bhakti Yoga will also have the qualities of an Astanga Yoga. On the yoga ladder, below Bhakti Yoga is the stage of Astanga yoga or Dhyana yoga. Krishna describes how the Astanga Yogi has to be regulated to practice Yoga. We also have to be regulated to control our senses. When we have regulated programs every day, we may think “oh, it is so boring. At the same place and same time, we do the same things every day.” Actually it is not boring, in fact it is very healthy. This regulation makes our mind peaceful.

We should understand why our life has to be regulated. People who don't know the importance may think that they want to do something different. Then when they do something different they end up doing something sinful. They forget all about Krishna. When we have a regulated program, we think and talk about Krishna.

There is a nice temple in Pune, India . There were 2 devotees who went from Taiwan to visit the temple there and they arrived at 2a.m. When they went there they thought there would be no one awake as it was so late. The devotees were surprised to see a couple of devotees chanting their rounds. In this temple they even have a class every day before mangal aarti, which is at 4.30a.m.

Brahma Muhurta means one and a half hours before sunrise. Devotees should wake up and take advantage of this auspicious time of the day.

In the summer, in the North of China the sun rises at 3 o'clock in the morning.

In Malaysia it is dark until 7a.m. so they have Mangal aarti at 5:15am, because the sun rises at about 6:45am.

In China, it is a bit tricky. Guangzhou (Gurudev speaking in Mandarin)

Q. A devotee is asking: it is difficult to regulate people to attend the class and come regularly, so what can we do about it, how can we regulate the people?

A. With new people we have to be very tolerant, very flexible. You can't expect very high standards with new people. If they have an interest in Krishna, we want to encourage them. We have to be willing to make sacrifices ourselves in order to preach to them. You don't expect too much from people in the beginning. Give them a chance to become devotees. You should be willing to go to them and give them Prasadam. Just like Prabhupada, he went to the Western world. Prabhupada did not expect very much, he did not push people to have high standards. He gave people time to become devotees, especially when you see that they want to become Krishna Conscious; they are sincere and want to know about Lord Krishna.

Q. Krishna Leela mataji is asking a question: about her situation as she is sometimes working in the morning and sometimes in the evening, so she is asking how to adjust?

A. Srila Prabhupada said eat Krishna prasadam. At all times you can adjust by honouring Krishna prasadam, at all times. When you are in the morning shift then come to temple in the evening and when you have an evening shift come to temple in the morning. Sometimes you have a day off, so at those times you have regulation but a different regulation. Make sure you do not waste time, use your time in a very Krishna conscious way. Chant to remember Krishna.