

Losing the Mind



by Tirtha dasa



The cover 1895 lithograph titled *Scream* by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944) is said by some to symbolize the human species taken by an attack of existential angst. The author explains within these pages that losing the mind is actually the normal condition for the soul devoid of Krsna Consciousness, and peace and happiness come from chanting Hare Krishna.

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Dedicated to the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and his disciples, with special mention for H. H. Radhanath Swami, H. H. Bhakti-Tirtha Swami, Candramauli Swami, and Malati Devi Dasi. Thanks also to Syama-Priya devi-dasi, Lokavarnottama dasa, Muktadesa dasa, and Hrishikesh dasa for production assistance.



Chapter One: Prisoner of Mind

It is said that man proposes and God disposes. As insignificant living entities we are completely helpless in all respects, although due to the powerful illusory potency of the material energy we mistakenly think that we are not only the lords of all we survey, but that we are also in complete control. This great error of consciousness is due to our forgetfulness of God, who in reality, is the controller and proprietor of all that is. Therefore when we mistakenly imagine we can control or possess anything around us, we are in fact suffering from a hallucination. In such a state of consciousness, we should consider ourselves as being more or less crazy.

The Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.3.39) gives this description of the conditioned living being's situation, "The spirit soul is born in many species of life within the material world. Some species are born from eggs, others from embryos, others from the seeds of plants and trees, and others from perspiration. But in all species of life the prana, or vital air, remains unchanging and follows the spirit soul from one body to another. Similarly, the spirit soul is eternally the same despite its material condition of life. We have practical experience of this. When we are absorbed in deep sleep without dreaming, the material senses become inactive, and even the mind and false ego are merged into a dormant condition. But although the senses, mind and false ego are inactive, one remembers upon waking that he, the soul, was peacefully sleeping."

In their purport, Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that when a living entity is awake the material senses and mind are constantly active. Similarly, when one is sleeping the false ego recollects one's waking experiences, and thus one experiences dreams or fragments of dreams while sleeping. But in the state of prasupti, or deep sleep, both the mind and the senses become inactive, and the false ego does not recall previous experiences or desires. The subtle mind and false ego are called linga-sarira, or the subtle material body. This linga-sarira is experienced in the form of temporary material designations such as "I am a rich man,"

"I am a strong man," "I am black," "I am white," "I am American," "I am Chinese." The sum total of one's illusory conceptions of oneself is called ahankara, or false ego. And due to this illusory conception of life the living entity transmigrates from one species of life to another, as clearly explained in Bhagavad-gita. The spirit soul, however, does not change its constitutional position of eternity, knowledge and bliss, although the soul may temporarily forget this position. To cite an analogous situation, if one dreams at night that he is walking in the forest, such a dream does not change one's actual position of lying in bed within his apartment.

The eternal spirit soul by constitution is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, whereas the material body is temporary, based in ignorance and the resting place of misery. Therefore, the spirit soul and the material body hold completely different characteristics and are separate entities. Accordingly, when we identify ourselves as being the external material designation of the body, comprised of bones, skin and blood, such misidentification is called false ego. While we may be conscious of the body, we are not the external body itself. The body is illuminated by consciousness, which is the energy, or symptom, of the spirit soul. It is due to the presence of the spirit soul that our consciousness pervades the entire length and breadth of the material bodies we possess. Maya, the Supreme Lord's external energy, creates the entire cosmic manifestation along with supplying the ingredients for our temporary material bodies. Each particular material body is awarded to the forgetful living entity according to his past pious and sinful deeds.

The Vedic system of varnasrama-dharma, composed of the four social or occupational orders and four spiritual orders of life, is designed to give progressive human beings a natural way to disentangle themselves from the clutches of the powerful material energy, in a gradual, step by step fashion. Accordingly, at the beginning of one's school life at a young age there is training as a brahmachari, thereby establishing the basis of sense control and restraint. Following this, should one so desire, there is householder life, wherein one becomes married and raises a family according to religious principles. Later, as one approaches mid-life, he is encouraged to retire from all worldly affairs, and may, along with

his wife, travel to holy pilgrimage sites and render service in a mood of greater renunciation. In this stage of life one retires from all further sensual activities, concentrating solely on service to guru, Krsna and the Vaisnavas. Finally, one accepts a mood of complete renunciation from all worldly matters and severs all family ties, striking out alone into the world to preach as a traveling mendicant or sannyasi. In this final stage of life one resolves to fully dedicate his body, mind and words to the service of the Supreme Lord.

Although practically unheard of in the western countries, the process of consciously cultivating and developing such a mood of complete detachment from material enjoyment and fully concentrating one's energies on serving the mission of guru and Krsna, is a manifestation of one's greater love for The Supreme Lord and all His energies, including His unlimited part and parcel spirit souls.

It may also be seen that while in the course of developing one's detachment from this material world, we are given pointed lessons in developing the qualities of tolerance, forgiveness and humility. To become completely freed from our longstanding material contamination we may endure criticism and ridicule from persons who are ignorant to our good intentions.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.5.15) Srila Prabhupada explains, "...The human beings, by long material association, life after life, have a natural inclination, by practice, to endeavor to lord it over material energy. They have no sense of the responsibility of human life. This human form of life is a chance to get out of the clutches of illusory matter. The Vedas are meant for going back to Godhead, going back home. To revolve in the cycle of transmigration in a series of lives numbering 8,400,000 is an imprisoned life for the condemned conditioned souls. The human form of life is a chance to get out of this imprisoned life, and as such the only occupation of the human being is to reestablish his lost relationship with God...In the Vedas it is distinctly said that the perfection of life is never to be attained either by voluminous work, or by accumulation of wealth or even by increasing the population. The materialistic men do not care to listen to such

injunctions. According to them, the so-called renounced order of life is meant for those who are unable to earn their livelihood because of some corporeal defects, or for persons who have failed to achieve prosperity in family life."

In the Eleventh Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.23) we find the story known as the Song of the Avanti Brahmana. "Sri Krsna said: O disciple of Brhaspati, there is virtually no saintly man in this world capable of resettling his own mind after it has been disturbed by the insulting words of uncivilized men." In commenting on this verse, Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that in the modern age there is widespread propaganda ridiculing the path of spiritual realization, and thus even saintly devotees are disturbed to see the progress of human society being obstructed. Still, a devotee of the Lord must tolerate any personal insult, though he cannot tolerate offense against the Lord Himself or the Lord's pure devotee.

"Sharp arrows which pierce one's chest and reach the heart do not cause as much suffering as the arrows of harsh, insulting words that become lodged within the heart when spoken by uncivilized men. My dear Uddhava, in this regard a most pious story is told, and I shall now describe it to you. Please listen with careful attention. Once a certain sannyasi was insulted in many ways by impious men. However, with determination he remembered that he was suffering the fruit of his own previous karma. I will narrate to you his story and that which he spoke." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura comments as follows. "Often those who give up the materialistic path and devote themselves to renunciation are attacked by impious persons. This analysis, however, is superficial, since the punishment is actually the cumulative result of one's past karma. Some renunciants show lack of tolerance when presented with the remnants of their previous sins and thus are forced to enter again onto the path of impious life. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore instructs that one should become as tolerant as a tree. If a neophyte on the path of devotional service to the Lord's pure devotees is attacked by envious persons, he must accept it as a consequence of his previous fruitive activities. One should be intelligent and avoid future unhappiness by rejecting the ethic of an eye for an eye, a tooth for

a tooth. If one refuses to enter into enmity with envious men, they will automatically leave him alone."

By the process of hearing and chanting the Lord's holy names, pastimes and uncommon activities in the association of devotees, we factually integrate ourselves into the personal association and unlimited potency of Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, our success is predicated upon the successful termination of our material attachments, which give rise to all forms of conditional suffering. To the degree that we are able to become freed from the influence of our material conditioning or material contamination, to that extent we are able to enter into the spiritually satisfying culture of Krsna consciousness. Therefore, our association is of critical importance, for it is only in the association of like-minded devotees that we are able to understand the science of Krsna consciousness and become free from all material designations.

On the importance of sadhu-sanga, or devotee association, His Holiness Bhakti Tirtha Swami comments (Reflections on Sacred Teachings, Volume Four, Introduction), "Sadhu-sanga, or the association of devotees, can stimulate and encourage us, thus enabling us to become very animated in our devotional service. However, it can also become discouraging if we allow it to deteriorate into a low-trust culture. Quality association is indispensable. If we do not have sufficient support, then inevitably we will get weaker and weaker. We are all locked into one another's consciousness much more than we normally consider. If we experience very exhilarated Krsna consciousness, our mood automatically spills over and touches someone else's psyche. It encourages others, assisting them in watering their own devotional creepers. Our firm Krsna consciousness will give others shelter and protection. But if our minds are captured with overwhelming doubts, fears, anxieties, and the enemies of the mind—namely kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (illusion), mada (madness), and matsarya (envy)—then that consciousness will seep through and contaminate others."

Therefore it is said that one's mind can either become his greatest friend or enemy, depending on our consciousness. If we

learn the art of controlling the mind with higher intelligence, we can remain safe from the insatiable demands of the mind and senses. The Bhagavad-gita (3.42) gives this explanation: "The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he (the soul) is even higher than the intelligence." Srila Prabhupada explains, "The senses are different outlets for the activities of lust. Lust is reserved within the body, but it is given vent through the senses. Therefore, the senses are superior to the body as a whole. These outlets are not in use when there is superior consciousness, or Krsna consciousness. In Krsna consciousness the soul makes direct connection with the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore the hierarchy of bodily functions, as described here, ultimately ends in the Supreme Soul. Bodily action means the functions of the senses, and stopping the senses means stopping all bodily actions. But since the mind is active, then even though the body may be silent and at rest, the mind will act—as it does during dreaming. But above the mind is the determination of the intelligence, and above the intelligence is the soul proper. If, therefore, the soul is directly engaged with the Supreme, naturally all other subordinates, namely the intelligence, mind and senses, will be automatically engaged. In the Katha Upanisad there is a similar passage, in which it is said that the objects of sense gratification are superior to the senses, and mind is superior to the sense objects. If, therefore, the mind is directly engaged in the service of the Lord constantly, then there is no chance that the senses will become engaged in other ways. This mental attitude has already been explained. *Param drstva nivartate*. If the mind is engaged in the transcendental service of the Lord, there is no chance of its being engaged in lower propensities. In the Katha Upanisad the soul has been described as *mahan*, the great. Therefore the soul is above all—namely, the sense objects, the senses, the mind and the intelligence. Therefore, directly understanding the constitutional position of the soul is the solution of the whole problem.

"With intelligence one has to seek out the constitutional position of the soul and then engage the mind always in Krsna consciousness. That solves the whole problem. A neophyte spiritualist is generally advised to keep aloof from the objects of

the senses. But aside from that, one has to strengthen the mind by use of intelligence. If by intelligence one engages one's mind in Krsna consciousness, by complete surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then, automatically, the mind becomes stronger, and even though the senses are very strong, like serpents, they will be no more effective than serpents with broken fangs. But even though the soul is the master of intelligence and mind, and the senses also, still, unless it is strengthened by association with Krsna in Krsna consciousness, there is every chance of falling down due to the agitated mind."

Likewise, in Caitanya-caritamrta (Madhya 11.10), Srila Prabhupada elaborates further, "Sri Canakya Pandita has stated in his moral instructions: tyaja durjana-samsargam bhaja sadhu-samagamam. This means that one has to abandon the association of materialistic people and associate with spiritually advanced people. However qualified a materialist may be, he is no better than a venomous serpent. Everyone knows that a snake is dangerous and poisonous, and when its hood is decorated with jewels, it is no less poisonous or dangerous. However qualified a materialist may be, he is no better than a snake decorated with jewels. One should therefore be careful in dealing with such materialists, just as one would be careful in dealing with a bejeweled serpent.

"Even though a woman be made of wood or stone, she becomes attractive when decorated. One becomes sexually agitated even by touching the form. Therefore one should not trust his mind, which is so fickle that it can give way to enemies at any moment. The mind is always accompanied by six enemies-namely, kama, krodha, mada, moha, matsarya and bhaya-that is, lust, anger, intoxication, illusion, envy and fear. Although the mind may be merged in spiritual consciousness, one should always be very careful in dealing with it, just as one is careful in dealing with a snake. One should never think that his mind is trained and that he can do whatever he likes. One interested in spiritual life should always engage his mind in the service of the Lord so that the enemies of the mind, who always accompany the mind, will be subdued. If the mind is not engaged in Krsna consciousness at

every moment, there is a chance that it will give way to its enemies. In this way we become victims of the mind.

"Chanting the Hare Krsna mantra engages the mind at the lotus feet of Krsna constantly; thus the mind's enemies do not have a chance to strike. Following Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's example in these verses, we should be very careful in dealing with the mind, which should not be indulged in any circumstance. Once we indulge the mind, it can create havoc in this life, even though we may be spiritually advanced. The mind is specifically agitated through the association of materialistic men and women. Therefore Sri Caitanya Maha-prabhu, through His personal behavior, warns everyone to avoid meeting a materialistic person or a woman."

It is only in the association of devotees that we gain an understanding and appreciation for chanting the holy name of the Lord. The nine-fold process of hearing, chanting, remembering, serving, etc., is the most efficient means for developing our innate Krsna consciousness, thereby automatically bringing the wavering mind under control. Srila Prabhupada explains (Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya 13.138), "Only when the mind is free from designations can one desire the association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The mind must have some occupation. If a person is to be free of material things, his mind cannot be vacant; there must be subject matters for thinking, feeling and willing. Unless one's mind is filled with thoughts of Krsna, feelings for Krsna and a desire to serve Krsna, the mind will be filled with material activities. Those who have given up all material activities and have ceased thinking of them should always retain the ambition to think of Krsna. Without Krsna one cannot live, just as a person cannot live without some enjoyment for his mind."

From our very births we are enveloped by material designations, each of which form barriers, just as the walls of a prison, to keep us in ignorance. In the first instance we imagine that we are the temporary material bodies that we inhabit, and then further, as such bodies, that we somehow belong to a certain race, religion, nation, caste or creed. All these designations, while pertaining to the various material bodies, are superfluous to our actual constitutional situation as pure spiritual beings. Moreover,

such designations are all products of the material mind, which in concert with the false ego, allows us to imagine we are persons that we are not. By accepting the premise of one's material designation as true, we allow ourselves to fall under the sway of false ego, which allows the mind to play and carry us into the realm of fantasy. The Bhagavad-gita (3.27) describes this phenomena: "The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature." Srila Prabhupada explains, "Two persons, one in Krsna consciousness and the other in material consciousness, working on the same level, may appear to be working on the same platform, but there is a wide gulf of difference in their respective positions. The person in material consciousness is convinced by false ego that he is the doer of everything. He does not know that the mechanism of the body is produced by material nature, which works under the supervision of the Supreme Lord. The materialistic person has no knowledge that ultimately he is under the control of Krsna. The person in false ego takes all credit for everything independently, and that is the symptom of his nescience. He does not know that this gross and subtle body is the creation of material nature, under the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as such his bodily and mental activities should be engaged in the service of Krsna, in Krsna consciousness. The ignorant man forgets that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is known as Hrisikesa, or the master of the senses of the material body, for due to his long misuse of the senses in sense gratification, he is factually bewildered by the false ego, which makes him forget his eternal relationship with Krsna."

The ego acts as our identification mechanism. In the spiritual realm one's ego acts to reinforce his transcendental role as servitor to the Supreme Lord. In actuality we all have our eternal existence as spiritual beings and our actual identities are as pure servants of the Supreme Lord in one of the primary spiritual relationships. So when we speak of false ego, we refer to our contrived, assumed identity that we assume under the influence of Krsna's illusory potency, Maya. Krsna, however, always remains apart from the designations created in our mind by the false ego. In Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.11.25) we find, "The Supreme Personality

of Godhead creates this material world, maintains it, and annihilates it in due course of time, but because He is transcendental to such activities, He is never affected by ego in such action or by the modes of material nature." Srila Prabhupada comments, "In this verse the word anahankara means 'without ego.' The conditioned soul has a false ego, and as a result of his karma he gets different types of bodies in this material world. Sometimes he gets the body of a demigod, and he thinks that body to be his identity. Similarly, when he gets the body of a dog he identifies his self with that body. But for the Supreme Personality of Godhead there is no such distinction between the body and the soul."

By identifying with our temporary material bodies, we become bewildered by such designations as we may occasionally appear in bodies that are white, black, rich, poor, American, Indian and so on. All such material designations are illusory in the sense that they will change when we again change our bodies. Today we may be inhabiting a white body and feel very superior to everyone else. But we have no guarantee that in our next lives we can remain in a white body, or even in a human body. Therefore, all such material designations are deemed to be false or illusory. Our real business therefore should be how to stop the repetition of birth, disease, old age and death of our bodies. For as long as we identify with our external bodies, we will also imagine some persons to be our friends, others our enemies and some as neutral parties. We will be forced to work hard according to the dictates of our imprisoned mind and false ego, imagining that reality is exactly as we dream it to be. It is only by the process of chanting Krsna's holy names that our actual, true consciousness and identities are uncovered and once more revealed to us. Otherwise we are doomed to remain within the strong prison of the mind, from which there is no escape. Therefore the only sane approach to becoming freed from the artificial barriers imposed by the material mind and false ego is to uncover our true identities as pure spiritual beings in service to the Supreme Lord. Any identity aside from our original spiritual identity is illusory. Only by regaining our original spiritual consciousness, Krsna consciousness, can we become freed from the imprisonment imposed by the material mind.

So as we shall see, when the brahmana from Avanti was prompted from within to become detached from the illusory world of duality, he actually became freed from the illusory prison created by the mind and false ego. Therefore, cultivating and adopting such a mood of detachment is of crucial importance for persons desiring to become freed from the self imposed prison of one's mind. By following the process of Krsna consciousness, engaging in the congregational chanting of the Lord's holy names, one automatically develops knowledge and detachment. Such knowledge is full and complete, focusing on cultivating an attachment to Krsna and Krsna conscious activities. Then automatically, as one develops a higher, spiritual taste, detachment from material objects and activities naturally arises within the heart of the living being.

In this age of Kali-yuga, the iron-age of quarrel and hypocrisy, there is no other means than the chanting of the Lord's holy names. No other method of self realization will be effective. Chanting Krsna's holy names as found in the maha-mantra, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare is the only effective means for attaining spiritual freedom in this age.

Chapter Two: The Miser

"In the country of Avanti there once lived a certain brahmana who was very rich and gifted with all opulences, and who was engaged in the occupation of commerce. But he was a miserly person—lusty, greedy and very prone to anger."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that, "According to Srila Sridhara Svami, the Avanti country is in the district of Malwa. The brahmana was extremely wealthy, doing business in agriculture, banking and so on. Being a miser, he suffered agony when his hard-earned wealth was lost, as will be described by the Lord Himself."

"In his home, devoid of religiosity and lawful sense gratification, the family members and guests were never properly respected, even with words. He would not even allow sufficient gratification for his own body at the suitable times. Since he was so hardhearted and miserly, his sons, in-laws, wife, daughters and servants began to feel inimical toward him. Becoming disgusted, they would never treat him with affection. In this way the presiding deities of the five family sacrifices became angry at the brahmana, who, being niggardly, guarded his wealth like a Yaksa, who had no good destination either in this world or the next, and who was totally deprived of religiosity and sense enjoyment. O magnanimous Uddhava, by his neglect of these demigods he depleted his stock of piety and all his wealth. The accumulation of his repeated exhaustive endeavors was totally lost."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that, "The brahmana's stock of piety became like a withered branch that no longer gives fruits or flowers. Srila Jiva Goswami comments that the brahmana had a trace of piety directed at the Supreme Lord with hopes of liberation. That pure portion of the branch of his piety remained unwithered, eventually giving the fruit of knowledge."

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.13.25) Vidura explains to Dhrtarastra, "Despite your unwillingness to die and your desire to live even at the cost of honor and prestige, your miserly body will certainly dwindle and deteriorate like an old garment." Srila Prabhupada explains, "The words *krpanasya jijiviso* are

significant. There are two classes of men. One is called the *krpana*, and the other is called the *brahmana*. The *krpana*, or the miserly man, has no estimation of his material body, but the *brahmana* has a true estimation of himself and the material body. The *krpana*, having a wrong estimation of his material body, wants to enjoy sense gratification with his utmost strength, and even in old age he wants to become a young man by medical treatment or otherwise. Dhrtarastra is addressed herein as a *krpana* because without any estimation of his material body he wants to live at any cost. Vidura is trying to open his eyes to see that he cannot live more than his term and that he must prepare for death. Since death is inevitable, why should he accept such a humiliating position for living? It is better to take the right path, even at the risk of death. Human life is meant for finishing all kinds of miseries of material existence, and life should be so regulated that one can achieve the desired goal. Dhrtarastra, due to his wrong conception of life, had already spoiled eighty percent of his achieved energy, so it behooved him to utilize the remaining days of his miserly life for the ultimate good. Such a life is called miserly because one cannot properly utilize the assets of the human form of life. Only by good luck does such a miserly man meet a self-realized soul like Vidura and by his instruction gets rid of the nescience of material existence."

In truth, the *brahmana* from Avanti appeared to be even more miserly than a gross materialist, for he even denied proper sense gratification for himself. He was so absorbed in making money that he forgot all else, even the proper care of his family members and his own self. Without understanding what one's real self interest is, one is certain to act improperly. In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (1.2.8) we find, "The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead." Srila Prabhupada comments, "There are different occupational activities in terms of man's different conceptions of life. To the gross materialist who cannot see anything beyond the gross material body, there is nothing beyond the senses. Therefore his occupational activities are limited to concentrated and extended selfishness. Concentrated selfishness centers around the personal body—this is generally seen amongst

the lower animals. Extended selfishness is manifested in human society and centers around the family, society, community, nation and world with a view to gross bodily comfort. Above these gross materialists are the mental speculators who hover aloft in the mental spheres, and their occupational duties involve making poetry and philosophy or propagating some ism with the same aim of selfishness limited to the body and the mind. But above the body and mind is the dormant spirit soul whose absence from the body makes the whole range of bodily and mental selfishness completely null and void. But less intelligent people have no information of the needs of the spirit soul.

"Because foolish people have no information of the soul and how it is beyond the purview of the body and mind, they are not satisfied in the performance of their occupational duties. The question of the satisfaction of the self is raised herein. The self is beyond the gross body and subtle mind. He is the potent active principle of the body and mind. Without knowing the need of the dormant soul, one cannot be happy simply with emolument of the body and mind. The body and the mind are but superfluous outer coverings of the spirit soul. The spirit soul's needs must be fulfilled. Simply by cleansing the cage of the bird, one does not satisfy the bird. One must actually know the needs of the bird himself.

"The need of the spirit soul is that he wants to get out of the limited sphere of material bondage and fulfill his desire for complete freedom. He wants to get out of the covered walls of the greater universe. He wants to see the free light and the spirit. That complete freedom is achieved when he meets the complete spirit, the Personality of Godhead. There is a dormant affection for God within everyone; spiritual existence is manifested through the gross body and mind in the form of perverted affection for gross and subtle matter. Therefore we have to engage ourselves in occupational engagements that will evoke our divine consciousness. This is possible only by hearing and chanting the divine message of the Supreme Lord, and any occupational activity which does not help one to achieve attachment for hearing and chanting the transcendental message of Godhead is said herein to be simply a waste of time. This is because other occupational

duties (whatever ism they may belong to) cannot give liberation to the soul. Even the activities of the salvationists are considered to be useless because of their failure to pick up the fountainhead of all liberties. The gross materialist can practically see that his material gain is limited only to time and space, either in this world or in the other. Even if he goes up to Svargaloka, he will find no permanent abode for his hankering soul. The hankering soul must be satisfied by the perfect scientific process of perfect devotional service."

"Some of the wealth of this so-called brahmana was taken away by his relatives, My dear Uddhava, some by thieves, some by the whims of providence, some by the effects of time, some by ordinary men and some by government authorities." Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that, "Even though the so-called brahmana was determined not to spend his money, his wife and other relatives managed to squeeze out a portion. According to Srila Sridhara Svami, providence here refers to fires in the home and other types of occasional misfortune. Effects of time here refers to the destruction of agricultural crops through seasonal irregularities and other such occurrences. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati points out that one should not merely proclaim oneself to be a brahmana but should actually understand one's original identity as a servant of the Lord. One declaring himself to be a brahmana but maintaining a materialistic mentality is not a real brahmana, but rather a brahma-bandhu, or so-called brahmana. The humble devotees of Lord Visnu, following the indications of the Vedic scriptures, refer to themselves as unfortunate and unable to understand the kingdom of God; they do not proudly proclaim themselves to be brahmanas. Those who are wise, however, know that such humble devotees are actually brahmanas whose hearts are cleansed by the pure mode of goodness."

For the humble devotee who is surrendered at the lotus feet of guru, Krsna and the Vaisnavas, providence is certainly realized as the manifestation of the Supreme Lord's will. He does not imagine that things might have happened by chance or that his fate is controlled by others. He only knows that Krsna is in complete control of everything, including his very life, and as such, he

surrenders himself to become a puppet in the hands of the Supreme Lord.

In the Fifth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam (5.26.35-36) we find the following descriptions of punishment for persons who act improperly toward their guests and visitors and who are such misers that they remain in constant anxiety, even feeling suspicion toward family members and superiors over thoughts of losing their wealth. "A householder who receives guests with cruel glances, as if to burn them to ashes, is put into the hell called Paryavartana, where he is gazed at by hard-eyed vultures, herons, crows and similar birds, which suddenly swoop down and pluck out his eyes with great force. One who in this world or in this life is very proud of his wealth always thinks, "I am so rich. Who can equal me?" His vision is twisted, and he is always afraid that someone will take his wealth. Indeed, he even suspects his superiors. His face and heart dry up at the thought of losing his wealth, and therefore he always looks like a wretched fiend. He is not in any way able to obtain actual happiness, and he does not know what it is to be free from anxiety. Because of the sinful things he does to earn money, augment his wealth and protect it, he is put into the hell called Sucimukha, where the officials of Yamaraja punish him by stitching thread through his entire body like weavers manufacturing cloth."

Srila Prabhupada comments on these verses, "According to the Vedic etiquette, even an enemy who comes to a householder's home should be received in such a gentle way that he forgets that he has come to the home of an enemy. A guest who comes to one's home should be received very politely. If he is unwanted, the householder should not stare at him with blinking eyes, for one who does so will be put into the hell known as Parya-vartana after death, and there many ferocious birds like vultures, crows, and corks will suddenly come upon him and pluck out his eyes...When one possesses more wealth than necessary, he certainly becomes very proud. This is the situation of men in modern civilization. According to the Vedic culture, brahmanas do not possess anything, whereas ksatriyas possess riches, but only for performing sacrifices and other noble activities as prescribed in the Vedic injunctions. A vaisya also earns money honestly through

agriculture, cow protection and some trade. If a sudra gets money, however, he will spend it lavishly, without discrimination, or simply accumulate it for no purpose. Because in this age there are no qualified brahmanas, ksatriyas or vaisyas, almost everyone is a sudra. Therefore the sudra mentality is causing great harm to modern civilization. A sudra does not know how to use money to render transcendental loving service to the Lord. Money is also called laksmi, and Laksmi is always engaged in the service of Narayana. Whenever there is money, it must be engaged in the service of Lord Narayana. Everyone should use his money to spread the great transcendental movement of Krsna consciousness. If one does not spend money for this purpose but accumulates more than necessary, he will certainly become proud of the money he illegally possesses. The money actually belongs to Krsna, who says in Bhagavad-gita (5.29): "I am the true enjoyer of sacrifices and penances, and I am the owner of all the planets." Therefore, nothing belongs to anyone but Krsna. One who possess more money than he needs should spend it for Krsna. Unless one does so, he will become puffed up because of his false possessions, and therefore he will be punished in the next life, as described herein."

"Finally, when his property was completely lost, he who never engaged in religiosity or sense enjoyment became ignored by his family members. Thus he began to feel unbearable anxiety. Having lost all his wealth, he felt great pain and lamentation. His throat choked up with tears, and he meditated for a long time on his fortune. Then a powerful feeling of renunciation came over him."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that, "The brahmana had previously been trained in pious life, but his past goodness was covered by his offensive behavior. Finally his previous purity was reawakened within him.

"The brahmana spoke as follows: O what great misfortune! I have simply tormented myself uselessly, struggling so hard for money that was not even intended for religiosity or material enjoyment. Generally, the wealth of misers never allows them any happiness. In this life it causes their self-torment, and when they die it sends them to hell."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples note that, "A miser is afraid to spend his money even for obligatory religious and social duties. Offending God and people in general, he goes to hell."

"Whatever pure fame is possessed by the famous and whatever praiseworthy qualities are found in the virtuous are destroyed by even a small amount of greed, just as one's attractive physical beauty is ruined by a trace of white leprosy. In the earning, attainment, increase, protection, expense, loss and enjoyment of wealth, all men experience great labor, fear, anxiety and delusion. Theft, violence, speaking lies, duplicity, lust, anger, perplexity, pride, quarreling, enmity, faithlessness, envy and the dangers caused by women, gambling and intoxication are the fifteen undesirable qualities that contaminate men because of greed for wealth. Although these qualities are undesirable, men falsely ascribe value to them. One desiring to achieve the real benefit of life should therefore remain aloof from undesirable material wealth."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples comment that, "The words anartham arthakhyam, or "undesirable wealth," indicate wealth that cannot be efficiently engaged in the loving service of the Lord. Such superfluous money or property will undoubtedly pollute a man with all of the above-mentioned qualities and therefore should be given up."

"Even a man's brothers, wife, parents and friends united with him in love will immediately break off their affectionate relationships and become enemies over a single coin. For even a small amount of money these relatives and friends become very agitated and their anger is inflamed. Acting as rivals, they quickly give up all sentiments of goodwill and will reject one at a moment's notice, even to the point of committing murder. Those who obtain human life, which is prayed for even by the demigods, and in that human birth become situated as first-class brahmanas, are extremely fortunate. If they disregard this important opportunity, they are certainly killing their own self-interest and thus achieve a most unfortunate end."

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura comments that, "Human birth is better than that of the demigods, ghosts, spirits,

animals, trees, lifeless stones, and so forth, because the demigods simply enjoy celestial pleasures, and in other forms of life there is excessive suffering. It is only in human life that one deeply considers one's ultimate benefit in life. Human birth is therefore more desirable than even that of the demigods."

"What mortal man, having achieved this human life, which is the very gateway to both heaven and liberation, would willingly become attached to that abode of worthlessness, material property?"

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain, "That which one intends to use for one's personal sense gratification is called material property, whereas paraphernalia to be used in the Lord's loving service is understood to be spiritual. One should give up all one's material property by utilizing it completely in the devotional service of the Lord. A person who owns a luxurious mansion should install the Deity of the Lord and hold regular programs to propagate Krsna consciousness. Similarly, wealth should be used to build temples of the Lord and publish literature scientifically explaining the Personality of Godhead. One who blindly renounces material property without utilizing it in the service of the Lord does not understand that everything belongs to the Personality of Godhead. Such blind renunciation is based on the material idea that "This property belongs to me, but I don't want it." Everything, in fact, belongs to God; knowing this, one neither tries to enjoy nor to reject the things of this world, but peacefully engages them in the service of the Lord."

"One who fails to distribute his wealth to the proper shareholders—the demigods, sages, forefathers and ordinary living entities, as well as his immediate relatives, in-laws and own self—is maintaining his wealth simply like a Yaksa and will fall down."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples note that, "One who does not share his wealth with the aforementioned authorized persons and does not even enjoy the wealth himself will certainly suffer unlimited problems in life.

"Discriminating persons are able to utilize their money, youth and strength to achieve perfection. But I have feverishly

squandered these in the useless endeavor for further wealth. Now that I am an old man, what can I achieve? Why must an intelligent man suffer by his constant vain efforts to get wealth? Indeed, this whole world is most bewildered by someone's illusory potency. For one who is in the grips of death, what is the use of wealth or those who offer it, sense gratification or those who offer it, or, for that matter, any type of fruitive activity, which simply causes one to again take birth in the material world? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Hari, who contains within Himself all the demigods, must be satisfied with me. Indeed, He has brought me to this suffering condition and forced me to experience detachment, which is the boat to carry me over this ocean of material life."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples comment that, "The brahmana could understand that the demigods, who award different types of sense gratification as the result of one's fruitive activities, cannot bestow the highest benefit in life. When the brahmana lost all his property he could understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who comprises all the demigods, had given him the highest perfection, not by awarding sense gratification but by saving him from the ocean of material enjoyment. Being thus deprived of the opportunity to cultivate religiosity, wealth, sense gratification and liberation, the brahmana became detached, and transcendental knowledge awakened within his heart."

"If there is any time remaining in my life, I will perform austerities and force my body to subsist on the bare necessities. Without further confusion I shall pursue that which constitutes my entire self-interest in life, and I shall remain satisfied with the self. Thus may the presiding demigods of these three worlds kindly show their mercy upon me. Indeed, Maharaja Khatvanga was able to achieve the spiritual world in a single moment."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that, "In this regard the brahmana of Avanti thought that although he was an old man who might die at any moment he could follow the example of Maharaja Khatvanga who achieved the Lord's mercy in a single moment. Maharaja Khatvanga, as described in the Second Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, fought valiantly on behalf of the demigods, and they offered the king any benediction he might desire. Khatvanga

Maharaja chose to find out the remaining duration of his life, which unfortunately was a single moment. The king therefore immediately surrendered to Lord Krsna and achieved the spiritual world. The brahmana of Avanti desired to follow this example; with the blessings of the demigods, who are all devotees of the Lord, he hoped to become fully Krsna conscious before giving up his body."

It is often seen that when someone comes to Krsna consciousness, they are suddenly placed in various situations wherein everything of material worth is taken away from them. Or, when a devotee reaches a certain stage in his advancement, Krsna will help that devotee advance further past an obstacle or sticking point by removing all material barriers. Such seeming reverses in a devotee's fortune are not ordinary occurrences. They are indicative of Lord Krsna showing His special mercy upon such a devotee. Thus the Avanti brahmana wisely understood that his so-called predicament was actually the special favor of the Supreme Lord.

Further illustration of this is given in Caitanya-bhagavata (Adi 2.12.184-): "Can you please tell Me why, after serving the beloved Lord of Laksmi, you do not get sufficient food and clothes? Sridhara replied, "At least I'm not starving, and whether small or large I'm still wearing some cloth." The Lord said, "But I see your cloth is mended in ten places, and the roof of your cottage has no straw. Look at other people. They worship Candi or Visahari, so they have no scarcity for food or cloth." Sridhara then replied, "O brahmana, what You say is indeed correct, yet the time passes equally for everyone. The king has jewels in his house, and he eats opulent food. Meanwhile the birds live in the trees. Yet time passes equally for everyone, as they all enjoy the fruits of their previous activities by the will of the Lord."

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura explains, "Lord Narayana is the omnipotent sole proprietor of unlimited opulences. In order to test His own servant, Sridhara, the Lord asked him why the servants of Narayana remain afflicted with poverty in this world even though they are eligible for the wealth of their Lord. Although the followers of sakta philosophy who wish to mitigate their poverty or gratify their senses and fulfill their self-interest

offer water and tulasi leaves at the feet of Lord Narayana and thus receive mundane opulences or temporary benefits, they do not achieve eternal good fortune. But the fully surrendered servants of Narayana who are engaged in unalloyed service do not accept any exchange for their service. In order to exhibit the ideal example of such Vaisnava qualities, the Lord's associates from Vaikuntha display various poverty stricken pastimes. By such pastimes, however, they do not feel any misery. They have the following strong conviction at heart—"Whatever misery comes in the course of Your service is my greatest happiness." They do not desire anything from the Lord for their own sense gratification. But foolish persons, through material vision inspired by external considerations, think that Vaisnavas are afflicted by various needs. Since due to a lack of wealth, Sridhara Vipra or other pure devotees of the Lord appear from the material point of view unable to accumulate fine items of enjoyment for dressing and eating like ordinary people, such questions may naturally arise. This is clearly seen in this conversation between Sridhara and Sri Gaurasundara...In reply to the Lord's question, Sridhara Vipra said, "Although according to mundane calculation the worshipers of the demigods who do not worship Visnu appear superior, the Vaisnavas and non-Vaisnavas both pass their lives in the same way. Actually non-Vaisnavas are busy making arrangements for their comfortable material happiness through material advancement while remaining indifferent to the service of Lord Hari, and the Vaisnavas are always busy serving the Lord while remaining indifferent to material advancement and thus have no opportunity to act as sense enjoyers. As a king lives in his palace, which is full of unlimited jewels, pearls, wealth, and opulences, receiving unlimited care, affection, and respect from his many order-carriers, servants, and associates and thus passes his time accumulating many valuable foodstuffs and clothes that he desires, in a similar way birds that are nourished without endeavor by mother nature also build their nests with straw and grasses at the tops of high trees and pass their time accumulating their respective foods from here and there by their own hard labor, without the help of anyone else. Everyone passes their life in the same way, and everyone lives within this world, enjoying the happiness and distress of their own karma. As a result of my karma I am also

passing my time in the service of the Lord according to my own intelligence and taste without desiring external material advancement. Therefore according to material calculation I have no necessities at all. Those with equal vision do not discriminate between objects of sense enjoyment; rather, discriminating between inferior and superior objects of sense enjoyment simply indicates one's likes and dislikes. In ancient times, due to the scarcity of varieties of enjoyment like good food and clothing, people were extremely poor and narrow minded. In the course of time people gradually became more busy in activities of material sense enjoyment and continued such endeavors with the support of mundane physics and science. If we minutely study, however, we will see that there is not much difference between the people's happiness and distress in the two time periods. Although there is certainly an increase and decrease in the necessities of life, since conditioned souls welcome enjoyment of the fruits of their activities according to their respective desires, all living entities pass their time in the same way. But those who are devotees of the Lord achieve happiness from His service and thus pass their time in unalloyed happiness, considering even so-called external misery as happiness. And those who are engaged in material enjoyment, which is not related with the Lord, pass their time in temporary adulterated happiness and distress."

The real standard of happiness, therefore, should not be based upon temporary material considerations, but according to our eternal welfare and greatest benefit. Only devotional service to the Supreme Lord can fully satisfy all of our true needs. For if achieving material happiness were an end in itself, we would find increasing happiness through fruitive activities. We find that this is not the case, as even the most materially prosperous of people are often found to be bereft of deep, lasting happiness or true peace of mind. The only solution to life's problems is found in devotional service to the Supreme Lord. The best service we can render is the congregational chanting of Krsna's names: Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

Chapter Three: Adjusting Our Consciousness

"Lord Sri Krsna continued: His mind thus determined, that most excellent Avanti brahmana was able to untie the knots of desire within his heart. He then assumed the role of a peaceful and silent sannyasi mendicant. He wandered about the earth, keeping his intelligence, senses and life air under control. To beg charity he traveled alone to various cities and villages. He did not advertise his advanced spiritual position and thus he was not recognized by others."

In their purport, Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain, "According to Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, the acceptance of the tridandi-sannyasa order of life is the chief indication that one has actually taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The three rods of the danda, or staff, of the Vaisnava sannyasi indicate control of the body, mind and words by engaging them only in the loving service of the Lord. This procedure helps one to become more tolerant than a tree, as recommended by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. By strict control of one's body, mind and speech, the quality of tolerance becomes strengthened, and thus one manifests the further qualities of forgiving others, never wasting one's time, detachment from sense gratification, lack of false pride in one's work and not hankering for liberation. One in this way gives up the mentality of materialistic persons, who establish so-called affectionate relationships of mutual flattery and exploit each other for sense gratification. One who adopts the strict path of Krsna consciousness, following in the footsteps of great souls, can achieve the shelter of the Lord."

The sannyasi is considered the spiritual master of the brahmanas. This position is so important and powerful that simply by offering our humble obeisances to a Vaisnava sannyasi we can mitigate our offenses and awaken our dormant Krsna consciousness. Sannyasa is the chief indication that one has dedicated his life to the service of guru and Krsna. Conversely, neglecting to offer our humble obeisances to every sannyasi we may see is detrimental to our spiritual advancement.

"O kind Uddhava, seeing him as an old, dirty beggar, rowdy persons would dishonor him with many insults. Some of these persons would take away his sannyasi rod, and some the waterpot which he was using as a begging bowl. Some took his deerskin seat, some his chanting beads, and some would steal his torn, ragged clothing. Displaying these things before him, they would pretend to offer them back but would then hide them again. When he was sitting on the bank of a river about to partake of the food that he had collected by his begging, such sinful rascals would come and pass urine on it, and they would dare to spit on his head. Although he had taken a vow of silence, they would try to make him speak, and if he did not speak they would beat him with sticks. Others would chastise him, saying, 'This man is just a thief.' And others would bind him up with rope, shouting, 'Tie him up! Tie him up!' They would criticize and insult him, saying, 'This man is just a hypocrite and a cheat. He makes a business of religion simply because he lost all his wealth and his family threw him out.' Some would ridicule him saying, 'Just see this greatly powerful sage! He is as steadfast as the Himalayan Mountains. By practice of silence he strives for his goal with great determination, just like a duck.' Other persons would pass foul air upon him, and others would bind this twice-born brahmana in chains and keep him captive like a pet animal. The brahmana understood that all his suffering—from other living beings, from the higher forces of nature and from his own body—was unavoidable, being allotted to him by providence."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that, "Many cruel persons harassed the brahmana, and his own body caused him suffering in the form of fever, hunger, thirst, fatigue, etc. The higher forces of nature are those that cause excessive heat, cold, wind and rain. The brahmana realized that his suffering was due to his false identification with his material body, and not to the interaction of his body with external phenomena. Rather than try to adjust his external situation, he tried to adjust his Krsna consciousness and thus realize his actual identity as eternal spirit soul."

As we grow older, we may, commensurate to our material contamination, experience increasing apprehension over what will

become of us, for as we age we become increasingly vulnerable to attacks from disease, infirmity, other living entities and inevitable death. Many people live in abject fear that the cost of medical treatment for any of innumerable diseases which loom large above them, and are nearly a certainty to visit them, will wipe out their entire life savings, leaving them bereft, helpless and destitute. Of course, disease and death will certainly come, and no amount of material planning or precautions can mitigate or prevent these things. Our only sure solution is to eliminate the cause of disease and death, meaning ridding ourselves once and for all of ever again accepting a material body.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.2.33) we find the following, "Sri Kavi said: I consider that one whose intelligence is constantly disturbed by his falsely identifying himself with the temporary material world can achieve real freedom from fear only by worshipping the lotus feet of the infallible Supreme Lord. In such devotional service, all fear ceases entirely." The purport herein states, "In the opinion of Srila Sridhara Svami the word *asad-atma-bhavat* in this verse indicates that the living entity is constantly disturbed by fear because he identifies his eternal self with the temporary material body and its paraphernalia. Similarly, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has stated, *bhakti-pratikula-dehahadhisva asaktim*. Because of one's attachment to one's temporary body and so-called home, family, friends and so on, one's intelligence is always disturbed by fear, and one is unable to appreciate or practice pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord. So-called religious activities executed in the bodily conception of life are always accompanied by fear and anxiety about the ultimate result. But pure devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead frees one from fear and anxiety because it is executed on the platform of Vaikuntha, or the spiritual plane, where there is no fear or anxiety. According to Srila Jiva Goswami, the process of bhakti-yoga is so powerful that even in the stage of *sadhana-bhakti*, in which one is practicing devotional service through rules and regulations, the neophyte can have a direct experience of fearlessness by the mercy of the Lord. As one's devotional service becomes mature, the Lord reveals Himself to the devotee, and all fear is totally vanquished forever.

"Every living entity has a natural propensity to serve God, but because of false identification with the temporary body one loses touch with this pure, constitutional propensity and instead inauspiciously becomes attached to temporary sense gratification in the form of body, home, family and so on. The result of such false attachment is continuing distress, which can be eradicated only by devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

"In this connection, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has quoted the following verse, 'O my Lord, the people of the world are always embarrassed by all material anxieties—they are always afraid. They always try to protect wealth, body and friends, they are filled with lamentation and unlawful desires and paraphernalia, and they avariciously base their undertakings on the perishable conceptions of 'I' and 'mine.' As long as they do not take shelter of Your safe lotus feet, they are full of such anxieties.'" (Bhag. 3.9.6)

"Even while being insulted by these low-class men who were trying to effect his downfall, he remained steady in his spiritual duties. Fixing his resolution in the mode of goodness, he began to chant the following song."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples comment, "Resolution in the mode of goodness is described in Bhagavad-gita (18.33) 'O son of Prtha, that determination which is unbreakable, which is sustained with steadfastness by yoga practice, and thus controls the mind, life and the acts of the senses, is in the modes of goodness.' Atheists who are envious of the devotees of the Supreme Lord are called naradhamas, or the lowest of men, and undoubtedly are enroute to hell. By all means at their disposal they disturb the devotional service of the Lord, sometimes by direct attack and sometimes by mockery. The devotees, however, remain tolerant, fixing their determination in the mode of goodness. As described by Srila Rupa Goswami in Sri Upadesamrta (Nectar of Instruction, Mantra One) "A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger and the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world."

Sri Isopanisad, mantra seventeen states, "Let this temporary body be burnt to ashes, and let the air of life be merged with the totality of air. Now, O my Lord, please remember all my sacrifices, and because You are the ultimate beneficiary, please remember all that I have done for You." This is an acknowledgment that in due course our temporary material bodies will be finished and that we will be held accountable for our actions. Of course Krsna knows our heart, and we do not have to petition Him in a separate way to acknowledge our service to Him. In truth, our pure devotional service is performed without any expectation of reward or return.

His Holiness Bhakti Tirtha Swami comments further on this verse (Reflections on Sacred Teachings, Volume Four), "Mantra Seventeen communicates a fundamental understanding common to all bona fide spiritual systems; that is, the body is temporary, while the soul is eternal. Both the life force and consciousness are functions of the soul. The life force represents the principle of vitality, while consciousness corresponds to the principle of awareness. When the soul departs from the body, no traces of life force or consciousness remain in the body, which immediately begins to deteriorate rapidly. While reciting this mantra, the speaker of Sri Isopanisad beseeches Sri Krsna, "Dear Lord, while I, the spirit soul, was in this body, I did my best to follow spiritual laws. Please remember me for doing so." While reminding the Lord of his endeavors to be righteous, pious and devotional, the speaker simultaneously conveys the message that we will be held accountable for all our actions. In fact, we do not have to petition the Lord in such a way. Everything that each of us has done is already accounted for by the laws of karma. Similarly, everything we experience in the present is the fruit of our past deeds.

"The speaker acknowledges the reality of material life, 'Dear Lord, I know that this body is temporary, and that I and everyone else will have to depart from this physical place of dwelling.'"

For so long as we remain in this material world we have to deal with varieties of miseries, ultimately culminating in the death and destruction of our temporary bodies. Our actual problems are

not in finding the so-called necessities of material existence, since those requirements are automatically met. Rather, our real problems are birth, sickness, old age and death. For as long as we accept material bodies, one after the other, these problems in life will persist.

"The brahmana said: These people are not the cause of my happiness and distress. Neither are the demigods, my own body, the planets, my past work, or time. Rather, it is the mind alone that causes happiness and distress and perpetuates the rotation of material life. The powerful mind actuates the functions of the material modes, from which evolve the different kinds of material activities in the modes of goodness, ignorance and passion. From the activities in each of these modes develop the corresponding statuses of life."

In their purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada's disciples describe how, "In the mode of goodness one considers oneself to be a saintly or wise person, in the mode of passion one struggles for material success, and in the mode of ignorance one becomes cruel, lazy and sinful. By the combination of the material modes one identifies oneself as a demigod, a king, a rich capitalist, a wise scholar, etc. These conceptions are material designations generated from the modes of nature, and they arrange themselves according to the tendency of the powerful mind to enjoy temporary sense gratification. The word *baliyas* in this verse, meaning 'very strong,' indicates that the material mind becomes insensitive to intelligent advice. Even if we are informed that we are committing many sins and offenses to earn money, we still think that some money should be acquired at all costs, since without it one can neither perform religious ceremonies nor gratify the senses with beautiful women, mansions and vehicles. Once the money is achieved, one suffers further problems, but the stubborn mind will never heed good advice in this regard. One must therefore give up mental concoction and control the mind in Krsna consciousness, as exemplified here by the brahmana from Avanti."

Sometimes when people refer to the mind they think of it in terms of their external physical body, thereby equating one's brain with the mind. The mind and intelligence, however, are completely

separate from the gross physical body. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.7.5-9) we find, "After everything was executed exactly as directed by Lord Siva, Daksa's body was joined to the head of the animal meant to be killed in the sacrifice. When the animal's head was fixed on the body of King Daksa, Daksa was immediately brought to consciousness, and as he awakened from sleep, the King saw Lord Siva standing before him."

Srila Prabhupada explains, "It appears from the exchange of Daksa's head that the modern scientific theory that the brain substance is the cause of all intelligent work is not valid. The brain substance of Daksa and that of a goat are different, but Daksa still acted like himself, even though his head was replaced by that of a goat. The conclusion is that it is the particular consciousness of an individual soul which acts. The brain substance is only an instrument which has nothing to do with real intelligence. The real intelligence, mind and consciousness are part of the particular individual soul. It will be found in the verses ahead that after Daksa's head was replaced by the goat's head, he was as intelligent as he had previously been. He prayed very nicely to satisfy Lord Siva and Lord Visnu, which is not possible for a goat to do. Therefore it is definitely concluded that the brain substance is not the center of intelligence, it is the consciousness of a particular soul that works intelligently. The whole movement of Krsna consciousness is to purify the consciousness. It doesn't matter what kind of brain one has because if he simply transfers his consciousness from matter to Krsna, his life becomes successful. It is confirmed by the Lord Himself in Bhagavad-gita that anyone who takes up Krsna consciousness achieves the highest perfection of life, regardless of whatever abominable condition of life he may have fallen into. Specifically, anyone in Krsna consciousness goes back to Godhead, back home, on leaving his present material body...The example given here is that Daksa got up as if he were awakened from deep sleep. In Sanskrit this is called *supta ivottasthau*. The meaning is that after a man awakens from sleep, he immediately remembers all the duties which he must execute. Daksa was killed, and his head was taken away and burned to ashes. His body was lying dead, but by the grace of Lord Siva, as soon as the head of a goat was joined to the body, Daksa came

back to consciousness again. This indicates that consciousness is also individual. Daksa actually took another body when he took on the head of a goat, but because consciousness is individual, his consciousness remained the same although his bodily condition changed. Thus bodily construction has nothing to do with the development of consciousness. Consciousness is carried with the transmigration of the soul. There are many instances of this in Vedic history, such as the case of Maharaja Bharata. After quitting his body as a king, Maharaja Bharata was transferred to the body of a deer, but he retained the same consciousness. He knew that although formerly he was King Bharata, he had been transferred to the body of a deer because of his absorption in thinking of a deer at the time of his death. In spite of his having the body of a deer, however, his consciousness was as good as it was in the body of King Bharata. The arrangement by the Lord is so nice that if a person's consciousness is turned to Krsna consciousness, there is no doubt that in his next life he will be a great devotee of Krsna, even if he is offered a different type of body."

Chapter Four: Fixing the Mind

"Although present with the struggling mind within the material body, the Supersoul is not endeavoring, because He is already endowed with transcendental enlightenment. Acting as my friend, He simply witnesses from His transcendental position. I, the infinitesimal spirit soul, on the other hand, have embraced this mind, which is the mirror reflecting the image of the material world. Thus I have become engaged in enjoying objects of desire and am entangled due to contact with the modes of nature. Charity, prescribed duties, observance of major and minor regulative principles, hearing from scripture, pious works and purifying vows all have as their final aim the subduing of the mind. Indeed, concentration of the mind on the Supreme is the highest yoga. If one's mind is perfectly fixed and pacified, then tell me what need does one have to perform ritualistic charity or other pious rituals? And if one's mind remains uncontrolled, lost in ignorance, then of what use are these engagements for him? All the senses have been under the control of the mind since time immemorial, and the mind himself never comes under the sway of any other. He is stronger than the strongest, and his godlike power is fearsome. Therefore, anyone who can bring the mind under control becomes the master of all the senses. Failing to conquer this irrepressible enemy; the mind, whose urges are intolerable and who torments the heart, many people are completely bewildered and create useless quarrel with others. Thus they conclude that other people are either their friends, their enemies or parties indifferent to them."

In their purport, Srila Prabhupada's disciples state, "Falsely identifying oneself as the material body, and accepting bodily expansions such as children and grandchildren to be one's eternal property, one completely forgets that every living being is qualitatively one with God. There is no essential difference between one individual being and another, since all are eternal expansions of the Supreme Lord. The mind absorbed in false ego creates the material body, and by identification with the body, the conditioned soul is overwhelmed by false pride and ignorance, as described here."

A description of the Supersoul, Paramatma, is found in Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.28) as follows: "Others conceive of the Personality of Godhead residing within the body in the region of the heart and measuring only eight inches, with four hands carrying a lotus, a wheel of a chariot, a conchshell and a club respectively." Srila Prabhupada explains, "The all-pervading Personality of Godhead resides as Paramatma in the heart of each and every living entity. The measurement of the localized Personality of Godhead is estimated to expand from the ring finger to the end of the thumb, more or less eight inches. The form of the Lord described in this verse with distribution of different symbols—beginning from the lower right hand up and down to the lower left hand with lotus, wheel of a chariot, conchshell and club respectively—is called Janardana, or the plenary portion of the Lord who controls the general mass. There are many other forms of the Lord with varied situations of the symbols of lotus, conchshell, etc., and they are differently known as Purusottama, Acyuta, Narasimha, Trivikrama, Hrsikesa, Kesava, Madhava, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Sankarsana, Sridhara, Vasudeva, Damodara, Janardana, Narayana, Hari, Padmanabha, Vamana, Madhusudana, Govinda, Krsna, Visnumurti, Adhoksaja and Upendra. These twenty-four forms of the localized Personality of Godhead are worshipped in different parts of the planetary system, and in each system there is an incarnation of the Lord having a different Vaikuntha planet in the spiritual sky, of which this material sky is only a fragmented offshoot. The Lord exists as purusa, or the male enjoyer, although there is no comparing Him to any male form in the material world. But all such forms are advaita, nondifferent from one another, and each of them is eternally young. The young Lord with four hands is nicely decorated as described below...His mouth expresses His happiness. His eyes spread like the petals of a lotus, and His garments, yellowish like the saffron of a kadamba flower, are bedecked with valuable jewels, and He wears a glowing headdress and earrings. His lotus feet are placed over the whorls of the lotuslike hearts of great mystics. On His chest is the Kaustubha jewel, engraved with a beautiful calf, and there are other jewels on His shoulders. His complete torso is garlanded with fresh flowers. He is well decorated with an ornamental wreath about His waist and rings

studded with valuable jewels on His fingers. His leglets, His bangles, His oiled hair, curling with a bluish tint, and His beautiful smiling face are all very pleasing."

"Persons who identify with this body, which is simply the product of the material mind, are blinded in their intelligence, thinking in terms of 'I' and 'mine.' Because of their illusion of 'this is I, but that is someone else,' they wander in endless darkness. If you say that these people are the cause of my happiness and distress, then where is the place of the soul in such a conception? The happiness and distress pertain not to the soul but to the interactions of material bodies. If someone bites his tongue with his own teeth, at whom can he become angry in his suffering?"

Srila prabhupada's disciples explain, "Although bodily pleasure and pain are felt by the soul, one must tolerate such duality, understanding it to be a creation of one's own material mind. If one accidentally bites his own tongue or lip, he cannot become angry and pull out his own teeth. Similarly, all living beings are individual parts and parcels of God, and thus nondifferent from each other. All of them are meant to serve the Supreme Lord in spiritual equality. If the living beings give up their master's service and instead quarrel among themselves, they will be forced to suffer by the laws of nature. If the conditioned souls establish artificial relationships of affection based on the material body and having nothing to do with God, then time itself will destroy such relationships, and they will be subjected to further suffering. But if the individual living entities understand each other to be of the same family, all having connection with the Supreme Lord, their mutual friendship will develop. Thus one should not exhibit anger that will be harmful to oneself and others. Although the brahmana was receiving kind offerings of charity from some people and being harassed and beaten by others, he denied that these people were the ultimate cause of his happiness and distress, for he was fixed on the platform of self-realization beyond the material body and mind."

In the Second Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.2.2-3) we find the following description of the illusory nature of the material world: "The way of presentation of Vedic sounds is so bewildering

that it directs the intelligence of the people to meaningless things like the heavenly kingdoms. The conditioned souls hover in dreams of such heavenly illusory pleasures, but actually they do not relish any tangible happiness in such places. For this reason the enlightened person should endeavor for the minimum necessities of life while in the world of names. He should be intelligently fixed and never endeavor for unwanted things, being competent to perceive practically that all such endeavors are merely hard labor for nothing."

Srila Prabhupada elaborates, "The conditioned soul is always engaged in laying out plans for happiness within the material world, even up to the end of the universal limit. He is not even satisfied with available amenities on this planet earth, where he has exploited the resources of nature to the best of his ability. He wants to go to the moon or planet Venus to exploit resources there. But the Lord has warned us in the Bhagavad-gita (8.16) about the worthlessness of all the innumerable planets of this universe, as well as those planets within other systems. There are innumerable universes and also innumerable planets in each of them. But none of them is immune to the chief miseries of material existence, namely the pangs of birth, the pangs of death, the pangs of old age and the pangs of disease. The Lord says that even the topmost planet, known as the Brahmaloaka or Satyaloka, (and what to speak of other planets, like the heavenly planets) is not a happy land for residential purposes, due to the process of material pangs, as above mentioned. Conditioned souls are strictly under the laws of fruitive activities, and as such they sometimes go up to the Brahmaloaka and again come down to Pataloka, as if they were unintelligent children on a merry-go-round. The real happiness is in the kingdom of God, where no one has to undergo the pangs of material existence. Therefore, the Vedic ways of fruitive activities for the living entities are misleading. One thinks of a superior way of life in this country or that, or on this planet or another, but nowhere in the material world can he fulfill his real desire of life, namely eternal life, full intelligence and complete bliss. Indirectly, Srila Sukadeva Goswami affirms that Maharaja Pariksit, in the last stage of life, should not desire to transfer himself to the so-called heavenly planets, but should prepare himself for going back home,

back to Godhead. None of the material planets, nor the amenities available there for living conditions, is everlasting; therefore one must have a factual reluctance to enjoy such temporary happiness as they afford...The bhagavata-dharma, or the cult of Srimad-Bhagavatam, is perfectly distinct from the way of fruitive activities, which are considered by the devotees to be merely a waste of time. The whole universe, or for that matter, all material existence, is moving on as jagat, simply for planning business to make one's position very comfortable or secure, although everyone sees that this existence is neither comfortable nor secure and can never become comfortable or secure at any stage of development. Those who are captivated by the illusory advancement of material civilization (following the way of phantasmagoria) are certainly madmen. The whole material creation is a jugglery of names only; in fact, it is nothing but a bewildering creation of matter like earth, water and fire. The buildings, furniture, cars, bungalows, mills, factories, industries, peace, war or even the highest perfection of material science, namely atomic energy and electronics, are all simply bewildering names of material elements with their concomitant reactions of the three modes. Since the devotee of the Lord knows them perfectly well, he is not interested in creating unwanted things for a situation which is not at all reality, but simply names of no more significance than the babble of sea waves. The great kings, leaders and soldiers fight with one another in order to perpetuate their names in history. They are forgotten in due course of time, and they make a place for another era of history. But the devotee realizes how much history and historical persons are useless products of flickering time. The fruitive worker aspires after a big fortune in the matter of wealth, women and worldly adoration, but those who are fixed in perfect reality are not at all interested in such false things. For them it is all a waste of time. Since every second of human life is important, an enlightened man should be very careful to utilize time cautiously. One second of human life wasted in the vain research of planning for happiness in the material world can never be replaced, even if one spends millions of coins of gold. Therefore the transcendentalist desiring freedom from the clutches of maya, or the illusory activities of life, is warned herewith not to be captivated by the external features of fruitive actors. Human life is

never meant for sense gratification, but for self realization. Srimad-Bhagavatam instructs us solely on this subject from the very beginning to the end. The civilization which aims at this utmost perfection never indulges in creating unwanted things, and such a perfect civilization prepares men only to accept the bare necessities of life or to follow the principle of the best use of a bad bargain. Our material bodies and our lives in that connection are bad bargains because the living entity is actually spirit, and spiritual advancement of the living entity is absolutely necessary. Human life is meant for the realization of this important factor, and one should act accordingly, accepting only the bare necessities of life and depending more on God's gift without diversion of human energy for any other purpose, such as being mad for material enjoyment. The materialistic advancement of civilization is called "the civilization of the demons," which ultimately ends in wars and scarcity. The transcendentalist is specifically warned herewith to be fixed in mind, so that even if there is difficulty in plain living and high thinking he will not budge even an inch from his stark determination. For a transcendentalist, it is a suicidal policy to be intimately in touch with the sense gratifiers of the world, because such a policy will frustrate the ultimate gain in life."

The temporary material bodies we inhabit as conditioned souls are made from the five elements, earth, water, fire air and ether. When such elements are combined together they form the gross and subtle bodies of all creatures, including the human beings. The mistaken propensity to enjoy these elements arises from our mental conceptions of material pleasure and pain, likes and dislikes. In truth, trying to enjoy matter as in any of its various manifestations, such as these material bodies, is something like trying to enjoy dirt mixed with water. We can squeeze, stir and mold it in a certain way, even form a statue with such mud and clay, but in the end such forms composed of matter are incapable of giving us true pleasure. It is only due to our mental configuration that we imagine such experiences as pleasurable or painful. Because of our innate desire to enjoy, now covered by the material mind, we manifest these propensities. In such a contaminated state, caused by our contact with the material energy,

we falsely imagine ourselves to be separate, supreme enjoyers apart from Krsna's service.

The root of the entire process of manifesting our desires and their results are described here in Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.10.30.32), "When there was a desire to think about the activities of His own energy, then the heart (the seat of the mind), the mind, the moon, determination and all desire became manifested. The sense organs are attached to the modes of material nature, and the modes of material nature are products of the false ego. The mind is subjected to all kinds of material experiences (happiness and distress), and the intelligence is the feature of the mind's deliberation." Srila Prabhupada explains, "The heart of every living entity is the seat of the Supersoul, Paramatma, a plenary expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Without His presence the living entity cannot get into the working energy according to his past deeds. The living entities who are conditioned in the material world are manifested in the creation in terms of respective inclinations inherent in them, and the requisite material body is offered to each and every one of them by the material energy under the direction of the Supersoul. This is explained in the Bhagavad-gita (9.10). When, therefore, the Supersoul is situated in the heart of the conditioned soul, the requisite mind is manifested in the conditioned soul, and he becomes conscious of his occupation as one is conscious of his duty after waking up from slumber. Therefore the material mind of the living entity develops when the Supersoul sits on his heart, after which the mind, the controlling deity (moon), and then the activities of the mind (namely thinking feeling and willing) all take place. The activities of the mind cannot begin without the manifestation of the heart, and the heart becomes manifested when the Lord wants to see the activities of the material creation...Illusioned by the material nature, the living entity identifies with false ego. More clearly, when the living entity is entrapped by the material body, he at once identifies with the bodily relationships, forgetting his own identity as spirit soul. This false ego associates with different modes of material nature, and thus the senses become attached to the modes of material nature. Mind is the instrument for feeling different material experiences, but intelligence is deliberative and can change everything for the

better. The intelligent person, therefore, can attain salvation from the illusion of material existence by proper use of intelligence. An intelligent person can detect the awkward position of material existence and thus begin to inquire as to what he is, why he is subjected to different kinds of miseries, and how to get rid of all miseries, and thus, by good association, an advanced intelligent person can turn towards the better life of self-realization. It is advised, therefore, that an intelligent person associate with the great sages and saints who are on the path of salvation. By such association, one can receive instructions, which are able to slacken the conditioned soul's attachment for matter, and thus the intelligent man gradually gets rid of the illusion of matter and false ego and is promoted to the real life of eternity, knowledge and bliss."

Chapter Five: Mind as Matter

"If you say that the demigods who rule the bodily senses cause suffering, still, how can such suffering apply to the spirit soul? This acting and being acted upon are merely interactions of the changeable senses and their presiding deities. When one limb of the body attacks another, with whom can the person in that body be angry?" In their purport, Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain that, "The brahmana is elaborately explaining the condition of self-realization, in which one understands oneself to be totally distinct from the material body and mind and the demigods who control them. By cultivating bodily happiness we are forced to accept bodily pain. Foolish conditioned souls endeavor to eliminate distress and enjoy happiness, but material happiness and distress are two sides of the same coin. One cannot relish bodily happiness without identifying oneself as the body. But as soon as such identification occurs, one is harassed by the innumerable pains and sufferings also inevitably present within the same body. Bodily happiness and distress are administered by the demigods, who can never be brought under our control; thus one remains subject to the whims of providence on the material platform. If, however, one surrenders to the Personality of Godhead, Lord Krsna, the reservoir of all pleasure, one can reach the spiritual platform, where transcendental bliss enlivens the liberated souls without any interrupting anxiety or unhappiness."

In "Krsna, The Supreme Personality of Godhead," 'Subduing Kaliya,' we find, "Our dear Lord, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, and You are also the supreme enjoyer. You have now appeared as the son of Vasudeva, a manifestation of the pure state of goodness. You are the predominating Deities of mind and intelligence, Aniruddha and Pradyumna, and You are the Lord of all Vaisnavas. By Your expansion of the catur-vyuha—namely Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Aniruddha and Pradyumna—You are the cause of the development of mind and intelligence. By Your activities only, the living entities become covered by forgetfulness or discover their real identity. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita (Fifteenth Chapter): The Lord is sitting as the Supersoul in everyone's heart,

and due to His presence the living entity either forgets himself or revives his original identity. We can partially understand that You are within our hearts as the witness of all our activities, but it is very difficult to appreciate Your presence, although every one of us can do so to some extent. You are the supreme controller of both the material and spiritual energies; therefore You are the supreme leader, although You are different from this cosmic manifestation. You are the witness and creator and the very ingredient of this cosmic manifestation. We therefore offer our respectful obeisances unto You."

"If the soul himself were the cause of happiness and distress, then we could not blame others, since happiness and distress would be simply the nature of the soul. According to this theory, nothing except the soul actually exists, and if we were to perceive something besides the soul, that would be illusion. Therefore, since happiness and distress do not actually exist in this concept, why become angry at oneself or others?"

In their purport, Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain, "Because a dead body does not feel pleasure or pain, our happiness and distress are due to our own consciousness, which is the nature of the soul. It is not, however, the original function of the soul to enjoy material happiness and suffer material distress. These are produced by ignorant material affection and enmity based on false ego. Our involvement in sense gratification drags our consciousness into the material body, where it is shocked by the inevitable bodily pains and problems.

From "Krsna, The Supreme Personality of Godhead," "The Advent of Lord Krsna," "...Why should you be so much afraid of death? Death is already born along with your birth. From the very day you took your birth, you began to die. Suppose you are twenty-five years old; that means you have already died twenty-five years. Every moment, every second, you are dying. Why then should you be so much afraid of death? Final death is inevitable. You may die either today or in a hundred years; you cannot avoid death. Why should you be so much afraid? Actually, death means annihilation of the present body. As soon as the present body stops functioning and mixes with the five elements of material nature, the living

entity within the body accepts another body, according to his present actions and reactions. It is just like when a man walks on the street; he puts forward his foot, and when he is confident that his foot is situated on sound ground, he lifts the other foot. In this way, one after the other, the bodies change and the soul transmigrates. See how the plantworms change from one twig to another so carefully! Similarly, the living entity changes his body as soon as the higher authorities decide on his next body. As long as a living entity is conditioned within this material world, he must take material bodies one after another. His next particular body is offered by the laws of nature, according to the actions and reactions of this life.

"This body is exactly like one of the bodies which we always see in dreams. During our dream of sleep, we create so many bodies according to mental creation. We have seen gold, and we have also seen a mountain, so in a dream we can see a golden mountain by combining the two ideas. Sometimes in dreams we see that we have a body which is flying in the sky, and at that time we completely forget our present body. Similarly, these bodies are changing. When you have one body, you forget the past body. During a dream, we may make contact with so many new kinds of bodies, but when we are awake we forget them all. And actually these material bodies are the creations of our mental activities. But at the present moment we do not recollect our past bodies.

"The nature of the mind is flickering. Sometimes it accepts something, and immediately it rejects the same thing. Accepting and rejecting is the process of the mind in contact with the five objects of sense gratification—form, taste, smell, sound and touch. In its speculative way, the mind comes in touch with the objects of sense gratification, and when the living entity desires a particular type of body, he gets it. Therefore, the body is an offering by the laws of material nature. The living entity accepts a body and comes out again into the material world to enjoy or suffer according to the construction of the body. Unless we have a particular type of body, we cannot enjoy or suffer according to our mental proclivities inherited from the previous life. The particular type of body is actually offered to us according to our mental condition at the time of death.

"The luminous planets like the sun, moon or stars reflect themselves in different types of reservoirs, like water, oil or ghee. The reflection moves according to the movement of the reservoir. The reflection of the moon is on the water, and the moving water makes the moon also appear to be moving, but actually the moon is not moving. Similarly, by mental concoction the living entity attains different kinds of bodies, although he has no connection with such bodies. But on account of illusion, being enchanted by the influence of maya, the living entity thinks that he belongs to a particular type of body. That is the way of conditioned life. Suppose a living entity is now in a human form of body. He thinks that he belongs to the human community, or a particular country or particular place. He identifies himself in that way and unnecessarily prepares for another body, which is not required by him. Such desires and mental concoctions are the cause of different types of bodies. The covering influence of material nature is so strong that the living entity is satisfied in whatever body he gets, and he identifies with that body with great pleasure."

"On the spiritual platform there is neither material happiness nor distress because there the living consciousness is fully engaged, without personal desire, in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord. This is the actual position of happiness, aloof from false bodily identification. Rather than uselessly becoming enraged with others for one's own foolishness, one should take to self-realization and solve the problems of life.

"And if we examine the hypothesis that the planets are the immediate cause of suffering and happiness, then also where is the relationship with the soul, who is eternal? After all, the effect of the planets applies only to things that have taken birth. Expert astrologers have moreover explained how the planets are only causing pain to each other. Therefore, since the living entity is distinct from these planets and from the material body, against whom should he vent his anger? If we assume that fruitive work is the cause of happiness and distress, we are still not dealing with the soul. The idea of material work arises when there is a spiritual actor who is conscious and a material body that undergoes the transformations of happiness and distress as a reaction to such work. Since the body has no life, it cannot be the actual recipient

of happiness and distress, nor can the soul, who is ultimately completely spiritual and aloof from the material body. Since karma thus has no ultimate basis in either the body or the soul, at whom can one become angry?"

In their purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain, "The material body is composed of earth, water, fire and air, just like bricks, stones and other objects. Our consciousness, falsely absorbed in the body, experiences happiness and distress, and fruitive work (karma) is performed when we falsely consider ourselves to be the enjoyers of the material world. False ego is thus the illusory combination within our minds of the self and body, which are actually two separate objects. Since karma, or material work, is based on illusory consciousness, these activities are also illusory and have no factual basis in either the body or the soul. When a conditioned soul falsely considers himself to be the body, and consequently the enjoyer of the material world, he tries to find pleasure in illicit connection with women. Such sinful activity is based on his false concept of being the body and thus the enjoyer of women and of the world. Since he is not the body, his activity of enjoying a woman does not actually exist. This is merely the interaction of two machines, namely the two bodies, and the interaction of the illusory consciousness of the man and woman. The sensation of illicit sex occurs within the material body and is falsely assimilated by the false ego as its own experience. Thus the miserable or pleasurable reaction of karma ultimately act upon the false ego and not upon the body, which is composed of dull matter, nor upon the soul, which has nothing to do with matter. False ego is the illusory concoction of the mind; it is specifically this false ego that is suffering happiness and distress. The soul cannot become angry at others, since he is not personally enjoying or suffering. Rather the false ego is doing this."

The chanting of the holy name of the Lord gradually frees us from the conceptions of false egoism centered around the material concepts of "I and mine." However, to take the full effect of such chanting, such chanting must be free from all offenses. Srila Prabhupada explains (SB 2.1.11), "Srila Jiva Goswami instructs that the chanting of the holy name of the Lord should be loudly done, and it should be performed offenselessly as well, as

recommended in the Padma Purana. One can deliver himself from the effects of all sins by surrendering himself unto the Lord. One can deliver himself from all offenses at the feet of the Lord by taking shelter of His holy name. But one cannot protect himself if one commits an offense at the feet of the holy name of the Lord. Such offenses are mentioned in the Padma Purana as being ten in number. The first offense is to vilify the great devotees who have preached about the glories of the Lord. The second offense is to see the holy names of the Lord in terms of worldly distinction. The Lord is the proprietor of all the universes, and therefore He may be known in different places by different names, but that does not in any way qualify the fullness of the Lord. Any nomenclature which is meant for the Supreme Lord is as holy as the others because they are all meant for the Lord. Such holy names are as powerful as the Lord, and there is no bar for anyone in any part of the creation to chant and glorify the Lord by the particular name of the Lord as it is locally understood. They are all auspicious, and one should not distinguish such names of the Lord as material commodities. The third offense is to neglect the orders of the authorized acaryas or spiritual masters. The fourth offense is to vilify scriptures or Vedic knowledge. The fifth offense is to define the holy name of the Lord in terms of one's mundane calculation. The holy name of the Lord is identical with the Lord Himself, and one should understand the holy name of the Lord to be nondifferent from Him. The sixth offense is to interpret the holy name. The Lord is not imaginary, nor is His holy name. There are persons with a poor fund of knowledge who think the Lord to be imaginary. Such a chanter of the name of the Lord cannot achieve the desired success in the matter of chanting the holy name. The seventh offense is to commit sins intentionally on the strength of the holy name. In the scriptures it is said that one can be liberated from the effects of all sinful actions simply by chanting the holy name of the Lord. One who takes advantage of this transcendental method and continues to commit sins on the expectation of neutralizing the effects of sins by chanting the holy name of the Lord is the greatest offender at the feet of the holy name. Such an offender cannot purify himself by any recommended method of purification. In other words, one may be a sinful man before chanting the holy names of the Lord, but after taking shelter in the holy name of the Lord and becoming

immune, one should strictly restrain oneself from committing sinful acts with a hope that his method of chanting the holy name will give him protection. The eighth offense is to consider the holy name of the Lord and His chanting method to be equal to some material auspicious activity. There are various kinds of good works for material benefits, but the holy name and His chanting are not mere auspicious holy services. Undoubtedly the holy name is holy service, but He should never be utilized for such purposes. Since the holy name and the Lord are of one and the same identity, one should not try to bring the holy name into the service of mankind. The idea is that the Supreme Lord is the supreme enjoyer. He is no one's servant or order supplier. Similarly, since the holy name of the Lord is identical with the Lord, one should not try to utilize the holy name for one's personal service.

"The ninth offense is to instruct those who are not interested in chanting the holy name of the Lord about the transcendental nature of the holy name. If such instruction is imparted to an unwilling audience, the act is considered to be an offense at the feet of the holy name. The tenth offense is to become uninterested in the holy name of the Lord even after hearing of the transcendental nature of the holy name. The effect of chanting the holy name of the Lord is perceived by the chanter as liberation from the conception of false egoism. False egoism is exhibited by thinking oneself to be the enjoyer of the world and thinking everything in the world to be meant for the enjoyment of one's self only. The whole materialistic world is moving under such false egoism of "I" and "mine," but the factual effect of chanting the holy name is to become free from such misconceptions."

The selfless preacher of the holy name always takes care to present the holy name to the fallen conditioned souls in a way just suitable to allow the holy name to manifest in their hearts. Just as the holy name is identical with the Lord, so too, Srimad-Bhagavatam is the literary incarnation of the Lord. Combining the holy name with regular recitation of Srimad-Bhagavatam provides a potent transcendental vehicle for returning back home, back to Godhead. Therefore the innovative preacher is ever seeking out ways to deliver the message of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Prabhupada explains (SB 1.5.16), "Srimad-Bhagavatam is the

topmost theological science, and therefore it can react on the layman as medicinal doses. Because it contains the transcendental activities of the Lord, there is no difference between the Lord and the literature. The literature is the factual literary incarnation of the Lord. So the layman can hear the narration of the activities of the Lord. Thereby they are able to associate with the Lord and thus gradually become purified from material diseases. The expert devotees can also discover novel ways and means to convert the nondevotees in terms of particular time and circumstance.

Devotional service is dynamic activity, and the expert devotees can find out competent means to inject it into the dull brains of the materialistic population. Such transcendental activities by the devotees for the service of the Lord can bring a new order of life to the foolish society of materialistic men. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His subsequent followers exhibited expert dexterity in this connection. By following the same method, one can bring the materialistic men of this age of quarrel into order for peaceful life and transcendental realization."

Chapter Six: The Two Natures

"If we accept time as the cause of happiness and distress, that experience still cannot apply to the spirit soul, since time is a manifestation of the Lord's spiritual potency and the living entities are also expansions of the Lord's spiritual potency manifesting through time. Certainly a fire does not burn its own flames or sparks, nor does the cold harm its own snowflakes or hail. In fact, the spirit soul is transcendental and beyond the experience of material happiness and distress. At whom, therefore, should one become angry?"

In their purport, Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain, "The material body is dull matter and does not experience happiness, distress or anything else. Because the spirit soul is completely transcendental, he should fix his consciousness on the transcendental Lord, who is beyond material happiness and distress. It is only when the transcendental consciousness falsely identifies with dull matter that the living entity imagines he is enjoying and suffering in the material world. This illusory identification of consciousness with matter is called false ego and is the cause of material existence."

Without understanding the true nature of the Absolute Truth, persons who lack sufficient knowledge speculate on the origin of the universe and are baffled in their attempts to comprehend how it is working, what to speak of knowing its source. Persons like the so-called scientists, researchers, and empiric philosophers can't get beyond the glaring reflection of the sun or moon, and are mystified by the workings of electricity, yet arrogantly deny the existence of God, even while postulating their own absurd theories as to how life might have begun. Srila Prabhupada likened such studies of the cosmic manifestation to intellectual gymnastics that are simply products of illusion. The illusory energy of the Lord has two phases: covering and throwing. By the throwing influence the living entities are thrown into the darkness of ignorance, and by its covering influence, the eyes of foolish men are covered over with a poor fund of knowledge, rendering them incapable of understanding anything of the Supreme Lord.

As far as time is concerned, it is said that in the spiritual world, the influence of time is conspicuous by its absence. "In that personal abode of the Lord, the material modes of ignorance and passion do not prevail, nor is there any of their influence in goodness. There is no predominance of the influence of time, so what to speak of the illusory, external energy; it cannot enter that region. Without discrimination, both the demigods and the demons worship the Lord as devotees." (SB 2.9.10) Srila Prabhupada explains further, "The kingdom of God, or the atmosphere of the Vaikuntha nature, which is called the tripad-vibhuti, is three times bigger than the material universes and is described here, as also in the Bhagavad-gita, in a nutshell. This universe, containing billions of stars and planets, is one of the billions of such universes clustered together within the compass of the mahat-tattva. And all these millions and billions of universes combined together constitute only one fourth of the magnitude of the whole creation of the Lord. There is the spiritual sky also; beyond this sky are the spiritual planets under the names of Vaikuntha, and all of them constitute three fourths of the entire creation of the Lord. God's creations are always innumerable. Even the leaves of a tree cannot be counted by a man, nor can the hairs on his head. However, foolish men are puffed up with the idea of becoming God Himself, although unable to create a hair of their own bodies. Man may discover so many wonderful vehicles of journey, but even if he reaches the moon by his much advertised spacecraft, he cannot remain there. The sane man, therefore, without being puffed up, as if he were the God of the universe, abides by the instructions of the Vedic literatures, the easiest way to acquire knowledge in transcendence. So let us know through the authority of Srimad-Bhagavatam of the nature and constitution of the transcendental world beyond the material sky. In that sky the material qualities, especially the modes of ignorance and passion, are completely absent. The mode of ignorance influences a living entity to the habit of lust and hankering, and this means that in the Viakunthalokas the living entities are free from these two things. As confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita, in the brahma-bhuta stage of life one becomes free from hankering and lamentation. Therefore the conclusion is that the inhabitants of the Vaikuntha planets are all brahma-bhuta living entities, as distinguished from the

mundane creatures who are all compact in hankering and lamentation. When one is not in the modes of ignorance and passion, one is supposed to be situated in the mode of goodness in the material world. Goodness in the material world also at times becomes contaminated by touches of the modes of passion and ignorance. In the Vaikunthaloka, it is unalloyed goodness only...The whole situation there is one of freedom from the illusory manifestation of the external energy. Although illusory energy is also part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, illusory energy is differentiated from the Lord. The illusory energy is not, however, false, as claimed by the monist philosophers. The rope accepted as a snake may be an illusion to a particular person, but the rope is a fact, and the snake is also a fact. The illusion of water on the hot desert may be illusion for the ignorant animal searching for water in the desert, but the desert and water are actual facts. Therefore the material creation of the Lord may be an illusion to the nondevotee, but to a devotee even the material creation of the Lord is a fact, as the manifestation of His external energy. But this energy of the Lord is not all. The Lord has His internal energy also, which has another creation known to be Vaikunthalokas, where there is no ignorance, no passion, no illusion and no past and present. With a poor fund of knowledge one may be unable to understand the existence of such things as the Vaikuntha atmosphere, but that does not nullify its existence. That spacecraft cannot reach these planets does not mean that there are no such planets, for they are described in the revealed scriptures.

"As quoted by Srila Jiva Goswami, we can know from the Narada-pancaratra that the transcendental world or Vaikuntha atmosphere is enriched with transcendental qualities. These transcendental qualities, as revealed through the devotional service of the Lord, are distinct from the mundane qualities of ignorance, passion and goodness. Such qualities are not attainable by the nondevotee class of men. In the Padma Purana, Uttara-khanda, it is stated that beyond the one-fourth part of God's creation is the three-fourths manifestation. The marginal line between the material manifestation and the spiritual manifestation is the Viraja River, and beyond the Virja, which is a transcendental current flowing from the perspiration of the body of the Lord, there is the

three-fourths manifestation of God's creation. This part is eternal, everlasting, without deterioration, and unlimited, and it contains the highest perfectional stage of living conditions. In the Sankhya-kaumudi it is stated that unalloyed goodness or transcendence is just opposite to the material modes. All the living entities there are eternally associated without any break, and the Lord is the chief and prime entity. In the Agama-Puranas also, the transcendental abode is described as follows: The associated members there are free to go everywhere within the creation of the Lord, and there is no limit to such creation, particularly in the region of the three-fourths magnitude. Since the nature of the region is unlimited, there is no history of such association, nor end of it.

"The conclusion may be drawn that because of the complete absence of the mundane qualities of ignorance and passion, there is no question of creation nor of annihilation. In the material world everything is created, and everything is annihilated, and the duration of life between the creation and annihilation is temporary. In the transcendental realm there is no creation and no destruction, and thus the duration of life is eternal unlimitedly. In other words, everything in the transcendental world is everlasting, full of knowledge and bliss without deterioration. Since there is no deterioration, there is no past, present and future in the estimation of time. It is clearly stated in this verse that the influence of time is conspicuous by its absence. The whole material existence is manifested by actions and reactions of elements which make the influence of time prominent in the matter of past, present and future. There are no such actions and reactions of cause and effects there, so the cycles of birth, growth, existence, transformations, deterioration and annihilation—the six material changes—are not existent there. It is the unalloyed manifestation of the energy of the Lord, without illusion as experienced here in the material world. The whole Vaikuntha existence proclaims that everyone there is a follower of the Lord. The Lord is the chief leader there, without any competition for leadership, and the people in general are all followers of the Lord. It is confirmed in the Vedas, therefore, that the Lord is the chief leader and all other living entities are subordinate to Him, for only the Lord satisfies all the needs of all other living entities."

"The false ego gives shape to illusory material existence and thus experiences material happiness and distress. The spirit soul, however, is transcendental to material nature; he can never actually be affected by material happiness and distress in any place, under any circumstance or by the agency of any person. A person who understands this has nothing whatsoever to fear from the material creation."

In their purport to the above verse, the disciples of Srila Prabhupada explain, "The brahmana has refuted six specific explanations of the happiness and distress of the living entity, and now he refutes any other explanation that might be given. On the basis of false ego, the bodily covering factually overwhelms the spirit soul, and thus one falsely enjoys and suffers that which has no real relationship with oneself. One who can understand this sublime teaching of the brahmana, spoken by the Lord to Uddhava, will never again suffer the terrible anxiety of fear within the material world."

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.10.15-17) we find the following: "Of the nine creations, the first one is the creation of the Mahat-tattva, or the sum of the total material ingredients, wherein the modes interact due to the presence of the Supreme Lord. In the second, the false ego is generated in which the material ingredients, material knowledge and material activities arise. The sense perceptions are created in the third creation, and from these the elements are generated. The fourth creation is the creation of knowledge and of working capacity. The fifth creation is that of the controlling deities by the interaction of the mode of goodness, of which the mind is the sum total. The sixth creation is the ignorant darkness of the living entity, by which the master acts as a fool." Srila Prabhupada explains, "The first emanation from the Supreme Lord for material creation is called the mahat-tattva. The interaction of the material modes is the cause of false identification, or the sense that a living being is made of material elements. This false ego is the cause of identifying the body and mind with the soul proper. Material resources and the capacity and knowledge to work are all generated in the second term of creation, after the mahat-tattva. Jnana indicates the senses which are sources of knowledge, and their controlling deities. Work entails the

working organs and their controlling deities. All these are generated in the second creation...The demigods in the higher planets are called devas because they are all devotees of Lord Visnu. Visnu-bhaktah smrto daiva asuras tad-viparyayah: all the devotees of Lord Visnu are devas, or demigods, whereas all others are asuras. This is the division of the devas and asuras. Devas are situated in the mode of goodness of material nature, whereas the asuras are situated in the modes of passion or ignorance. The demigods, or controlling deities, are entrusted with departmental management of all the different functions of the material world. For example, one of our sense organs, the eye, is controlled by light, light is distributed by the sun rays, and their controlling deity is the sun. Similarly, mind is controlled by the moon. All other senses, both for working and for acquiring knowledge, are controlled by the different demigods. The demigods are assistants of the Lord in the management of material affairs.

"After the creation of the demigods, all entities are covered by the darkness of ignorance. Each and every living being in the material world is conditioned by his mentality of lording it over the resources of material nature. Although a living entity is the master of the material world, he is conditioned by ignorance, by the false impression of being the proprietor of material things...The energy of the Lord called avidya is the bewildering factor of the conditioned souls. The material nature is called avidya, or ignorance, but to the devotees of the Lord engaged in pure devotional service, this energy becomes vidya, or pure knowledge. This is confirmed in Bhagavad-gita. The energy of the Lord transforms from mahamaya to yogamaya and appears to pure devotees in her real feature. The material nature therefore appears to function in three phases: as the creative principle of the material world, as ignorance and as knowledge. As disclosed in the previous verse, in the fourth creation the power of knowledge is also created. The conditioned souls are not originally fools, but by the influence of the avidya function of material nature they are made fools, and thus they are unable to utilize knowledge in the proper channel...By the influence of darkness, the conditioned soul forgets his relationship with the Supreme Lord and is overwhelmed

by attachment, hatred, pride, ignorance and false identification, the five kinds of illusion that cause material bondage."

We may understand more of the material creation from "Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead," 'Prayers by the Personified Vedas,' wherein Srila Prabhupada narrates, "As for the material creation, Brahma is the first created person. Before Brahma there was no living creature within this material world; it was void and dark until Brahma was born on the lotus flower that sprouted from the abdomen of Garbhodakasayi Viṣṇu. Garbhodakasayi Viṣṇu is an expansion of Karanodakasayi Viṣṇu, Karanodakasayi Viṣṇu is an expansion of Sankarsana, and Sankarsana is an expansion of Balarama, who is an immediate expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa. After the creation of Brahma, the two kinds of demigods were born; demigods like the four brothers Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanat-kumara, who are representatives of renunciation of the world, and demigods like Marici and their descendants, who are meant to enjoy this material world. From these two kinds of demigods were gradually manifested all other living entities, including the human beings. Thus all living creatures within this material world, including Brahma, all the demigods and all the Raksasas, are to be considered modern. This means that they were all born recently. Therefore, just as a person born recently in a family cannot understand the situation of his distant forefather, no one within this material world can understand the position of the Supreme Lord in the spiritual world, because the material world has only recently been created. Although they have a long duration of existence, all the manifestations of the material world—namely the time element, the living entities, the Vedas and the gross and subtle material elements—are created at some point. Thus any process manufactured within this created situation as a means for understanding the original source of creation is to be considered modern...Therefore by the process of self-realization or God realization through fruitive activities, philosophical speculation or mystic yoga, one cannot actually approach the supreme source of everything. When the creation is completely terminated—when there is no existence of the Vedas, no existence of material time, and no existence of the gross and subtle material elements, and

when all the living entities are in the nonmanifested stage, resting within Narayana—then all these manufactured processes become null and void and cannot act. Devotional service, however, is eternally going on in the eternal spiritual world. Therefore the only factual process of self realization or God realization is devotional service, and one who takes to this process takes to the real process of God realization... The most dangerous theory of the impersonalists is that when God comes as an incarnation He accepts a material body created by the three modes of material nature. This Mayavada theory has been condemned by Lord Caitanya as most offensive. He said that anyone who accepts the transcendental body of the Personality of Godhead to be made of material nature commits the greatest offense at the lotus feet of Visnu. Similarly, the Bhagavad-gita also states that when the Personality of Godhead descends in a human form, only fools and rascals deride Him. This actually occurred when Lord Krsna, Lord Rama and Lord Caitanya moved within human society as human beings...It can be concluded that all the theories of the materialistic philosophers are generated from temporary, illusory existence, like the conclusions in a dream. Such conclusions certainly cannot lead us to the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth can be realized only through devotional service. As the Lord says in the Bhagavad-gita, "Only by devotional service can one understand Me." Srila Sridhara Svami has composed a nice verse in this regard, which states, 'My dear Lord, let others engage in false argument and dry speculation, theorizing upon great philosophical theses. Let them loiter in the darkness of ignorance and illusion, falsely enjoying as if very learned scholars, although they are without any knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As far as I am concerned, I wish to be liberated simply by chanting the holy names of the all-beautiful Supreme Personality of Godhead—Madhava, Vamana, Trinayana, Sankarsana, Sripati and Govinda. Simply by chanting Your transcendental names, O Lord Madhupati, let me become free from the contamination of this material existence.'

Chapter Seven: Beyond Material Consciousness

"I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Krsna. This was approved by the previous acaryas, who were fixed in firm devotion to the Lord, Paramatma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Srila Prabhupada explains that this verse is quoted by Krsnadasa Kaviraja in his *Caitanya-caritamrta* (Madhya 3.6). "In connection with this verse, which is a quotation from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (11.23.57), Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura says that of the sixty-four items required for rendering devotional service, acceptance of the symbolic marks of sannyasa is a regulative principle. If one accepts the sannyasa order, his main business is to devote his life completely to the service of Mukunda, Krsna. If one does not completely devote his mind and body to the service of the Lord, he does not actually become a sannyasi. It is not simply a matter of changing dress. In *Bhagavad-gita* (6.1) it is also stated that one who works devotedly for the satisfaction of Krsna is a sannyasi. The dress is not sannyasa, but the attitude of service to Krsna is.

"The word *paratma-nistha* means being a devotee of Lord Krsna. *Paratma*, the Supreme Person, is Krsna. *Isvarah paramah krsnah sac-cid-ananda-vigraha*. Those who are completely dedicated to the lotus feet of Krsna in service are actually sannyasis. As a matter of formality, the devotee accepts the sannyasa dress as previous acaryas did. He also accepts the three dandas. Later *Visnusvami* considered that accepting the dress of a *tri-dandi* was *paratma-nistha*. Therefore sincere devotees add another danda, the *jiva danda*, to the three existing dandas. The *Vaisnava sannyasi* is known as a *tridandi-sannyasi*. The *Mayavadi sannyasi* accepts only one danda, not understanding the purpose of *tri-danda*. Later, many persons in the community of *Siva Swami* gave up the *atma-nistha* (devotional service) of the Lord and followed the path of *Sankaracarya*. Instead of accepting 108 names, those in the *Siva Swami sampradaya* follow the path of

Sankaracarya and accept the ten names of sannyasa. Although Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the then-existing order of sannyasa (namely eka-danda), He still recited a verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam about the tridanda-sannyasa accepted by the brahmana of Avantipura. Indirectly He declared that within that ekadanda (one danda), four dandas existed as one. Accepting ekadanda sannyasa without paratma-nistha (devotional service to Lord Krsna) is not acceptable to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In addition, according to the exact regulative principles, one should add the jiva-danda to the tri-danda. These four dandas, bound together as one, are symbolic of unalloyed devotional service to the Lord. Because the ekadandi-sannyasis of the Mayavada school are not devoted to the service of Krsna, they try to merge into the Brahman effulgence, which is a marginal position between material and spiritual existence. They accept this impersonal position as liberation. Mayavadi sannyasis, not knowing that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was a tri-dandi, think of Caitanya Mahaprabhu as an ekadandi-sannyasi; indeed, the tridandi-sannyasi is accepted as the symbolic representation of the sannyasa order. By citing this verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the sannyasa order recommended in Srimad-Bhagavatam. The Mayavadi sannyasis, who are enamored of the external energy of the Lord, cannot understand the mind of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

"To date, all the devotees of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, following in His footsteps, accept the sannyasa order and keep the sacred thread and tuft of unshaved hair. The ekadandi-sannyasis of the Mayavadi school give up the sacred thread and do not keep any tuft of hair. Therefore they are unable to understand the purport of tridanda-sannyasa, and as such they are not inclined to dedicate their lives to the service of Mukunda. They simply think of merging into the existence of Brahman because of their disgust with the material existence. The acaryas who advocate the daiva-varnasrama (the social order of catur-varnyam mentioned in Bhagavad-gita) do not accept the proposition of asura-varnasrama, which maintains that the social order of varna is indicated by birth.

"The most intimate devotee of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, namely Gadadhara Pandita, accepted the tridanda-sannyasa and

also accepted Madhava Upadhyaya as his tridandi-sannyasi disciple. It is said that from this Madhvacharya the sampradaya known in western India as the Vallabhacharya-sampradaya has begun. Srila Gopala Vasu, who is known as a smarty-acarya in the Gaudiya Vaisnava-sampradaya, later accepted the tridanda-sannyasa order from Tridandipada Prabodhananda Sarasvati. Although acceptance of tridanda-sannyasa is not distinctly mentioned in the Gaudiya Vaisnava literature, the first verse of Srila Rupa Goswami's Upadesamrta advocates that one should accept the tridanda-sannyasa order by controlling the six forces:

*vaco vegam manasah krodha-vegam
jihva-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah
sarvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat*

"One who can control the forces of speech, mind, anger, belly, tongue and genitals is known as a gosvami and is competent to accept disciples all over the world.' The followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu never accepted the Mayavada order of sannyasa, and for this they cannot be blamed. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted Sridhara Svami, who was a tridandi-sannyasi, but the Mayavadi sannyasis, not understanding Sridhara Svami, sometimes think that Sridhara Svami belonged to the Mayavada ekadanda-sannyasa community. Actually this was not the case."

The material nature is aptly described by the Avanti brahmana as an insurmountable ocean of nescience. The only true way to cross over this dangerous ocean is through devotional service to the Supreme Lord. In Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.9.5-6) we find, "O my Lord, persons who smell the aroma of Your lotus feet, carried by the air of Vedic sound through the holes of the ears, accept Your devotional service. For them You are never separated from the lotus of their hearts. O my Lord, the people of the world are embarrassed by all material anxieties—they are always afraid. They always try to protect wealth, body and friends, they are filled with lamentation and unlawful desires and paraphernalia, and they avariciously base their undertakings on the perishable conceptions

of 'my' and 'mine.' As long as they do not take shelter of Your safe lotus feet, they are full of such anxieties."

Srila Prabhupada comments as follows: "For the pure devotee of the Lord there is nothing beyond the lotus feet of the Lord, and the Lord knows that such devotees do not wish anything more than that. The word *tu* specifically establishes this fact. The Lord also does not wish to be separated from the lotus hearts of those pure devotees. That is the transcendental relationship between the pure devotees and the Personality of Godhead. Because the Lord does not wish to separate Himself from the hearts of such pure devotees, it is understood that they are specifically dearer than the impersonalists. The relationship of the pure devotees with the Lord develops because of devotional service to the Lord on the authentic basis of Vedic authority. Such pure devotees are not mundane sentimentalists, but are factually realists because their activities are supported by the Vedic authorities who have given aural reception to the facts mentioned in the Vedic literatures.

"The word *paraya* is very significant. *Para bhakti*, or spontaneous love of God, is the basis of an intimate relationship with the Lord. This highest stage of relationship with the Lord can be attained simply by hearing about Him (His name, form, quality, etc.) from authentic sources like *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, recited by pure, unalloyed devotees of the Lord.

"One may question how one can always think of the Lord in regard to His name, fame, quality, etc., if one is embarrassed by thoughts of family affairs. Everyone in the material world is full of thoughts about how to maintain his family, how to protect his wealth, how to keep pace with friends and relatives, etc. Thus he is always in fear and lamentation, trying to keep up with the status quo. In answer to this question, this verse spoken by Brahma is very appropriate.

"A pure devotee of the Lord never thinks of himself as the proprietor of his home. He surrenders everything unto the supreme control of the Lord, and thus he has no fear for maintaining his family or protecting the interests of his family. Because of this surrender, he no longer has any attraction for wealth. Even if there

is attraction for wealth, it is not for sense enjoyment, but for the service of the Lord. A pure devotee may be attracted to accumulating wealth just like an ordinary man, but the difference is that a devotee acquires money for the service of the Lord, whereas the ordinary man acquires money for his sense enjoyment. Thus the acquisition of wealth by a devotee is not a source of anxieties, as is the case for a worldly man. And because a pure devotee accepts everything in the sense of serving the Lord, the poisonous teeth of accumulation of wealth are extracted. If a snake has its poison removed and bites a man, there is no fatal effect. Similarly, wealth accumulated in the cause of the Lord has no poisonous teeth, and the effect is not fatal. A pure devotee is never entangled in material worldly affairs even though he may remain in the world like an ordinary man."

For the sincere devotee of the Lord, he is in the world, but not of it. The pure devotees of the Lord choose to remain here only for the benefit of the conditioned souls who are rotting in the grave of material sense enjoyment. "O great actor, my Lord, all these poor creatures are constantly perplexed by hunger, thirst, severe cold, secretion and bile, attacked by coughing winter, blasting summer, rains and many other disturbing elements, and overwhelmed by strong sex urges and indefatigable anger. I take pity on them, and I am very much aggrieved for them. (SB 3.9.8)

Srila Prabhupada elaborates, "A pure devotee of the Lord like Brahma and persons in his disciplic succession are always unhappy to see the perplexities of the conditioned souls, who are suffering the onslaughts of the threefold miseries which pertain to the body and mind, to the disturbances of material nature, and to many other such material disadvantages. Not knowing adequate measures for relieving such difficulties, suffering persons sometimes pose themselves as leaders of the people, and the unfortunate followers are put into further disadvantages under such so-called leadership. This is like a blind man's leading another blind man to fall into a ditch. Therefore, unless the devotees of the Lord take pity on them and teach them the right path, their lives are hopeless failures. The devotees of the Lord who voluntarily take the responsibility of raising the foolish materialistic sense enjoyers are as confidential to the Lord as Lord Brahma."

At the present moment there is cynical propaganda implying that unless people take to artificial contraceptive methods and abortion, the world will be plunged into greater misery due to overpopulation. Because people have no idea of the inconceivable, unlimited greatness of the Supreme Lord, they are swayed by such demoniac propositions. In truth, there is never any scarcity, save for Krsna consciousness. Krsna is always the Complete Whole and the Complete Balance. By this is meant that He adjusts everything perfectly to accommodate His desires and the desires of all living beings.

For the devotees, the only painful burden experienced is the burden of atheistic man. In their great compassion and humility, the devotees take many chances just to convert such Godless miscreants into bhaktas. This preaching work is at times a thankless task, but the devotees willingly accept it as their service to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.3.14) we find, "(After the end of the Battle of Kuruksetra, the Lord said:) The abatement of the earth's great burden, eighteen aksauhinis, has now been effected with the help of Drona, Bisma, Arjuna and Bhima. But what is this? There is still the strength of the Yadu dynasty, born of Myself, which may be a more unbearable burden."

Srila Prabhupada comments, "It is a wrong theory that due to an increase in population the world becomes overburdened and therefore there are wars and other annihilating processes. The earth is never overburdened. The heaviest mountains and oceans on the face of the earth hold more living entities than there are human beings, and they are not overburdened. If a census were taken of all the living beings on the surface of the earth, certainly it would be found that the number of humans is not even five percent of the total number of living beings. If the birthrate of human beings is increasing, then the birthrate of other living beings is increasing proportionately. The birthrate of lower animals—beasts, aquatics, birds, etc. —is far greater than that of human beings. There is an adequate arrangement for food for all the living beings all over the earth by the order of the Supreme Lord, and He can arrange more

and more if there is actually a disproportionate increase of living beings.

"Therefore, there is no question of an increase in population causing a burden. The earth became overburdened due to dharma-glani, or irregular discharge of the Lord's desire. The Lord appeared on the earth to curb the increase in miscreants, and not the increase in population, as is wrongly put forward by the mundane economist. When Lord Krsna appeared, there had been a sufficient increase in miscreants who had violated the desire of the Lord. The material creation is meant for fulfilling the desire of the Lord, and His desire is that the conditioned souls who are unfit to enter into the kingdom of God have a chance to improve their conditions for entering. The entire process of cosmic arrangement is intended just to give a chance to the conditioned souls to enter the kingdom of God, and there is an adequate arrangement for their maintenance by the nature of the Lord.

"Therefore, although there may be a great increase in population on the surface of the earth, if the people are exactly in line with God consciousness and are not miscreants, such a burden on the earth is a source of pleasure for her. There are two kinds of burdens. There is the burden of the beast and the burden of love. The burden of the beast is unbearable, but the burden of love is a source of pleasure. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti describes the burden of love very practically. He says that the burden of the husband on the young wife, the burden of the child on the lap of the mother, and the burden of wealth on the businessman, although actually burdens from the viewpoint of heaviness, are sources of pleasure, and in the absence of such burdensome objects, one may feel the burden of separation, which is heavier to bear than the actual burden of love. When Lord Krsna referred to the burden of the Yadu dynasty on the earth, He referred to something different than the burden of the beast. The large numbers of family members born of Lord Krsna counted to some millions and were certainly a great increase in the population of the earth, but because all of them were expansions of the Lord Himself by His transcendental plenary expansions, they were a source of great pleasure for the earth. When the Lord referred to them in connection to the burden of the earth, He had in mind their imminent disappearance from the

earth. All the members of the family of Lord Krsna were incarnations of different demigods, and they were to disappear from the surface of the earth along with the Lord. When He referred to the unbearable heaviness on the earth in connection with the Yadu dynasty, He was referring to the burden of their separation. Srila Jiva Goswami confirms this inference."

Chapter Eight: Mental Detachment

"Lord Sri Krsna said: Thus becoming detached upon the loss of his property, this sage gave up his moroseness. He left home, taking sannyasa, and began to travel about the earth. Even when insulted by foolish rascals he remained unswerved from his duty and chanted this song."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain, "Those becoming free from the materialistic way of life, which involves grueling austerities performed to acquire money, may chant the preceding song of the Vaisnava sannyasi. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura states that if one is not capable of listening to the song of this sannyasi, then one will certainly remain an obedient servant of material illusion."

From "Krsna, The Supreme Personality of Godhead," 'Prayers by the Personified Vedas,' Srila Prabhupada explains, "...The sparks of the living entities, as we understand from the Bhagavad-gita, are injected into material nature, and then they come out. The body of the living entity in different forms is supplied by the Supreme Lord. The father and mother give the body necessary for the living entity under certain conditions. The living entity transmigrates from one body to another according to his different desires, which in the subtle form of intelligence, mind and false ego accompany him from body to body. By superior arrangement a living entity is put into the womb of a certain type of material body, and then he develops a similar body. Therefore, the spirit soul is not produced from matter; it takes on a particular type of body under superior arrangement. According to our present experience, this material world is a combination of matter and spirit. The spirit is moving the matter. The spirit soul (the living entity) and matter are different energies of the Supreme Lord, and since both the energies are products of the Supreme Eternal, or the Supreme Truth, they are factual, not false. Because the living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme, he exists eternally. Therefore, for him there cannot be any question of birth or death. So-called birth and death occur because of the material body. The Vedic version 'sarvam khalv idam brahma' means that since both

the energies have emanated from the Supreme Brahman, everything we experience is nondifferent from Brahman.

"There are many arguments about the existence of this material world, but the Vaisnava philosophical conclusion is the best. The example of the earthen pot is very suitable: the form of the earthen pot may be temporary, but it has a specific purpose. The purpose of the earthen pot is to carry water from one place to another. Similarly, this material body, although temporary, has a special use. The living entity is given a chance from the beginning of the creation to evolve different kinds of material bodies according to the reserve desires he has accumulated from time immemorial. The human form of body is a special chance in which the developed form of consciousness can be utilized.

"Sometimes the Mayavadi philosophers push forward the argument that if this material world is truth, then why are householders advised to give up their connection with this material world and take sannyasa? But the Vaisnava philosopher's view of sannyasa is not that because the world is false one must therefore give up material activities. The purpose of Vaisnava sannyasa is to utilize things as they are intended to be utilized. Srila Rupa Goswami has given transcendentalists two formulas for dealing with this material world. When a Vaisnava renounces the materialistic way of life and takes to sannyasa, it is not on the conception of the falsity of the material world but to devote himself fully to engaging everything in the service of the Lord. Srila Rupa Goswami therefore gives this formula: "One should be unattached to the material world because material attachment is meaningless. The entire material world, the entire cosmic manifestation, belongs to God, Krsna. Therefore, everything should be utilized for Krsna, and the devotee should remain unattached to material things." This is the purpose of Vaisnava sannyasa. A materialist sticks to the world for sense gratification, but a Vaisnava sannyasi, although not accepting anything for his personal sense gratification, knows the art of utilizing everything for the service of the Lord. Srila Rupa Goswami has therefore criticized the Mayavadi sannyasis with his second formula: 'Because the Mayavadis do not know that everything has a utilization for the service of the Lord, they take the world to be

false and falsely think they are liberated from the contamination of the material world.' Since everything is an expansion of the energy of the Supreme Lord, the expansions are as real as the Supreme Lord is."

Srila Prabhupada oft said that, "Purity is the force and utility is the principle." If we are pure in consciousness then we will be able to properly utilize things in the service of the Lord. Without the requisite purity, none of our endeavors will bear good fruit.

For most of us, our purification comes throughout a lifetime of devotional service, associating with devotees and serving the mission of the spiritual master. If we are serious to utilize everything in the service of guru and Krsna, we are acting on the platform of sannyasa. The idea of taking sannyasa as a last-ditch means to become more serious is dangerous, since if we are not prepared for the rigors of such a lifestyle, we will fall and cast a dark shadow on the sanctity of the sannyasa asrama.

His Holiness Bhakti Tirtha Swami comments (Reflections on Sacred Teachings, Volume Three), "...The Vedic system was designed to carry people through many experiences. For instance at an early age one would live in the guru's asrama as a brahmacari. Later one would take to the grhastha life to deal with so many different issues. Then a person would be ready for vanaprastha and later sannyasa. By that time, a person has experienced different relationships and economic development, and has produced a few little children who look like them. They have done everything and can take to Krsna consciousness in a deeper way. Actually, at this stage it is very deep because the mind does not carry feelings of regret. When maya tries to kick in, they just kick maya right out because they know the consequences. On the other hand, it is an unfortunate scenario when we find a sannyasi who is now looking for a wife at the age of fifty. Maya suddenly kicks in and reminds the person of the experience he missed. Someone else might suddenly become enamored by money and become deviant as a result. We may still have a taste for many other desires that can spring forth if the bhakti has not matured."

As our devotional attitude matures we realize more and more how our lives are meant for serving others. In every asrama this attitude is to be cultivated. Sannyasa is therefore the external manifestation of this mental attitude. When we see a sannyasi we can understand that here is someone whose love for others is so great that he has renounced all worldly activities for personal sense gratification just to assist others in a mood of selfless love. This sentiment is not artificial or contrived. It transcends mundane philanthropy or pious works. And while renunciation is certainly a component of sannyasa, it is not everything. If we are not also developed in our love for others to the degree of happily accepting greater renunciation, we will not be complete. Just as for householders, if the relationship is based on selfishness and personal sense gratification, how long can such a relationship last?

Krsna consciousness does not attempt to proceed in a piecemeal fashion, whereby one may try to love and care for one person, then for one's children, neighbors and so on. Krsna consciousness is the direct process of watering the root. By developing our love for the Supreme Being, our love for all other beings naturally unfolds. We can see then how sannyasa is a manifestation of love in a much broader sense. We complement our spirituality through foregoing our attendance to personal material comforts with a mind to enhance the development of our higher sentiments for greater love. This is the sacrifice of self that brings the true emotion of love into the forefront. We see such devotees knowing them as great souls whose association everyone constantly seeks. They are giving love and inspiration to such an extent that they are actually receiving ever more love themselves. Indeed, everyone around them pours their love toward such a person, reciprocating in kind.

His Holiness Bhakti Tirtha Swami explains further (Reflections on Sacred Teachings, Volume Three), "We are eternally part of the Lord and part of the eternal romance. We integrally belong to the eternal union where everything is interconnected or is about to make a connection. The main danger to avoid is unhealthy possessiveness or maintaining material attachments of 'I' and 'mine.' Celibacy is not greater or more

spiritual than a grhastha relationship. One asrama is not better than the other. This conception is nonsense.

"The purpose of celibacy is to decrease this feeling of possessiveness, and if a person properly practices, it can assist them in this way. If the practitioner properly honors celibacy, it will help them relinquish this mentality of seeing others as objects of enjoyment. It will help them realize that they do not have to own the experience or experience another person in order to relate to them and honor their existence. It can help the person focus with more humility and submissiveness due to a decreasing attachment to material things. Hopefully it will help the person develop more of a genuine heart connection, which ultimately means minimizing the body and physicality.

"However, celibacy alone does not necessarily produce these results. If someone practices celibacy without love or proper attachments, it then produces a hard heart and will cause a person to feel angry, disturbed, restless, and anxious."

In the end it is about our attentive chanting and strictly following the process of Krsna consciousness. If we do this then whatever asrama we find ourselves in will be of less importance than the process itself. As stated in Sri Harinama Cintamani (69), "A devotee who has taken shelter of the holy name can live in any situation—in household life or in the forest as a hermit. If the household situation is conducive to chanting, then the life of a mendicant is unnecessary and wrong; but if household life is unfavorable, the devotee is duty-bound to forsake home. It is a terrible offense to commit sins on the strength of chanting; this offender is forever banished from the path of devotional service."

"No other force besides his own mental confusion makes the soul experience happiness and distress. His perception of friends, neutral parties and enemies and the whole material life he builds around this perception are simply created out of ignorance."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples comment, "Everyone is working hard to please their friends, defeat their enemies and maintain the status quo with neutral parties. These relations are certainly based on the material body and do not exist beyond the

body's inevitable demise. They are called ignorance, or material illusion."

The varnasrama system, in its purest form, places each person into social/occupational and spiritual categories according to their true qualifications. If we use this framework and add the powerful component process of devotional service, following the four regulative principles and chanting a minimum of sixteen rounds of the Hare Krsna maha-mantra each day, we will see our lives become transformed and transcendental to the boundaries of social and spiritual convention. The process of devotional service is so potent that even a little progress on its path can save us from the greatest danger.

In the greater world surrounding us, a world from which we were once mercifully rescued ourselves, everyone is struggling hard in the pursuit of so-called happiness that always continues to elude them. If we think about it, happiness should come freely, not after a long, grueling struggle. Indeed, if happiness can only come after repeated punishment and calamity, what is the value of such happiness?

We all have our friends, relatives, well wishers and parties neutral to our desires. This will undoubtedly continue on as always. The Krsna conscious proposal is not implying we negate these relationships, but rather, only to purify them in the context of our mental perceptions of them. In other words, we accept things favorable for the execution of Krsna consciousness and reject things unfavorable. This is accomplished under the guidance of the expert spiritual master. We can only do this by placing Krsna and the order of the spiritual master in the center of our activities.

If we live at home with our husbands, wives and children, etc., we should make our homes temples of the Supreme Lord. We should solemnly dedicate one appropriate room in our home or apartment solely for the service of the Lord. Everyone without exception can at least have Gaura-Nitai Deities prominently displayed in one room of their homes. This room can then serve as a type of prayer and meditation room, where we offer the Lord's Deity form foods and drink, and where we chant our japa and have kirtana before the Deity. If a stone or brass Deity is unavailable,

we can just as effectively use a picture of the Panca-tattva to offer our worship.

Everything we do in our lives should be performed as service to the Supreme Lord, always in accordance with the four regulative principles and thereby keeping Krsna in the forefront of our thoughts, words and deeds. This is the meaning of the sannyasa vow of dedicating body, mind and words to the service of the Supreme Lord. Our advancement in Krsna consciousness depends primarily on receiving the mercy of the Vaisnavas and following the details of the process of devotional service as given us by our previous acaryas. It will come, over time, as a matter of practical realization and not necessarily because we have taken additional vows.

If our lives are dedicated to serving the mission of guru and Krsna we may indeed find renewed vigor by accepting the further vows of austerity in the sannyasa asrama. However, we must first be completely chaste to our preliminary vows of following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds each day without fail. If we are struggling to chant our rounds or are always distracted by the allurements of the material energy, we need to first become secure in our basic understanding and practice of Krsna consciousness.

The material energy is very strong and not everyone with a so-called initiated spiritual name is necessarily striving to serve our best interests. This can be witnessed by the nonsense commonly found on the internet with regard to gossip, blasphemy and misinformation. If we are weak in our habits of avoiding the ten offenses to the holy name, the material energy will easily lure us into viewing sites that offer only offense into our lives. Reading about blasphemy of a Vaisnava is as serious as hearing it firsthand. Therefore we must be disciplined enough to steer clear of such injurious distractions.

It is not easy becoming Krsna conscious in the Western countries, where practically every billboard, television and radio advertisement, every song and every gesture is loaded with sexual innuendo and crassness. We must have a certain feeling and degree of disgust with the material world and take positive steps to

insulate ourselves from the influence of such things. Otherwise we will remain at risk of falling again into its grasp. This does not mean we become hermits, but rather, that our realizations are bolstered by real, practical transcendental knowledge. We can gain this by carefully studying Srila Prabhupada's books and those of the other Vaisnava acaryas in the association of other devotees. In this way we must constantly reinforce our beliefs that this material world is factually a place of misery and that our valuable human lives are meant for becoming freed from the looming disaster of sickness, old age and ultimate death. Certainly, of all the things we may face in life, what could be more perilous or momentous than the time of our eventual death?

The material nature has lulled us into accepting the unnatural circumstance of birth, sickness, old age and death as though it were an unavoidable part of our existence. We cannot be reminded enough that we are not these temporary material bodies that we inhabit. We are eternal spirit souls, forever free and unlimitedly happy, full of transcendental knowledge. But we have somehow fallen into the ocean of misery, beset by birth, death, old age and disease. Who would not want to trade such a pitiful existence for the great gift of spiritual emancipation? It is all ours for the taking. We only need to dedicate our lives in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord. Even if at first we are unsure or hesitant, if we only take up this process as an experiment, we will soon see the results. It is our birthright and destiny as human beings. By the mercy of Krsna one is directed to the spiritual master. By the mercy of the spiritual master, one is given the means to serve Sri Krsna. This is the simple and sublime method for obtaining self-realization, God realization, Krsna consciousness.

Chapter Nine: The End of Mind

"No other force besides his own mental confusion makes the soul experience happiness and distress. His perception of friends, neutral parties and enemies and the whole material life he builds around this perception are simply created out of ignorance."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples explain, "Everyone is working hard to please their friends, defeat their enemies and maintain the status quo with neutral parties. These relations are certainly based on the material body and do not exist beyond the body's inevitable demise. They are called ignorance, or material illusion.

"My dear Uddhava, fixing your intelligence on Me, you should thus completely control the mind. This is the essence of the science of yoga. Anyone who listens to or recites this song of the sannyasi, which presents scientific knowledge of the Absolute, and who thus meditates upon it with full attention, will never again be overwhelmed by the dualities of material happiness and distress."

Srila Prabhupada's disciples confirm, "The Vaisnava sannyasi took shelter of the devotional service of the Lord and thus could overcome the illusory potency of his worshipable object, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He himself meditated upon and heard this song, and also taught it to others. Having received the Lord's mercy, he enlightened other conditioned souls with transcendental intelligence so that they could also follow in the footsteps of the devotees of the Lord. Religion actually means to become a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord in loving service. Those who are trying to enjoy the material world or merely renounce it to avoid personal inconvenience cannot actually understand love of Godhead, in which the only objective is the satisfaction of the Lord."

Another pointed lesson in this regard comes to us from Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.13.7-46) we find, "Literature that is a useless waste of time—in other words, literature without spiritual benefit—should be rejected. One should not become a professional teacher as a means of earning one's livelihood, nor should one indulge in arguments and counterarguments. Nor should one take shelter of any cause or faction." Srila Prabhupada comments, "A

person desiring to advance in spiritual understanding should be extremely careful to avoid reading ordinary literature. The world is full of ordinary literature that creates unnecessary agitation in the mind. Such literature, including newspapers, dramas, novels and magazines, is factually not meant for advancement in spiritual knowledge. Indeed, it has been described as a place of pilgrimage for crows. Anyone advancing in spiritual knowledge must reject such literature. Furthermore, one should not concern oneself with the conclusions of various logicians or philosophers. Of course, those who preach sometimes need to argue with the contentions of opponents, but as much as possible one should avoid an argumentative attitude. In this conclusion Srila Madhvacarya says: 'There is no need to take shelter of unnecessary literature or concern oneself with so many so-called philosophers and thinkers who are useless for spiritual advancement. Nor should one accept a disciple for the sake of fashion or popularity. One should be callous to these so-called sastras, neither opposing nor favoring them, and one should not earn one's livelihood by taking money for explaining sastra. A sannyasi must always be neutral and seek the means to advance in spiritual life, taking full shelter under the lotus feet of the Lord.'

"A sannyasi must not present allurements of material benefits to gather many disciples, nor should he unnecessarily read many books or give discourses as a means of livelihood. He must never attempt to increase material opulences unnecessarily. A peaceful, equipoised person who is factually advanced in spiritual consciousness does not need to accept the symbols of a sannyasi, such as the tridanda and kamandalu. According to necessity, he may sometimes accept these symbols and sometimes reject them." Srila Prabhupada explains, "...For paramahamsas, or sannyasis in the Vaisnava order, preaching is the first duty. To preach, such sannyasis may accept the symbols of sannyasa, such as the danda or kamandalu, or sometimes they may not. Generally the Vaisnava sannyasis, being paramahamsas, are automatically called babajis, and they do not carry a kamandalu or danda. Such a sannyasi is free to accept or reject the marks of sannyasa. His only thought is, 'Where is there an opportunity to spread Krsna consciousness?' Sometimes the Krsna consciousness movement sends its

representative sannyasis to foreign countries where the danda and kaman-dalu are not very much appreciated. We send our preachers in ordinary dress to introduce our books and philosophy. Our only concern is to attract people to Krsna consciousness. We may do this in the dress of sannyasis or in the regular dress of gentlemen. Our only concern is to spread interest in Krsna consciousness.

"Although a saintly person may not expose himself to the vision of human society, by his behavior his purpose is disclosed. To human society he should present himself like a restless child, and although he is the greatest thoughtful orator, he should present himself like a dumb man. As a historical example of this, learned sages recite the story of an ancient discussion between Prahlada Maharaja and a great saintly person who was feeding himself like a python." Srila Prabhupada comments, "The saintly person met by Prahlada Maharaja was undergoing ajagara-vrtti, the living conditions of a python, which does not go anywhere but sits in one place for years and eats whatever is automatically available. Prahlada Maharaja, along with his associates, met this great saint and spoke to him as follows."

"Prahlada Maharaja, the most dear servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, once went out touring the universe with some of his confidential associates just to study the nature of saintly persons. Thus he arrived at the bank of the Kaveri, where there was a mountain known as Sahya. There he found a great saintly person who was lying on the ground, covered with dirt and dust, but who was deeply spiritually advanced. Neither by that saintly person's activities, by his bodily features, by his words nor by the symptoms of his varnasrama status could people understand whether he was the same person they had known. The advanced devotee Prahlada Maharaja duly worshipped and offered obeisances to the saintly person who had adopted a python's means of livelihood. And thus after worshipping the saintly person and touching his own head to the saint's lotus feet, Prahlada Maharaja, in order to understand him, inquired very submissively as follows. Seeing the saintly person to be quite fat, Prahlada Maharaja said: 'My dear sir, you undergo no endeavor to earn your livelihood, but you have a stout body, exactly like that of a materialistic enjoyer. I know that if one is very rich and has nothing to do, he becomes

extremely fat by eating and sleeping and performing no work." Srila Prabhupada explains, "Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura did not like his disciples to become very fat in the course of time. He would become very anxious upon seeing his fat disciples becoming bhogis, or enjoyers of the senses. This attitude is herewith confirmed by Prahlada Maharaja, who was surprised to see a saintly person adopting ajagara-vrtti and becoming very fat. In the material world also, we generally see that when a man who is poor and skinny gradually endeavors to earn money through business or some other means and he then gets the money, he enjoys the senses to his satisfaction. By enjoying the senses one becomes fat. Therefore in spiritual advancement becoming fat is not at all satisfactory."

"O brahmana, fully in knowledge of transcendence, you have nothing to do, and therefore you are lying down. It is also understood that you have no money for sense enjoyment. How then has your body become so fat? Under the circumstances, if you do not consider my question impudent, kindly explain how this has happened." Srila Prabhupada remarks, "Generally those engaged in spiritual advancement take food only once, either in the afternoon or in the evening. If one takes food only once, naturally he does not become fat. The learned sage, however, was quite fat, and therefore Prahlada Maharaja was very much surprised. Because of being experienced in self-realization, a transcendentalist certainly becomes bright faced. And one who is advanced in self-realization must be considered to possess the body of a brahmana. Because the bright faced saintly person was lying down and not working and yet was quite fat, Prahlada Maharaja was puzzled and wanted to question him about this."

Narada Muni continued: "Your Honor appears learned, expert and intelligent in every way. You can speak very well, saying things that are pleasing to the heart. You see that people in general are engaged in fruitive activities, yet you are lying there inactive. When the saintly person was thus questioned by Prahlada Maharaja, the King of the Daityas, he was captivated by this shower of nectarean words, and he replied to the inquisitiveness of Prahlada Maharaja with a smiling face. The saintly brahmana said: O best of the asuras, Prahlada Maharaja, who are recognized by

advanced and civilized men, you are aware of the different stages of life because of your inherent transcendental eyes, with which you can see a man's character and thus know clearly the results of acceptance and rejection of things as they are. Narayana, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is full of all opulences, is predominant within the core of your heart because of your being a pure devotee. He drives away all the darkness of ignorance, as the sun drives away the darkness of the universe." Srila Prabhupada comments, "The words bhaktya kevalaya indicate that simply by executing devotional service one can become full of all knowledge. Krsna is the master of all knowledge. The Lord is situated in everyone's heart, and when the Lord is pleased with a devotee, the Lord instructs him. Only to the devotees, however, does the Lord give instructions by which to advance further and further in devotional service. To others, the nondevotees, the Lord gives instructions according to the manner of their surrender. The pure devotee is described by the words bhaktya kevalaya. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura explains that bhaktya kevalaya means, 'unmixed with fruitive activities or speculative knowledge.' Simply surrendering at the lotus feet is the cause of all a devotee's enlightenment and awareness."

"My dear King, although you know everything, you have posed some questions, which I shall try to answer according to what I have learned by hearing from authorities. I cannot remain silent in this regard, for a personality like you is just fit to be spoken to by one who desires self-purification." Srila Prabhupada comments, "A saintly person doesn't wish to speak to anyone and everyone, and he is therefore grave and silent. Generally a common man does not need to be advised. Unless one is prepared to take instructions, it is said that a saintly person should not address him, although sometimes, because of great kindness, a saintly person speaks to ordinary men. As for Prahlada Maharaja, however, since he was not a common, ordinary man, whatever questions he posed would have to be answered, even by a great and experienced personality. Therefore the saintly brahmana did not remain silent, but began to answer. These answers, however, were not concocted by him. This is indicated by the words yatha-srutam, meaning 'as I have heard from authorities.' In the parampara

system, when the questions are bona fide the answers are bona fide. No one should attempt to create or manufacture answers. One must refer to the sastras and give answers according to Vedic understanding. The words yatha-srutam refer to Vedic knowledge. The Vedas are known as sruti because this knowledge is received from authorities. The statements of the Vedas are known as sruti-pramana. One should quote evidence from the sruti—the Vedas or Vedic literature—then one's statements will be correct. Otherwise one's words will proceed from mental concoction."

"Because of insatiable material desires, I was being carried away by the waves of material nature's laws, and thus I was engaging in different activities, struggling for existence in various forms of life." Srila Prabhupada explains, "As long as a living entity wants to fulfill various types of material desire, he must continuously change from one body to accept another. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura explains that as a small piece of grass falls in a river and is tossed about with different types of wood and tree branches, the living entity floats in the ocean of material existence and is dashed about and tossed amidst material conditions. This is called the struggle for existence. One kind of fruitive activity causes the living being to take one form of body, and because of actions performed in that body, another body is created. One must therefore stop these material activities, and the chance to do so is given in the human form of life. Specifically, our energy to act should be engaged in the service of the Lord, for then materialistic activities will automatically stop. One must fulfill one's desires by surrendering unto the Supreme Lord, for He knows how to fulfill them. Even though one may have material desires, one should therefore engage in the devotional service of the Lord. That will purify one's struggle for existence. Thus, 'A person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead.' (Bhag. 2.3.10)"

"In the course of the evolutionary process, which is caused by fruitive activities due to undesirable material sense gratification, I have received this human form of life, which can lead to the heavenly planets, to liberation, to the lower species, or to rebirth among human beings." Srila Prabhupada speaks in his purport,

"All living entities within this material world are undergoing the cycle of birth and death according to the laws of nature. The struggle of birth and death in different species may be called the evolutionary process, but in the Western world it has been wrongly explained. Darwin's theory of evolution from animal to man is incomplete because the theory does not present the reverse condition, namely evolution from man to animal. In this verse, however, evolution has been very well explained on the strength of Vedic authority. Human life, which is obtained in the course of the evolutionary process, is a chance for elevation or for degradation. If one uses this human form of life properly, he can elevate himself to the higher planetary systems, where material happiness is many thousands of times better than on this planet, or one may cultivate knowledge by which to become free from the evolutionary process and be reinstated in one's original spiritual life. This is called apavarga, or liberation."

"In this human form of life, a man and a woman unite for the sensual pleasure of sex, but by actual experience we have observed that none of them are happy. Therefore, seeing the contrary results, I have stopped taking part in materialistic activities." Srila Prabhupada explains, "...Every living entity is always eager to enjoy sex life because materialistic life consists of eating, sleeping, sex and fear. In animal life, eating, sleeping, sexual enjoyment and fear cannot be regulated, but for human society the plan is that although men, like animals, must be allowed to eat, sleep, enjoy sex and take protection from fear, they must be regulated. The Vedic plan for eating recommends that one take jajna-sista, or prasada, food offered to Krsna. 'The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food that is offered first for sacrifice.' (Bg. 3.13) In material life, one commits sinful activities, especially in eating, and because of sinful activities one is condemned by nature's laws to accept another body, which is imposed as punishment...One should not enjoy sex life like hogs and eat everything even to the limit of stool. A human being should eat prasada offered to the Deity and should enjoy sex life according to the Vedic injunctions. He should engage himself in the business of Krsna consciousness, he should save himself from the fearful condition of material existence, and

he should sleep only to recover from fatigue from working hard. The learned brahmana said that since everything is misused by fruitive workers, he had retired from all fruitive activities."

"The actual form of life for the living entities is one of spiritual happiness, which is real happiness. This happiness can be achieved only when one stops all materialistic activities. Material sense enjoyment is simply imagination. Therefore, considering this subject matter, I have ceased from all material activities and am lying down here. In this way the conditioned soul living within the body forgets his self-interest because he identifies himself with the body. Because the body is material, his natural tendency is to be attracted by the varieties of the material world. Thus the living entity suffers the miseries of material existence. Just as a deer, because of ignorance, cannot see the water within a well covered by grass, but runs after water elsewhere, the living entity covered by the material body does not see the happiness within himself, but runs after happiness in the material world." Srila Prabhupada explains, "This is an accurate example depicting how the living entity, because of lack of knowledge, runs after happiness outside his own self. When one understands his real identity as a spiritual being, he can understand the supreme spiritual being, Krsna, and the real happiness exchanged between Krsna and one's self. It is very interesting to note how this verse points to the body's growth from the spirit soul. The modern materialistic scientist thinks that life grows from matter, but actually the fact is that matter grows from life. The life, or the spiritual soul, is compared herein to water, from which clumps of matter grow in the form of grass. One who is ignorant of scientific knowledge of the spirit soul does not look inside the body to find happiness in the soul; instead, he goes outside to search for happiness, just as a deer without knowledge of the water beneath the grass goes out to the desert to find water. The Krsna consciousness movement is trying to remove the ignorance of misled human beings who are trying to find water outside the jurisdiction of life. The taste of water is Krsna. To quench one's thirst, one must taste water by association with Krsna. This is the Vedic injunction."

"The living entity tries to achieve happiness and rid himself of the causes of distress, but because the various bodies of the

living entities are under the full control of material nature, all his plans in different bodies, one after another, are ultimately baffled." Srila Prabhupada comments, "As soon as a living entity is victimized by material desires to lord it over material nature, he is subjected to the control of material nature, which is supervised by the Supreme Soul. The result is that one again and again makes plans and is baffled, but as foolish as he is he cannot see the cause of his bafflement. This cause is distinctly stated in Bhagavad-gita: Because one has not surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he must work under the control of material nature and its stringent laws. The only means of becoming free from this entanglement is to surrender to the Supreme Lord. In the human form of life, the living entity must accept this instruction from the Supreme Person, Krsna, 'Do not plan to achieve happiness and drive away distress. You will never be successful. Simply surrender unto Me.' Unfortunately, however, the living entity does not accept the Supreme Lord's clearly stated instructions from Bhagavad-gita, and thus he becomes a perpetual captive of the laws of material nature...By pious activities one is elevated to the higher planetary systems, and by impious activities one is degraded to lower species of life, in which he is punished by the laws of nature. In the lower species of life there is an evolutionary process, and when the term of the living entity's imprisonment or punishment in the lower species is finished, he is again offered a human form and given a chance to decide for himself which way he should plan. If he again misses the opportunity, he is again put into the cycle of birth and death, going sometimes higher and sometimes lower, turning on the samsara-cakra, the wheel of material existence, sometimes going higher, and sometimes lower."

The brahmana continued: "Materialistic activities are always mixed with three kinds of miserable conditions— adyatmika, adhidaivika and adhibautika. Therefore, even if one achieves some success by performing such activities, what is the benefit of this success? One is still subjected to birth, death, old age, disease and the reactions of his fruitive activities. I am actually seeing how a rich man, who is a victim of his senses, is very greedy to accumulate wealth, and therefore suffers from

insomnia due to fear from all sides, despite his wealth and opulence. Those who are considered materially powerful and rich are always full of anxieties because of governmental laws, thieves and rogues, enemies, family members, animals, birds, persons seeking charity, the inevitable time factor and even their own selves. Thus they are invariably afraid." Srila Prabhupada explains, "The word svasmat means 'from one's self.' Because of attachment for money, the richest person is even afraid of himself. He fears that he may have locked his money in an unsafe manner or might have committed some mistake. Aside from the government and its income tax and aside from thieves, even a rich man's own relatives are always thinking of how to take advantage of him and take away his money. Sometimes these relatives are described as 'rogues and thieves in the guise of relatives.' Therefore, there is no need to accumulate wealth or unnecessarily endeavor for more and more money. The real business of life is to ask, 'Who am I?' and to understand one's self. One should understand the position of the living entity in this material world and understand how to return home, back to Godhead."

"Those in human society who are intelligent should give up the original cause of lamentation, illusion, fear, anger, attachment, poverty and unnecessary labor. The original cause of all these is the desire for unnecessary prestige and money." Srila Prabhupada explains, "Here is the difference between Vedic civilization and the modern demoniac civilization. Vedic civilization concerns itself with how to achieve self-realization, and for this purpose one was recommended to have a small income to maintain body and soul together... Whatever excess money is collected should be spent for Krsna, and not a farthing for sense gratification. This is the Bhagavata principle."

"The bee and python are two excellent spiritual masters who give us exemplary instructions regarding how to be satisfied by collecting only a little and how to stay in one place and not move. From the bumblebee I have learned to be unattached to accumulating money, for although money is as good as honey, anyone can kill its owner and take it away. I do not endeavor to get anything, but am satisfied with whatever is achieved in its own way. If I do not get anything, I am patient and unagitated like a

python and lie down in this way for many days. Sometimes I eat a very small quantity and sometimes a great quantity. Sometimes the food is very palatable, and sometimes it is stale. Sometimes prasada is offered with great respect, and sometimes food is given neglectfully. Sometimes I eat during the day and sometimes at night. Thus I eat what is easily available. To cover my body I use whatever is available, whether it be linen, silk, cotton, bark or deerskin, according to my destiny, and I am fully satisfied and unagitated. Sometimes I lie on the surface of the earth, sometimes on leaves, grass or stone, sometimes on a pile of ashes, or sometimes, by the will of others, in a palace on a first-class bed with pillows. O my lord, sometimes I bathe myself very nicely, smear sandalwood pulp all over my body, put on a flower garland, and dress in fine garments and ornaments. Then I travel like a king on the back of an elephant or on a chariot or horse. Sometimes, however, I travel naked, like a person haunted by a ghost. Different people are of different mentalities. Therefore it is not my business either to praise them or to blaspheme them. I only desire their welfare, hoping that they will agree to become one with the Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna." Srila Prabhupada explains, "As soon as one comes to the platform of bhakti-yoga, one understands fully the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, is the goal of life. This is the instruction of all the Vedic literature. There is no use in praising someone for material qualifications or blaspheming him for material disqualifications. In the material world, good and bad have no meaning because if one is good he might be elevated to a higher planetary system and if one is bad he may be degraded to the lower planetary systems. People of different mentalities are sometimes elevated and sometimes degraded, but this is not the goal of life. Rather, the goal of life is to become free from elevation and degradation and take to Krsna consciousness. Therefore a saintly person does not discriminate between that which is supposedly good and supposedly bad; rather, he desires for everyone to be happy in Krsna consciousness, which is the ultimate goal of life."

"The mental concoction of discrimination between good and bad should be accepted as one unit and then invested in the mind, which should then be invested in the false ego. The false ego

should be invested in the total material energy. This is the process of fighting false discrimination. A learned, thoughtful person must realize that material existence is illusion. This is possible only by self-realization. A self-realized person, who has actually seen the truth, should retire from all material activities, being situated in self-realization." Srila Prabhupada explains, "By an analytical study of the entire constitution of the body, one can surely come to the conclusion that the soul is different from all the body's material constituents, such as earth, water, fire and air. Thus the difference between the body and the soul can be realized by a person who is thoughtful, and after this realization of the individual spirit soul one can very easily understand the supreme spirit soul. If one thus realizes that the individual soul is subordinate to the supreme spirit soul, he achieves self-realization. As explained in the Thirteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, there are two souls within the body. The body is called ksetra, and there are two ksetra-jnas, or occupants of the body, namely the Supersoul (Paramatma) and the individual soul. The Supersoul and the individual soul are like two birds sitting on the same tree (the material body). One bird, the individual, forgetful bird, is eating the fruit of the tree, not caring for the instructions of the other bird, which is only a witness to the activities of the first bird, who is his friend. When the forgetful bird comes to understand the supreme friend who is always with him and trying to give him guidance in different bodies, he takes shelter at the lotus feet of that supreme bird. As explained in the yoga process, when one actually becomes a perfect yogi, by meditation he can see the supreme friend and surrender unto Him. This is the beginning of bhakti-yoga, or actual life in Krsna consciousness."

"Prahlada Maharaja, you are certainly a self-realized soul and a devotee of the Supreme Lord. You do not care for public opinion or so-called scriptures. For this reason I have described to you without hesitation the history of my self-realization."

Each devotee has their own particular story of self realization, their coming to Krsna consciousness. At the beginning of every such story is the mercy of another devotee who enlightens them on the necessity to begin the process of Krsna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada comments, "A person who is actually a devotee

of Krsna does not care about so-called public opinion and Vedic or philosophical literatures. Prahlada Maharaja, who is such a devotee, always defied the false instructions of his father and the so-called teachers who were appointed to teach him. Instead, he simply followed the instructions of Narada Muni, his guru, and thus he always remained a stalwart devotee. This is the nature of an intelligent devotee. The Srimad-Bhagavatam therefore instructs that one who is actually very intelligent must join the Krsna consciousness movement, realizing his own self as an eternal servant of Krsna, and thus practice constant chanting of the holy name of the Lord-Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare."

Chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra is the perfection of all knowledge. It is the yuga-dharma for this fallen age of Kali, the dark age of quarrel and hypocrisy. We may take our lessons from wherever we find them, and in this story of the learned brahmana who lived as a python, we can understand how Krsna will provide all our necessities without fail. Of course, to practice such a vow requires great spiritual insight, and is not an activity to be imitated. Still, within this example we can understand how everything is coming to us according to our destined allotment from superior forces. We all are required to work in our prescribed duties, but only insofar as we are required to keep body and soul together. The balance of our time should be dedicated to Krsna conscious activities. And if we are already completely surrendered to the will of the Lord, then we need not discriminate between one activity and another.

The process of Krsna consciousness provides us with a systematic approach toward lessening our entanglement in the material world. Our key indicator of detachment is our lessening of sense gratificatory activities. If we are reducing our eating, sleeping, mating and defending activities with an aim toward self realization, we are actually advancing in Krsna consciousness. In time, as our spiritual realization matures, we will think of nothing besides assisting the spiritual master in spreading the Krsna consciousness movement. We can see how from the very beginning, the best of Srila Prabhupada's disciples were fully

engaged in this mission of mercy. Even today they remain dedicated servants to the order of the spiritual master.

Our challenge is to make the process of Krsna consciousness as attractive as possible to the greatest number of people. We can do this with a keen intellect, always presenting the philosophy of Lord Caitanya "As it Is," for the benefit of all suffering humanity. With an aim to surrender our lives at the lotus feet of Guru and Gauranga, we can each become the empowered representatives of the Supreme Lord. Without desire for fame or distinction, remaining always as humble servants of the servants of the servants of the gopis of Vrindaban, we pray for the opportunity to serve the preaching mission of our disciplic succession.

Chapter Ten: Neither Body Nor Mind

As devotees we continually hear how we are not these temporary material bodies, but are eternal spirit souls. Even so, oftentimes, in the next instant we may smell something good to eat and unconsciously begin to crave tasting that food. Our theoretical knowledge that we are not the body is roughly accosted by the material mind, prompting us to once again think we are the enjoyers and that our bodies are just suitable for that purpose. It all seems to happen in a flash, as the senses detect the sense objects through the sense of smell, sight, touch and hearing, and our conditioned material minds reinforce our false ego's assertion that we are important enough to deserve a bit of selfish pleasure.

As we advance in spiritual consciousness we may feel some shame in realizing how our conditioned responses betray our actual advancement. We berate ourselves for remaining on such a neophyte level, knowing how it would all be very different if, upon smelling a flower, some food or the aroma of incense, that we are reminded of our service to the Supreme Lord, and how we could best utilize these things in giving Him pleasure. This mood of spontaneity is what we should lust for. It is exactly how the gopis of Vrindaban constantly think. Whatever they see, feel or contact with their purified senses, they do so in relation to their highly refined loving service to Krsna. Because Krsna is at the center of their every thought, word and deed, they do not consider their own sense gratification. Not even for a moment. Without even the hint of selfishness they never give a thought to their own personal pleasure, for their hearts and minds are completely focused on giving pleasure to the Supreme Lord.

Because of our false identification with these material bodies we find ourselves under attack from all sides at every moment. Although we may not realize it, in the course of our daily lives we are attacked by so many forces, including the elements, like the sun, wind and rain, tiny dust particles, and invisible foreign entities like viruses and microbes that can wreck havoc inside our bodies. Attacks come from many other quarters, including other

people who may not agree or approve of our actions, along with government officials who repeatedly attack us by taking away a portion of our hard earned money in the form of taxes. Likewise, there are unlimited living beings like mosquitoes, flies, wasps and spiders that may attack suddenly, without warning. Additionally, when we lie down to rest we may be disturbed by unwelcome dreams.

Even though we are suffering miserably, most people never begin to seriously question the burden of such hardships. They simply go about their lives in a ho-hum manner, blithely accepting these disturbing attacks and elements as part of the normal course of their lives. They often do so with the aid of such things as over-the-counter medications, prescription pain killers, vacations, etc. In the short view, people generally accept the world as a place of some misery, but remain determined to enjoy themselves at any cost.

The idea of enjoyment is quite natural to us, for it is a part of our inborn nature. However, we must all face the ultimate disturbance to our beings, coming in the form of death. Nothing we can purchase, borrow or steal can loosen death's tight grip upon us. In the end we are forced to relinquish our temporary material bodies and begin a new chapter of material life in yet another temporary body beset by the same miseries and disturbances as before. For so long as we remain under the influence of the mind and false ego, which are empowered to distract us into thinking we should cling to the belief that we are these temporary material bodies, we will be forced to repeatedly undergo the rigors and hardships born of such a fleeting material existence.

We have read of the Avanti brahmana and the saintly brahmana lying down like a python, undisturbed in their meditation on the Supreme Lord. We may initially think that neither of these examples is quite fitting for us, since we have no intention of leaving home, nor of accepting such seeming severe vows. However, the inner lessons of these great souls springs from their staunch determination to understand how everything is coming according to the design of the Supreme Lord. Their inner realizations thus becomes the predicate factor for understanding

the true nature of the material world, their actions following accordingly, though not as some shallow or contrived exercise they abstractly hoped to live up to. They each in their way accepted their particular situation not as an inconvenience, but as the special mercy of the Supreme Lord. This is the key to our advancement in Krsna consciousness. We can accept our position as part of the Lord's plan and work toward elevating our consciousness, rather than struggling to adjust our temporary external situation. Indeed, even if we are to achieve the heavenly realms of this universe, because there is no permanent settlement to be found in this material world we will have to again return to face the same confounding issues as before, the inescapable issues of birth, sickness, old age and death.

It thus happens that when we lose sight of our true roles as humble servants of the Supreme Lord, we falsely begin to imagine that we are important, powerful beings of all manner and description. In whatever species of life we are placed, we imagine ourselves to be quite important and deserving of our own personal pleasure.

In "Krsna, The Supreme Personality of Godhead," 'The Deliverance of Dvividya Gorilla,' we find a wonderful story that depicts the pitfalls of great material pride generated by the mind and false ego.

It so happened that Dvividya Gorilla was a great friend of Bhaumasura, or Narakasura, who was killed by Krsna in connection with His kidnapping sixteen thousand princesses from all over the world. Dvividya was the minister of King Sugriva. His brother, Mainda, was also a very powerful gorilla king.

Some background of Dvividya gorilla is given in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.67.2): "Sri Sukadeva Goswami said, 'There was an ape named Dvividya who was a friend of Narakasura's. This powerful Dvividya, the brother of Mainda, had been instructed by King Sugriva.'" Srila Prabhupada's disciples comment, "Srila Jiva Goswami points out some interesting facts about the ape Dvividya. Although Dvividya was an associate of Lord Ramacandra, he later became corrupted by bad association with the demon Naraka, as stated here: narakasya sakha. This bad association was the reaction

for an offense Dvidida had committed when, being proud of his strength, he disrespected Lord Ramacandra's brother Laksmana and others. Those who worship Lord Rama-candra sometimes chant hymns addressed to Mainda and Dvidida, who are attendant deities of the Lord. According to Srila Jiva Goswami, the Mainda and Dvidida mentioned in this verse are empowered expansions of these deities, who are residents of Lord Ramacandra's Vaikuntha domain.

"Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura concurs with Srila Jiva Goswami's view that Dvidida was ruined by bad association, which was a punishment for his having disrespected Sriman Laksmana. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti states, however, that the Mainda and Dvidida mentioned here are actually the eternally liberated devotees addressed as attendant deities during the worship of Lord Ramacandra. The Lord arranged their degradation, he says, to show the evil of the bad association that results from offending great personalities. Thus Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti compares the fall of Dvidida and Mainda to that of Jaya and Vijaya."

So it was that when Dvidida gorilla heard the story of his friend Bhaumasura's being killed by Lord Krsna, he planned to create mischief throughout the country in order to avenge the death of Bhaumasura. His first business was to set fires in villages, towns and industrial and mining places, as well as in the residential quarters of the mercantile men who were busy dairy farming and protecting cows. Sometimes he would uproot a big mountain and tear it to pieces. In this way he created great disturbances all over the country, especially in the province of Kathwar. The city of Dvaraka was situated in this Kathwar province, and because Lord Krsna used to live in this city, Dvidida specifically made it his target of disturbance.

Dvidida was as powerful as ten thousand elephants. Sometimes he would go to the seashore, and with his powerful hands he would create so much disturbance in the sea that he would flood the neighboring cities and villages. Often he would go to the hermitages of great saintly persons and sages and cause a great disturbance by smashing their beautiful gardens and

orchards. Not only did he create disturbances in that way, but sometimes he would pass urine and stool on their sacred sacrificial arenas. He would thus pollute the whole atmosphere. He also kidnapped both men and women, taking them away from their residential places to the caves of the mountains. After putting them within the caves, he would close the entrances with large chunks of stone, like the bhrngi insect, which arrests and carries away many flies and other insects and puts them within the holes of the trees where it lives. Thus Dvidida regularly defied the law and order of the country. Not only that, but he would sometimes pollute the female members of many aristocratic families by forcibly raping them.

While creating such great disturbances all over the country, sometimes he heard very sweet musical sounds coming from Raivataka Mountain, and so he entered that mountainous region. There he saw Lord Balarama in the midst of many beautiful young girls, enjoying their company while singing and dancing. He became captivated by the beauty of Lord Balarama's body, whose every feature was very beautiful, decorated as He was with a garland of lotus flowers. Similarly, all the young girls present, dressed and garlanded with flowers, exhibited much beauty. Lord Balarama seemed fully intoxicated from drinking the varuni beverage, and His eyes appeared to be rolling in a drunken state. Lord Balarama appeared just like the king of the elephants in the midst of many she-elephants.

This gorilla by the name Dvidida could climb up into the trees and jump from one branch to another. Sometimes he would jerk the branches, creating a particular type of sound—kilakila—so that Lord Balarama was greatly distracted from the pleasing atmosphere. Sometimes Dvidida would come before the women and exhibit different types of caricatures. By nature young women are apt to enjoy everything with laughter and joking, and when the gorilla came before them they did not take him seriously but simply laughed at him. However, the gorilla was so rude that even in the presence of Balarama he began to show the lower part of his body to the women, and sometimes he would come forward to show his teeth while moving his eyebrows. He disrespected the women, even in the presence of Balarama.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.67.13) states, "Even as Lord Balarama looked on, Dvividā insulted the girls by making odd gestures with his eyebrows, coming right in front of them, and showing them his anus."

Lord Balarama's name suggests not only that He is very powerful but that He takes pleasure in exhibiting extraordinary strength. So He took a stone and threw it at Dvividā. The gorilla, however, artfully avoided being struck by the stone. In order to insult Balarama, the gorilla took away the earthen pot in which the varuni was kept. Dvividā, being thus intoxicated by his limited strength, began to tear off all the valuable clothes worn by Balarama and the accompanying young girls. He was so puffed up that he thought Balarama could not do anything to chastise him, and he continued to offend Balaramaji and His companions.

When Lord Balarama saw the disturbances created by the gorilla and heard that he had already performed many mischievous activities all over the country, He became very angry and decided to kill him. Immediately He took His club in His hands. The gorilla could understand that now Balarama was going to attack him. To counteract Balarama, he immediately uprooted a big oak tree and with great force he came and struck Lord Balarama's head. Lord Balarama, however, immediately caught hold of the big tree and remained undisturbed, just like a great mountain. To retaliate, He took His club, named Sunanda, and hit the gorilla with it, severely injuring his head. Currents of blood flowed from the gorilla's head with great force, but the stream of blood simply enhanced his beauty, like a stream of liquid manganese coming out of a great mountain. The striking of Balarama's club did not even slightly disturb him. On the contrary, he immediately uprooted another big oak tree and, after clipping off all of its leaves again struck Balarama's head with it. But Balarama, with the help of His club, tore the tree to pieces. Since the gorilla was very angry, he took another tree in his hands and struck Lord Balarama's body. Again Lord Balarama tore the tree to pieces, and the fighting continued. Each time the gorilla would bring out a big tree to strike Balarama, Lord Balarama would tear the tree to pieces by the striking of His club, and the gorilla Dvividā would clutch another tree from another direction and again strike Balarama in the same

way. As a result of this continuous fighting, the forest became treeless.

When no more trees were available, Dvidida took help from the hills and threw large pieces of stone, like rainfall, upon the body of Balarama. Lord Balarama, in a great sporting mood, began to smash those big pieces of stone into mere pebbles. The gorilla, being bereft of all trees and stone slabs, now stood before Balarama and waved his strong fists. Then, with great force, he began to beat Lord Balarama's chest with his fists. This time Lord Balarama became most angry. Since the gorilla was striking Him with his hands, Lord Balarama would not strike back with His own weapons, the club or the plow. Simply with His fists He struck the collarbone of the gorilla. This blow proved fatal to Dvidida, who immediately vomited blood and fell unconscious upon the ground. When the gorilla fell, all the hills and forests appeared to totter.

After this horrible incident, all the Siddhas, great sages and saintly persons from the upper planetary systems showered flowers upon the person of Lord Balarama and vibrated sounds glorifying His supremacy. All of them chanted, 'All glories to Lord Balarama! Let us offer our respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet. By killing this great demon, Dvidida, You have initiated an auspicious era for the world.' All such jubilant sounds of victory were heard from outer space. After killing the great demon Dvidida and being worshipped by showers of flowers and glorious sounds of victory, Balarama returned to His capital city, Dvaraka.

In this instance, Dvidida was thinking himself to be a big, mean gorilla, and he acted accordingly. We sometimes imagine ourselves to be beggars, distinguished gentlemen, scholars, common laborers, priests, housewives and minorities. Whatever connotation we place on our bodies we try to live up to. Sometimes we are Americans, Africans, Canadians, Europeans, and so on. However, we are really none of these things. Our actual identities relate to our spiritual existence in service to the Supreme Lord.

The process of chanting Krsna's holy names gradually frees us from all false material conceptions. By reestablishing our lost relationship with Krsna, we automatically revive our eternal identities and consciousness. When we become fully awakened to

our true selves, we will no longer have to suffer the pangs of conditioned life: repeated birth, sickness, old age and death.

We should become serious about our situation in this material world and try to understand just how dangerous a place we live in. In the culture of Krsna consciousness, one thing is certain. No one will attempt to sugarcoat our precarious position in life. We only offer the truth, as it is, and refuse to make compromise with the material mind and false ego. Our lives are meant for much more than we can imagine while remaining trapped within the confines of the material world. The chanting of the holy names as found in the Hare Krsna maha-mantra is the sublime method for reviving our dormant God consciousness, or Krsna consciousness. This is our simple, nonsectarian plea to one and all. Join with us in the chanting of God's holy names. Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

About the Author



In the late 1960s, Tirtha dasa served his country in the United States Army in the 101st Airborne Division as a combat soldier in Viet Nam. He received numerous decorations and awards for valor, including the Bronze Star, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Air Medal, Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star, two Purple Heart Medals, and numerous division and brigade military campaign awards.

He met the Hare Krsna devotees in 1971 in Buffalo, New York, and thereafter began chanting Hare Krsna and associating regularly with the devotees. He was deeply inspired by the teachings of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and accepted the path of bhakti, devotional service to the Supreme Lord Krsna.

In a mood of genuine renunciation, Tirtha dasa accepted the Vaisnava order of sannyasa on June 22, 1987, in a one-of-a-kind fire sacrifice ceremony at the West Virginia State Penitentiary at

Moundsville, West Virginia. Although he continues to follow his strict vows of sannyasa, he prefers that others call him simply Tirtha dasa, rather than Tirtha Swami.

In the confines of prison for over twenty years, Tirtha dasa has found inner peace in chanting the Lord's holy names as found in the Hare Krsna mahamantra. His tribulations in prison have only served to strengthen his resolve to renounce material enjoyments.

Tirtha has found solace in reading and writing about Krsna, and sharing his writings with others, some of whom have found inspiration in his articles and essays, and have posted them on an Internet website at <http://tirthainprison.com> to share with the world.

Other books by Tirtha dasa are: *The Definitive Guide to Practicing Krsna Consciousness In Prison*, *Prisoner Me*, *Perfect Atonement*, and *Freedom From Fear*..

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*Hare Krsna Hare Krsna
Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare*