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[Kindly transcribed by Sheela Mataji, Singapore]

From Sri MayapurCandrodayaMandir!

Date: February 16, 2014

Verse: SrimadBhagavatam 5.5.18

Speaker: HH Sivarama Swami

Hare Krishna!

Welcome to all of the members of the ILS festival that is taking place. This a leadership seminar and I have been asked to give class on a theme that I am not so versed on. Not that I am versed on many things but not on leadership. And this was the verse that was given to us, a very well-known verse from the Fifth Canto. I remember when the Fifth Canto came out, this Fifth Chapter was one of the ones that the devotees were very fond of learning and memorizing.

So here Sukadeva or MaharajRsabhadeva is speaking in the following way to His sons:

gururnasasyātsva-janonasasyāt
pitānasasyājjananīnasāsyāt
daivamna tat syānnapatiś ca sasyān
namocayedyaḥ samupeta-mṛ tyum (SB 5.5.18)

Translation: One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother or a worshipable demigod.

And here is the purport by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada.

Purport: There are many spiritual masters, but Ṛṣ abhadeva advises that one should not become a spiritual master if he is unable to save his disciple from the path of birth and death. Unless one is a pure devotee of Kṛ ṣ ṇ a, he cannot save himself from the path of repeated birth and death. Tyaktvādehaṁpunarjanmanaitimāmeti so 'rjuna. One can stop birth and death only by returning home, back to Godhead. However, who can go back to Godhead unless he understands the Supreme Lord in truth? Janma karma ca me divyamevaṁyovettitattvataḥ .

We have many instances in history illustrating Ṛṣ abhadeva's instructions. Śukrācārya was rejected by Bali Mahārāja due to his inability to save Bali Mahārāja from the path of repeated birth and death. Śukrācārya was not a pure devotee, he was more or less inclined to fruitive activity, and he objected when Bali Mahārāja promised to give everything to Lord Viṣ ṇ u. Actually one is supposed to give everything to the Lord because everything belongs to the Lord. Consequently, the Supreme Lord advises in Bhagavad-gītā (9.27):

yatkaroṣ iyadaśnāsiyajjuhoṣ idadāsiyat
yattapasyasikaunteyatat kuruṣ va mad-arpaṇ am

“O son of Kuntī, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me.” This is bhakti. Unless one is devoted, he cannot give everything to the Supreme Lord. Unless one can do so, he cannot become a spiritual master, husband, father or mother. Similarly, the wives of the brāhmaṇas who were performing sacrifices gave up their relatives just to satisfy Kṛ ṣ ṇ a. This is an example of a wife rejecting a husband who cannot deliver her from the impending dangers of birth and death. Similarly, PrahādaMahārāja rejected his father, and BharataMahārāja rejected his mother (jananīnasāsyāt). The word daivam indicates a demigod or one who accepts worship from a dependent. Ordinarily, the spiritual master, husband, father, mother or superior relative accepts worship from an inferior relative, but here Ṛ ṣ abhadeva forbids this. First the father, spiritual master or husband must be able to release the dependent from repeated birth and death. If he cannot do this, he plunges himself into the ocean of reproachment for his unlawful activities. Everyone should be very responsible and take charge of his dependents just as a spiritual master takes charge of his disciple or a father takes charge of his son. All these responsibilities cannot be discharged honestly unless one can save the dependent from repeated birth and death.

[mangalacarana prayers]

HH Sivarama Swami: Hare Krishna. Here is the context and then we just keep in mind that the theme is meant to be about leadership and the qualities, responsibilities of leaders. This is a very appropriate and a very generic verse, generic in the sense that it talks about all levels of leadership, all levels of leaders. MaharajRsabhadeva and His sons are in Brahmavarta. And the Lord is giving instruction here and in the previous verses, He is emphasizing the futility of fruitive activities and the validity of devotional service is actually the only means of perfection. There are many wonderful verses and in the previous verse, I will just read, the Lord is describing the nature of a materialistic person. In other words that person who delivers, who deserves deliverance:

“Due to ignorance, the materialistic person does not know anything about his real self-interest, the auspicious path in life. He is simply bound to material enjoyment by lusty desires, and all his plans are made for this purpose. For temporary sense gratification, such a person creates a society of envy, and due to this mentality, he plunges into the ocean of suffering. Such a foolish person does not even know about this.” (SB 5.5.16)

“If someone is ignorant and addicted to the path of saṁsāra, how can one who is actually learned, merciful and advanced in spiritual knowledge engage him in fruitive activity and thus further entangle him in material existence? If a blind man is walking down the wrong path, how can a gentleman allow him to continue on his way to danger? How can he approve this method? No wise or kind man can allow this.” (SB 5.5.17)

And then...

“One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother or a worshipable demigod.” (SB 5.5.18)

I was just looking...I recognize over here, so I believe if I am correct that this is also a statement which is found in Manu-samhita. And here because this particular verse is placed in quotation marks and the other verses are not.

In any case the real bottom line is what leadership and guidance is about is being given here. Ultimately one must be able to make others Krishna conscious. If we cannot bring one to the path of devotional service which is the path that ends samsara, then one should not be any position of leadership which more or less means one should not do anything, one should not take any responsibility in this world because here it's not just about guru but it's about any leader, meaning for instance a political leader or a father or a husband or even the demigods. The demigods should give up their positions if they are not able to bring one to the path of perfection.

What does it mean to deliver a dependent? Here Srila Prabhupada in the purport explains that it means to give them devotional service. Similarly I looked up VisvanathaCakravartiThakura's comments and his is also is “unless one can give bhakti”. If someone cannot actually give bhakti, if one cannot give pure devotional service then one should not take the responsibility.

And Srila Prabhupada concludes here. He says. “All these responsibilities cannot be discharged honestly unless one can save the dependent.” And, “if he cannot do this, he plunges himself into the ocean of reproachment for his unlawful activities.”

That ocean of reproachment is termed in very simple language by Cakravarti Thakura as being sin. In other words it is a sin, it's a sin if one takes responsibility and yet one cannot fulfill responsibility to another.

CaitanyaMahaprabhu in a very general way has given the order, “āmāraājñāyaguru” (CC Madhya 7.128), that everyone should be guru, and here we see that regardless of what situation one takes up, what type of responsibility one adopts, whether it be a family responsibility, a social responsibility, a spiritual responsibility, more or less everybody is in the same category.

Of course it may be that they are being viewed differently or they have a different type of relationship but the bottom line is that the ultimate purpose and goal of life is to go back home, back to Godhead.

And those who take responsibility for someone else are meant to know this and have to facilitate that. They are meant to give the opportunity for others to take to the path of devotional service. So when CaitanyaMahaprabhu says āmāraājñāya which is a very weighty statement. He is saying “This is My order.” Throughout Bhagavad gita Krishna never gives an order. In fact He says, yathecchasitathākuru (Bg 18.63) “Do whatever you want to do.” But CaitanyaMahaprabhu is giving an order which means it's a very weighty instruction and He says, ‘It's My order that you become guru.’

And of course what is guru? Guru is someone who is giving devotional service, who is giving bhakti, who is planting bhakti-latā-bīja, who is planting that seed of devotional service. So brahmāṇḍabhramitewē are wandering throughout the universe, but as

Srila Prabhupada also points out the children who take birth in the family of devotees their wandering isn't coincidental that they are taking birth in the family of devotees, but it's actually in the same way as one comes in contact or is fortunate enough, guru-kr̥ṣṇa-prasādepāya, fortunate by Krishna's grace to come in contact with guru, similarly one comes in contact with a good parent, a good mother, a good father.

It's very interesting that Cakravarti Thakura says that if you become friend of someone just to be his friend but not because you are going to actually deliver or give them Krishna consciousness or exchange Krishna consciousness, he says then you are sinful. It's a good platform for friendship, obviously Krishna consciousness .

bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām̐nityam̐
tuṣ yanti ca ramanti ca (Bg 10.9)

Coincidentally this morning I was listening to Srila Prabhupada's conversation in Delhi 1973 and the latter part of the conversation was very interesting, it was all about Srila Prabhupada's days, pharmaceutical days when he was a pharmacist and he was speaking of himself in humorous terms. He was saying, "Yes, when Bengal Chemical offered me a job, I was very arrogant, I was very puffed up. I wanted my terms and when they didn't give me my terms, I wouldn't accept it."

But the beginning part, seems to be that Srila Prabhupada was displeased. He is displeased with what was transpiring over there at the temple because devotees were spending all day and all night maintaining the temple and he says " but if you are not coming together for satsang, if you are not chanting and hearing together, if you are not cultivating your own Krishna consciousness, he says then you are karmis. You are working hard but the consciousness will not be there, the right consciousness will not be there if actually the exchange is not based on Krishna consciousness and is not based on this principle, how to nurture each other'sbhakti-latā-bīja.

And it's sometimes something that one may observe that in our Krishna consciousness movement we do spend a lot of time preaching about how important it is to hear about Krishna and talk about Krishna and so on and yet we don't necessarily spend so much time hearing about Krishna and talking about Krishna.

Just before I came to India we had a leadership seminar for the Hungarian yatra, the leaders are about sixty, the senior devotees there in leadership positions. It was refreshing as we weren't talking about any problems or any management or any other issues, but the whole theme was how to become more faithful, more knowledgeable, more devoted to Srila Prabhupada, and Srila Prabhupada's instructions.

And that was three full days. On the first two days we had debates on topical issues based on Srila Prabhupada's teachings. Niranjana Swami Maharajawas also there. He was speaking with the English-speaking Hungarians; I was speaking with the Hungarian-speaking Hungarians.

And on the last day we sort of incorporated something which I learnt or at least heard of from KesavaBharati Swami Maharaja who in Bhaktivedanta Asrama, Govardhana. What they usually do during the month of Karttika is they spend about six hours a day just reading. Groups of devotees hear and chant together, they go systematically through certain books. They stop at a certain point. Devotees talk

and exchange, analyze a verse and then they go on like that, kathayantaś ca māṁnityam And they nurtured each other's Krishna consciousness and so we did the same thing for one day.

We took teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām from Bhagavad gita and we were just analyzing that verse. Actually someone else also very expert in this is Krishna Dharma and Cintamani Dhamain UK. We had a nice time sitting and discussing like that and it was very interesting for in the morning we never got past the Sanskrit, devotees were analyzing the Sanskrit and it was really quite amazing and it was very enlivening and in the afternoon we got to the word for word and we got as far as the translation and a little bit of Srila Prabhupada's purport.

But the feedback that I got from that was that this was worth more than so many other leadership seminars and so on, to go just deeply into Krishna's words, to go into Prabhupada's teachings and as Srila Prabhupada says to examine his books from all different angles of vision.

And of course it does not mean that leadership doesn't mean that one does not require training. We have many great examples of leaders. Of course our most immediate best example of leader is Srila Prabhupada himself. And for instance the Pandavas despite the fact that they were associates of the Lord, that they were already great personalities and they certainly were very Krishna conscious but still they went through so much training just to have to put that, how to get across Krishna consciousness in a most viable practical way.

Maharaj Yudhishtir was the king, and I can't remember who, I think Arjuna ended up being a treasurer after the war. They all took different roles, different responsibilities, but even while they were in the Himalayas before they actually came to Hastinapur they were in training and after that they were in training but the substance of the training is what it is they are actually communicating. We are not simply communicating systems, we are not just communicating words but these are actually vehicles for giving across the wonderful message of Bhagavad gita, man-manābhava mad-bhaktom ad-yājīmāṁ namaskuru—how to actually become pure devotees. And when one does that, then one becomes very glorious.

This is slight divergence. Just recently when I was in the UK and I was either giving class or I was speaking with Dhananjaya Prabhu our Godbrother. He recited one instance in Vrindavana when devotees were sitting there with Srila Prabhupada in his room and sort of out of the blue Prabhupada started saying, "You may all leave; the Presidents may fall down, the GBC's may fall down, the pujaris may fall down, the book distributors may. . . ."

And everyone was thinking, "What's going on? Where is this all leading to?" So Prabhupada said, "But the books are already out there and therefore. . ." I am not exactly quoting, "But the poison is already set, the damage has been done, and someone will come and they will start it again but I want all of you to take the glory. And I want you to get the recognition from Caitanya Mahaprabhu."

So it is a wonderful opportunity that Srila Prabhupada has actually given us and it's not that difficult a thing. As Srila Prabhupada would often say "Just repeat what you have heard". What we have heard here from Srimad-Bhagavatam, what we hear from Bhagavad-Gita, all of the wonderful teachings that Srila Prabhupada has given us, all in order to be better sanyasis, better parents, better gurus, or maybe we should start

with real sanyasis, real parents, real gurus and then once you are real then you can get better. So our intent is really to transmit that message of pure devotional service with which ultimately, namocayedyaḥ samupeta-mṛ tyum, you end the cycle of birth and death. Prabhupada says the only way you end it is by going home, back to Godhead.

And the purpose of I think our Leadership Sanga, the purpose was Srila Prabhupada wanted us to come here in Mayapur and chant together and hear together and glorify Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was to spend (?) in this amongst ourselves as friends, as acquaintances, as relatives, disciples, spiritual, whatever roles that we may have and when that becomes a very strong communal bond or as Srila Prabhupada, or in the previous verse it was stated in the same way as ignorant people create...very interesting, create a society of envy. And Srila Prabhupada in his last days was saying this is a perfect society, no envy, no party spirit, only one goal that is praising Krishna and going back home, back to Godhead.

Anyway I will stop there, if any other Vaisnavas would like to make any further comments or questions before we start our first day of the Leadership Sanga.

Jahnudvipa Das: what is the difference between the brahmana leader...and a ksatriya leader administers a project like building the new temple because it seems like to be a leader for the temple project is not the same as?? [unclear]

Sivarama Swami: The motive is the same. Why are we building this temple and those who are participating in that construction, what are we reminding them that, here we are building this adbhutamandir which will make millions of people Krishna conscious and certainly will become Krishna conscious by participating in that project. So I don't know whether the builders are necessarily in the category of ksatriyas, there may be so many things, they are Vaisnavas doing some particular role. but what is the underlying purpose of everything, anyābhilāṣ itā-śūnyam. So what is the anyābhilāṣ itā, what is the underlying purpose and if the underlying purpose is clear in whatever we do, whether I am cooking or I am cleaning the street, then namocayedyaḥ samupeta-mṛ tyum. And if we are being reminded of that then we are doing our duty in a position of responsibility.

Dravida Prabhu?

Dravida Das: Maharaja, thank you for a very enlivening class. You made one statement as you quoted, āmāraājñāyaguruhañātāra'eideśa, that this is an order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu and this is very significant and then you said that Krishna doesn't actually order in the Bhagavad gita, that He says yathecchasi tathākuru, but there are so many verses where He gives, man manabhava mad bhakto, so He seems to be giving an order and although Lord Caitanya is certainly using the word, He doesn't use the words ājñā in the Bhagavad-gita, but the implication is that the living entity can't also disobey that order. So how does Krishna not actually give orders in the Bhagavad-gita?

Maharaj: At least He is not saying I am ordering you but He certainly saying yes this is what you should do and of course He is giving alternative different things that you could do but ultimately, sarva-guhyatamam, this is the best thing to do, yathecchasi tathākuru, and then, I just wanted to emphasize the point that as Caitanya Mahaprabhu accompanies this instruction with a very. . . this is an order

which yes, you can choose to obey or disobey but recognize that this is no longer optional. This is a very strong emphatic statement by the Lord.

And so Prabhupada would say, yes saving your own country what does it mean, save your family, save your village? Prabhupada would say save your family. So guru actually means father is guru, mother is guru, ultimately brothers and sisters then become guru by ?, so it's a very all-encompassing order especially of course for those who have come to Krishna consciousness.

Prahladanandana Swami Maharaja?

Prahladanandana Swami :I think one of the differences is that in Bhagavad-gita Krishna gives so many alternatives through karma-yoga, jnana-yoga, astanga-yoga and then He says at the end you should give this all up and surrender to Me. But still the other options are there. But when Caitanya Mahaprabhu comes in this age there is no other alternative but you chant Hare Krishna and spread the sankirtana movement. Anything else won't work in this age.

Maharaja: Thank you. This gentlemen over here.

Devotee: Hare Krishna, Maharaja. As it is mentioned that, as you mentioned in your class that it is sinful if one is unable to deliver his dependents and if he takes the position of leadership but we see examples of how even despite having qualified leader, the dependents may choose not to practice bhakti. Even sometimes leaders all they can do is just show the path, I mean, they are not actively giving much siksa, or anything like that but still the dependents become serious on the path of bhakti, go back to Godhead. So how much level of purity or to what degree should the leader be able to deliver the dependents? I mean is it enough if we just show the path or should he be also in a certain stage where he can himself deliver the dependents. What does it mean?

Sivarama Swami: The higher stage the better, but since the instruction is general and for everyone the most elevated that someone is. . . I will just read a previous verse then at least the more depth, and the more degree to which he can actually deliver or guide someone on the path of devotional service.

Here in the tenth verse when Lord Rsabhadeva is speaking He says, haṁseguraumayi, which Srila Prabhupada translates in the following way, "O My sons, you should accept a highly elevated paramahansa, a spiritually advanced spiritual master."

This is the best, this is the general rule of thumb and why? Because, as Prabhupada explains in the Upadesamrta, then he can guide the disciple all the way, through all stages of devotional service. That is already guaranteed. He is already in the paramhansa stage, so he guides the disciple to the paramhansa stage. Nonetheless whatever platform one may be on, still the duty is to repeat that same teachings that we have received and by doing that we are at least fulfilling our duty wherever we are. So, sthānesthitāḥ śruti-gatāḥ, generally Srila Prabhupada translated this as, "You don't have to go anywhere, just hear about Krishna and engage others in hearing about Krishna."

Similarly sthitāḥ, it's your particular position, whatever your spiritual position may be, at least make sure that you understand what the basic principles of Krishna consciousness are so that you can communicate them clearly to others.

This note says 8.45 am. Kaunteya Prabhu told me we could go later. Any other devotees would like to contribute.

Devotee: [inaudible].

Sivarama Swami: I don't think you heard that because its not so loud but there's the responsibility here, the emphasis we've been placing on the leader on the person who is accepting responsibility for some one else but what about those who are the dependents? There is also an onus on them. Obviously, specially if you have got a good leader and you neglect to follow that good leader, well, yathecchasi tathākuru, but ultimately then you become subject to the laws of material nature and you will have to take the reaction for that and of course according to the level of commitment that you have already made.

For instance once we make commitment to the disciplic succession through initiation that's one type of thing, when we take from someone, when we also take from a superior that taking is also a type of commitment. When a child takes from their parents being raised and maintained, being fed and clothed and housed and so many other things, there is an obligation that comes with a dependent. Same thing if a citizen is also following the king, they also have a responsibility.

And quite some months ago I read the Mahabharata, its very interesting how Yudhishthira Maharaja even when he was leaving after they lost the gambling match, the citizens wanted to revolt. First it was outrageous what Duryodhana had done and it was more outrageous that Dhritarashtra allowed such a thing to even take place.

And Yudhishthira Maharaja says, "No, if you love me then you will follow the king because the primary duty of the citizens is to follow the king."

This king wasn't much of a king worth following. ut necessarily the principle was also there and therefore Yudhishthira Maharaja was emphasizing that point. And of course in due course of time those citizens got a king worthy of following which was Yudhishthira Maharaja.

Shall we close there and let everyone take prasadam and prepare for the Sanga?
Thank you so much. Hare Krishna!