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*śrī-yadur uvāca
notsahe jarasā sthātum
antarā prāptayā tava
aviditvā sukhaṁ grāmyaṁ
vairṣṇyaṁ naiti pūruṣaḥ*

“Yadu replied: My dear father, you have already achieved old age, although you also were a young man. But I do not welcome your old age and invalidity, for unless one enjoys material happiness, one cannot attain renunciation.”¹

Renunciation of material enjoyment is the ultimate goal of human life. Therefore the *varṇāśrama* institution is most scientific. It aims at giving one the facility to return home, back to Godhead, which one cannot do without completely renouncing all connections with the material world. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, *niṣkiñcānasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya*: one who wants to go back home, back to Godhead, must be *niṣkiñcana*, free from all affinity for material enjoyment. *Brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam*: unless one is fully renounced, one cannot engage in devotional service or stay in

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Brahman. Devotional service is rendered on the Brahman platform. Therefore, unless one attains the Brahman platform, or spiritual platform, one cannot engage in devotional service; or, in other words, a person engaged in devotional service is already on the Brahman platform.

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

“One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.26)

If one attains devotional service, therefore, he is certainly liberated. Generally, unless one enjoys material happiness, one cannot attain renunciation. *Varṇāśrama* therefore gives the opportunity for gradual elevation. Yadu, the son of Mahārāja Yayāti, explained that he was unable to give up his youth, for he wanted to use it to attain the renounced order in the future.

Mahārāja Yadu was different from his brothers. As stated in the next verse, *turvasuś coditaḥ pitrā druhyuś cānuś ca bhārata, pratyācakhyur adharmajñāḥ*. Mahārāja Yadu's brothers refused to accept their father's proposal because they were not completely aware of *dharma*. To accept orders that follow religious principles, especially the orders of one's father, is very important. Therefore, when the brothers of Mahārāja Yadu refused their father's order, this was certainly irreligious. Mahārāja Yadu's refusal, however, was religious.

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As stated in the Tenth Canto, *yadoś ca dharmā-śilāya*: Mahārāja Yadu was completely aware of the principles of religion. The ultimate principle of religion is to engage oneself in devotional service to the Lord. Mahārāja Yadu was very eager to engage himself in the Lord's service, but there was an impediment: during youth the material desire to enjoy the material senses is certainly present, and unless one fully satisfies these lusty desires in youth, there is a chance of one's being disturbed in rendering service to the Lord.

We have actually seen that many *sannyāsīs* who accept *sannyāsa* prematurely, not having satisfied their material desires, fall down because they are disturbed. Therefore, the general process is to go through *gṛhastha* life and *vānaprastha* life and finally come to *sannyāsa* and devote oneself completely to the service of the Lord. Mahārāja Yadu was ready to accept his father's order and exchange youth for old age because he was confident that the youth taken by his father would be returned. But, because this exchange would delay his complete engagement in devotional service, he did not want to accept his father's old age, for he was eager to achieve freedom from disturbances. Moreover, among the descendants of Yadu would be Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, because Yadu was eager to see the Lord's appearance in his dynasty as soon as possible, Yadu refused to accept his father's proposal. This was not irreligious, however, because Yadu's purpose was to serve the Lord. Because Yadu was a faithful servant of the Lord, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in his dynasty. As confirmed in the prayers of Kuntī, *yadoḥ priyasyānvavāye*. Yadu was very dear to Kṛṣṇa, who was therefore eager to descend in Yadu's dynasty. In conclusion, Mahārāja Yadu should not be considered *adharmā jñā*, ignorant of religious principles, as the next verse designates his brothers. He was like the four Sanakas (*catuḥ-sana*), who refused the order of their father, Brahma, for

the sake of a better cause. Because the four Kumāras wanted to engage themselves completely in the service of the Lord as *brahmacārīs*, their refusal to obey their father's order was not irreligious. ²

Accepting Sannyāsa Prematurely

Why would you accept *sannyāsa* prematurely? It is foolish to do this, because *varṇāśrama-dharma* provides the opportunity of gradual development through the *āśrama* system. The first *āśrama* is the *brahmacārī-āśrama*, then the *gṛhastha-āśrama*, afterwards the *vānaprastha-āśrama* and the last *āśrama* is the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. It is not so easy; you cannot just omit other *āśramas* and jump into taking *sannyāsa*. Prabhupāda said, “We have practical experience”.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained in his very elaborate purport what *dharma* is, and what *adharmā* is. Yadu's refusal is supported by *dharma*, whereas the refusal of his other brothers is not supported by *dharma*. “We have actually seen that many *sannyāsīs* who accept *sannyāsa* prematurely, not having satisfied their material desires, fall down because they are disturbed.” They have fallen down because their desire for sense enjoyment is not satisfied. This is an impediment.

Pouring Ghee into a Blazing Fire

*na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānām
upabhogena śāmyati
haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva
bhūya evābhivardhate*

“As supplying butter to a fire does not diminish

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the fire but instead increases it more and more, the endeavour to stop lusty desires by continual enjoyment can never be successful.” [In fact, one must voluntarily cease from material desires.]³

The more you give enjoyment to your senses, the more they demand. They will never be satisfied. How can you satisfy the senses? If you pour ghee into a blazing fire, the fire will never be extinguished, rather it will burn more vigorously and demand more. Similarly, the more enjoyment you give to your material senses, the more they will demand, and they will never be satisfied. Where is the question of satisfaction? This is the other teaching in this purport.

Yayāti is now requesting his sons, who are in the prime of their youth, to exchange his old age for their youth. Yadu and his younger brothers refused. The reason why his eldest son Yadu refused is explained as follows.

Yayāti, Yadu’s father, was at an advanced age. He had two wives, Devayānī and Śarmiṣṭhā. He had already enjoyed sex and he had produced five sons, who were young men at that time, but he was still not satisfied. With Devayānī he had two sons, Yadu and Turvasu and with Śarmiṣṭhā he had three sons, Druhyu, Anu and Pūru. His father-in-law Śukrācārya had cursed him to become old and invalid, but he still shamelessly admitted that his sexual desire was not satisfied.

Although Yayāti had two wives, he was not satisfied and was asking to change bodies with his sons. His youngest son Pūru agreed and accepted the old age and invalidity of his father and gave him his youth. Thereafter Yayāti enjoyed with Devayānī for hundreds and hundreds of years, without satiation. Where is the satiation in sex life?

Here in this purport it is explained, “there is an impediment:

during youth the desire to enjoy the material senses is certainly present, and unless one fully satisfies these lusty desires in youth, there is a chance of one's being disturbed in rendering service to the Lord. We have actually seen that many *sannyāsīs* who accept *sannyāsa* prematurely, not having satisfied their material desires, fall down because they are disturbed.” So where is the question of satiation? Śrīla Prabhupāda has said, in youth this will be satisfied, but there is no satiation at all. How can it be satisfied?

An Apparent Contradiction

Similarly, by giving enjoyment to your senses they will not be satisfied, rather they will demand more. Therefore where is your satisfaction? Why is this mentioned here? It is apparently contradictory, but there is no contradiction.

In this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that those who were not satisfied in their youth, and prematurely take *sannyāsa*, fall down because they have the desire for material enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, which has not been satisfied. They give up their *daṇḍa* and again enter a relationship with a woman. This is happening. What is this nonsense?

The *sannyāsa-āśrama* is the topmost āśrama. After accepting *sannyāsa*, how can one again return to the *gṛhastha-āśrama*? Is this following āśrama-dharma?

Apparently there is a contradiction, but you should understand that there is no contradiction at all because after having experienced material enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, you know what the experience is and you should not go back to it again.

There is a saying in Oriya:

dillikā laḍu yo khāyā o pastāyā

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yo nehiṅ khāyā o bhi pastāyā ⁴

A *dillikā laḍu* is a very deluding sweet. It looks very nice and big, but when you squeeze it, it becomes very small, because it is hollow. Sexual enjoyment is like a *dillikā laḍu*, one who has enjoyed it laments, because it is not satisfying, and one who has not enjoyed it laments, because he thinks it will give him satisfaction. Therefore, one who has become a *gṛhastha* and has had sexual enjoyment and knows what the reactions and consequences are laments, “No more, no more. I pay my *daṇḍavats*, enough!” You should gain experience and thereby give up this desire. After becoming completely desire-less, *niṣkāma*, you are eligible for *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsa*, otherwise, you are not eligible, because you have not satisfied your desires.

Varṇāśrama–dharma Should be Strictly Followed

In the eleventh canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Kṛṣṇa explains to Uddhava that *varṇāśrama–dharma* is most scientific and should be strictly followed. The first āśrama is the *brahmacārī-āśrama*. One who stays in the *guru’s āśrama*, *guru-gṛha*, is known as a *brahmacārī*. First you must become a strict *brahmacārī* in the *guru-gṛha*, and you must learn the purpose and rules and regulations of *brahmacārī* life, and then afterwards, if necessary, you may enter the *gṛhastha-āśrama*. Kṛṣṇa has said:

*dvitīyaṃ prāpyānupūrvyāj
janmopanayanam dvijaḥ
vasan guru-kule dānto
brahmādhīyīta cāhutaḥ*

“The twice-born member of society achieves sec-

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ond birth through the sequence of purificatory ceremonies culminating in Gāyatrī initiation. Being summoned by the spiritual master, he should reside within the *guru's āśrama* and with a self-controlled mind carefully study the Vedic literature.”⁵

Daśa-Vidhā-Saṁskāra

There are ten types of purifying ceremonies—*daśa-vidhā-saṁskāra*, from *garbhādhāna* to *upanayana*. While performing these *saṁskāras*, the *guru* gives you a second birth. The first birth is *śaukra-janma*, this is from the semen of the father and the *guru* gives the second birth according to a purifying ceremony in the *guru-gṛha*, whereby you become *dvija*—twice-born.

The *guru* performs all ten *saṁskāras*: *garbhādhāna*, *puṁsavana*, *sīmantonnyanam*, *jāta karma*, *niṣkrāmaṇam*, *nāma-karaṇa*, *pauṣṭika-karma*, *anna-prāśana*, *cūḍā-karaṇam*, and the last one is *upanayanam*. A *brahmacārī* receives *upanayana*, the tenth *saṁskāra*, while staying in *guru-gṛha*, the *āśrama*. He is trained to control his senses and mind—*dama guṇa saṁpūrṇa*, and studies the *Vedas*. The *guru* teaches the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which is the essence of all *Vedas*. This is the *brahmacārī-āśrama*.

The Ācārya is the Lord's Manifested Form

*ācāryam mām vijānīyān
navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guru*

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“Never disregard the ācārya; never entertain the idea that the ācārya is your equal in any sense.” These are the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself by which the *jīva* is to be benefitted. ⁶

Kṛṣṇa has said, the ācārya, the *guru*, is *mat svarūpa*—My manifestation. That means he is the Lord’s *prakāśa vigraha*, manifested form. Therefore if you think that the *guru* is an ordinary mortal being you commit an offence, *aparādha*. *Sarva-deva-mayo*, he is the representative of all the demigods. You should not see the *guru* through your material vision, because he is not an ordinary human being. He is the representative of the Lord. Kṛṣṇa says, *mat svarūpa, mām vijānīyān*, he is as good as Myself. This is how a śiṣya should see his *guru*.

*sāyam prātar upānīya
bhaikṣyam tasmai nivedayet
yac cānyad apy anujñātam
upayujñīta samyataḥ*

‘In the morning and evening one should collect foodstuffs and other articles and deliver them to the spiritual master. Then, being self-controlled, one should accept for oneself that which is allotted by the ācārya.’ ⁷

The duty of a *brahmacārī* is to rise early in the morning, take bath, go out to collect *bhikṣā* for the *guru* and return in the evening. Then he gives everything that he has collected to his *guru*, because he is collecting on behalf of his *guru*, not for himself. It is not that he gives 95% and keeps 5% for himself, but he gives everything, cent percent to his *guru*.

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A *brahmacārī* should not eat unless his *guru* has given him something to eat. *Brahmacārī* life has to be that strict, because thereby he practices to control the mind and the senses. While staying in the *guru-grha*, the *guru's āśrama*, a *brahmacārī* is taught *bhoga vivarjita*, to tolerate the urges of the senses, and to give up all desires for enjoyment.

The Story of Upamanyu

The *Upaniṣads* relate the story of Upamanyu.

Apodadhaumya was a great Muni, a Ṛṣi who had a number of disciples. One of his disciples was a *brahmacārī* by the name of Upamanyu, who looked after the Muni's cows. Early in the morning, Upamanyu would take the cows and calves to the forest so as they could graze and he would return in the evening. After some days his *guru* noticed that Upamanyu was becoming plump and asked, "Upamanyu, I have noticed that you are becoming fat. What are you eating?"

Upamanyu said, "Gurudeva, in the mornings I collect some *bhikṣā* which I give to you. What I collect in the afternoon, I eat." "Who told you to do that? Whatever you collect either in the morning or in the afternoon, is all for me. You should give everything to me. How can you eat the afternoon's collection? Does it belong to you? It does not belong to you. It is mine, your *guru's*. I have not told you to do that, so why are you doing that?"

Upamanyu said, "All right, please excuse me. I will not do it again." From that day on he did not do that anymore. He gave all his collections in the evening to his *guru*, but his *guru* did not give him anything to eat. It was a very severe test. He had to pass the test otherwise how would he receive the mercy of

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his *guru*? It is not that easy, that you can just ask; “Gurudeva, *kṛpā koro*, *kṛpā koro*, *kṛpā koro*, Gurudeva, please shower your mercy upon me,” and then you obtain his mercy. It is not that simple, *guru*’s mercy is not cheap. Therefore, Upamanyu gave everything.

After a few days, his *guru* noticed again that he had gained weight. His *guru* asked, “Upamanyu, what are you eating? You are giving me all the *bhikṣā* you collect, so what are you eating that makes you fat?”

“Gurudeva, it is very difficult to tolerate hunger, the urge of the belly. I cannot tolerate it, so when I feel hungry I drink some milk from the udders of the cows. I milk them and drink some milk.”

“Who told you to do that? Milk is food for the calves; you are eating their food. I did not tell you to do that. Why are you doing that?”

Then he said, “All right. Please excuse me, Gurudeva. I will not do it again.” From that day on, Upamanyu also stopped drinking milk, and he was not eating at all. His *brahmacārī* life was that strict.

After a few days the *guru* again noticed that he was still fat, so he must have been eating something. Therefore he asked, “Upamanyu, what are you eating now? You are giving me all the *bhikṣā* you collect in the morning and afternoon, I have stopped you from drinking milk, but I can still notice that you are becoming chubby. You must be eating something. What are you eating?”

“O Gurudeva, it is very, very difficult on my part to tolerate the urge of my belly. When I feel hungry, after you stopped me drinking the milk, I thought ‘what shall I do’? When the calves drink milk from the udders of the cows, some foam is left on their lips, and I lick it. This is what I do, when I feel hungry.”

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“Why are you doing that? Who told you to do that? The calves will lick it. Why are you licking it? It is their food. I did not tell you to do that. You cannot do that. Stop it!”

“Yes, Gurudeva. I will not do it again.” Then that was also stopped, no more licking from the lips of the calves. His *guru* stopped everything.

The Early Days in Bhubaneswar

If a *guru* is not giving you anything to eat, will you stay in that *guru's āśrama*? *Calo jayenge*. No one will stay! Therefore we have made nice arrangements, nice apartments, with electric light, fans and nice *prasāda*. There are taps. When you turn the tap on you will get water, you can have a shower, and flush the toilet. Very nice, comfortable arrangements are there and when you go out there are vehicles, a jeep, the bus or two-wheelers. When all these nice arrangements are made many people come, because there is very nice enjoyment.

Now so many people are coming to our temple in Bhubaneswar, but when my *guru* sent me here there was nothing. This once was a quiet, out of the way place, a jungle. There was no electricity at that time. Even during the daytime, the *rickshawallas* would not come here. They were afraid to come, because the dacoits might kill them. This place was so dangerous. My *guru* said, “Go and stay there! Do this service.” It was my *guru's* order. He did not give me any money, and he did not give me any men. I said, “Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, will you give me one man and some money?”

“Why? Why do you want a man? No! Nothing will be given. Just go there!” He did not give me anything. “All right.” I thought, “My *guru* has ordered me, all right, I will just go there.”

At that time, he told me: “A Vaiṣṇava is not alone. Kṛṣṇa

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is with him.” I thought, “Bābā, I am not a Vaiṣṇava”, but I did not say it. I thought, “My *guru* is a Vaiṣṇava. He is always with Kṛṣṇa. He thinks that I am like that, but I am not like that. I am not a Vaiṣṇava. I have come here and accepted a *guru* to become a Vaiṣṇava. I have not become a Vaiṣṇava yet, but my *guru* says that. All right, I will put faith in my *guru*’s words. My *guru* says a Vaiṣṇava is not alone, Kṛṣṇa is there.”

Therefore, I prayed, “O Kṛṣṇa, please be with me. My *guru* has told me a Vaiṣṇava is never alone. I am not a Vaiṣṇava. My *guru* is a Vaiṣṇava, Your dear devotee.” Kṛṣṇa hears the prayer of His dear devotee.

Anyhow, I came alone. My *guru* told me to occupy this land and to build a temple. So I first built a very humble cottage. “Stay there and do *bhajana*. Do not eat outside, but cook your own food with your own hands. Translate my books into Oriya, go out and preach.” He gave me so many instructions.

Then Prabhupāda said, “I will go to Orissa. You will take me.” In addition to this he said, “You have a patch of land so try to produce some vegetables.” Therefore, I carried out the order of my *guru*, thinking, “Yes, my *guru* gave this order so I have to do it.” I did what he told me to do.

I was eating one meal a day. He said, “You cook your own food. Grow some vegetables. Go out and preach. Whatever you get you may cook and eat. Translate my books. Develop the land. I want a very nice temple there; a nice ISKCON centre should be developed there, under your leadership. You go and do it, without man and without money.”

So, I came and stayed here. At first I stayed in different places. I had to go out and collect money to build a cottage. Every day I was walking, I did not know how to ride a bicycle. I am such a rascal, an unfit person, completely unfit. Therefore when I went out for preaching, I carried a bag, an umbrella, a *laṭhi*

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(stick), and wore a turban on my head. I collected one or two rupees from different people who would give 5 or 10 *paisā*.

One time in Old Bhubaneswar, at the Ananta Vāsudeva temple, a gentleman saw me and said: “*Sādhuji*, you are hungry. I will give you something to eat.” He gave me Ananta Vāsudeva *prasāda*. It is just like Jagannatha Purī *prasāda*. In that way I maintained myself.

Early in the morning I would go out by myself, purchase a little rice, *dāl* and *subjī* from the bazaar (market) and return around midday, then I would cook. My Gurudeva told me to cook my own food, and not to eat outside. I would cook either *kicharī*, a mixture of rice, *dāl* and vegetables or sometimes I would cook *capātīs* (flat bread) and *dālma*, (a mixture of *dāl* and vegetables).

For many years I was leading this kind of life. No one else was here at that time. At night, on the National Highway, trucks were going by with their headlights on, so at least there was some light and sound. I was always chanting *hare kṛṣṇa*, so Kṛṣṇa was there. My *guru* said, “Kṛṣṇa is always there.” So I stayed here.

Then I constructed a mud hut and moved in. I was not complaining to my *guru* that it was inconvenient, or that there were no facilities, no communication, no electricity, no water supply, or that my body was very weak, or that I did not know how to cook. I did not say anything to my *guru* because we have to serve the *guru* and carry out his order. It was a very severe test. You have to pass the test, otherwise how can you get the mercy of *guru*?

My *guru* told me that I would one day bring him here to Orissa. I was doing *kīrtana*, *bhajana*, and sometimes I held programs. I met some devotees in the Nayapalli village and we held *kīrtana* at a house program, and collected some money.

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I stayed here with only one kerosene lantern that burned the whole night. Can you lead a life like that? To live a life like that is *guru-sevā*. The *guru* does not supply anything. Only when the *guru* gives you something to eat can you eat, otherwise you do not eat. When a *brahmacārī* lives in this way, he learns to control his mind and senses, *dama guṇa sampūrṇa*.

The Story Of Upamanyu Continued

Dhaumya Ṛṣi forbade Upamanyu from eating. Upamanyu could not tolerate the feeling of hunger. It is very difficult to tolerate the urge of the belly. So he chewed on the leaves of a poisonous plant in the jungle. As a result he went blind. That evening, while trying to find his way back to the āśrama with the cows and calves, he fell into a deep well.

His *guru* was wondering what happened to Upamanyu. Dhaumya Ṛṣi was always thinking of him because he has love and affection for his disciple. He was giving Upamanyu a very severe test and was thinking, “I stopped him from eating. What happened to Upamanyu that he couldn’t return today? Something must have happened to him.” He went with some *brahmacārīs* to the jungle and shouted, “Upamanyu! Upamanyu! Upamanyu, where you are?”

When he heard his *guru* calling, Upamanyu said, “Gurudeva! I am here in this deep dark well. I became blind and fell down here. “Guru found the well and saw Upamanyu had fallen inside. “O, how did you become blind?” “Gurudeva, you stopped me from eating, but the urge of the belly to eat is so severe I couldn’t tolerate it so I chewed some poisonous leaves, therefore I became blind.”

His *guru* was very pleased with him and gave him a *mantra*.

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“Recite this mantra. Physicians from the heavenly planet, the Aśvinī-kumāras, will appear and they will cure you”.

The Aśvinī Kumāras

Upamanyu recited the *mantra* and the Aśvinī-kumāras appeared. They gave Upamanyu a piece of cake, and told him that his eyesight would return when he would eat it.

Upamanyu said, “No, I cannot eat this cake.”

They replied, “Why not? Eat it! You will regain your eyesight.”

Upamanyu answered, “No, I will not eat unless my *guru* tells me to eat.”

The Aśvinī-kumāras said, “We gave some of the cake to your *guru* and your *guru* has already eaten it.”

Upamanyu could have said, “Oh, my *guru* has eaten? All right, give it to me, I’ll eat it.” But instead Upamanyu said, “No! I cannot imitate my *guru*.”

*ācāryaṃ mām vijānīyān
nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guru.* ⁸

“He is not just an ordinary human being. How can I imitate him? He may eat but I cannot eat unless my *guru* gives permission. Rather I will remain blind and stay here. I won’t eat.”

His *guru* was very pleased and the Aśvinī-kumāras were very pleased. He passed the severe test. Otherwise how can you get *guru*’s mercy? Only by saying, “*Kṛpā koro, Gurudeva, I am very*

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fallen. You are an ocean of mercy. Please shower your mercy on me.” Is it so easy that by flattering *guru* you will get the mercy of *guru*? You must pass a very severe test.

Upamanyu’s *guru* and the Aśvinī-kumāras showered their blessings and mercy on him and he regained his eyesight, even all his teeth became golden. All Vedic knowledge was revealed to him and he developed transcendental vision. He was immediately elevated to the Brahman platform and became free from all material desires.

Dama Guṇa Saṁpūrṇa

One Who Has Conquered His Mind and Senses

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions here that, “Unless one is fully renounced, one cannot engage in devotional service or stay in Brahman. Devotional service is rendered on the Brahman platform. Therefore, unless one attains the Brahman platform, or spiritual platform, one cannot engage in devotional service, or, in other words; a person engaged in devotional service is already on the Brahman platform.”

Only one who has conquered his mind and senses—*dama guṇa saṁpūrṇa*, and is engaged in devotional service to give pleasure to the senses of Kṛṣṇa, will be elevated to the Brahman platform. To give pleasure to one’s own senses is *kāma* and to give pleasure to the senses of Kṛṣṇa is *prema*.

*mām ca yo ‘vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

“One who engages in full devotional service, un-

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failing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.”⁹

One who is fully engaged in devotional service and is completely fixed at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa does not fall down under any circumstance because he has controlled his mind and senses. When your mind and senses are fixed at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, your mind and senses are actually controlled. This is real renunciation. You cannot control your mind and senses in any other way.

One, who does not fall down under any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman. Therefore, one who attains pure devotional service will certainly be liberated. Generally, unless one enjoys material happiness, one cannot attain renunciation. Therefore, the general process is to go through *gṛhastha* life.

The *guru* knows if a *brahmacārī* is free from desires and if he is a strict *brahmacārī*. When he has no material desire at all, he will be given *sannyāsa*, otherwise he cannot be given *sannyāsa*. The *guru* also notices if a *brahmacārī* still has material desires and has not fulfilled his lusty desires. In that case the *guru* gives the instruction to get married and become a *gṛhastha*. Then a *brahmacārī* will enter the next āśrama, the *gṛhastha-āśrama*.

The Five Rules Observed by a Brahmacārī

A *naiṣṭikī brahmacārī*, a very strict *brahmacārī* like Upamanyu, controls his strong senses and stubborn mind, thus becoming successful in spiritual life. Upamanyu was a *naiṣṭikī brahmacārī* free from all material desires and he received the full mercy of his *guru*. This verse describes the duties of a *brahmacārī*.

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*śuśrūṣamāṇa ācāryam
sadopāsita nīca-vat
yāna-śayyāsana-sthānair
nāti-dūre kṛtāñjaliḥ*

“While engaged in serving the spiritual master one should remain as a humble servant, and thus when the *guru* is walking the servant should humbly walk behind. When the *guru* lies down to sleep, the servant should also lie down nearby, and when the *guru* has awakened, the servant should sit near him, massaging his lotus feet and rendering other similar services. When the *guru* is sitting down on his āsana, the servant should stand nearby with folded hands, awaiting the *guru*’s order. In this way one should always worship the spiritual master.”¹⁰

While walking, sleeping, sitting, or taking rest, a *brahmacārī* will always wait close by with folded hands for his *guru*’s order, and serve his will. In a humble state of mind, he should always be ready, as his *guru* may call at any moment, even in the dead of the night, at 1 or 2 o’clock in the morning.

Therefore, it is said: *kāka snāna baka dhyāna śva nidra alpā bhojana videsa ghara*. A *brahmacārī* should observe the following five rules:

A *brahmacārī* should take bath like a crow—*kāka snāna*. He should not spend too much time taking bath, but finish within a few minutes. A crow picks up a few drops of water with its beak, puts it on his body and his bath is finished.

He should meditate like a crane—*baka dhyāna*. The crane,

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standing very still in the water where the fish are playing, meditates upon catching a fish.

A *brahmacārī* should sleep like a dog—*śva nidra*. *Śva* means dog. A dog sleeps very lightly. Just a little sound and immediately a dog will wake up, barking.

He should eat very little—*alpa bhojana*. The general process in *brahmacārī* life is to drink one full glass of water to fill the stomach before eating, and then take *prasāda*. Eat only half of what you think you can eat. Then drink another glass of water and keep one fourth of your stomach empty.

A *brahmacārī* should not stay in the home of his parents. He should stay in the *guru's āśrama*. If the *guru's āśrama* is in India and the *brahmacārī* is from Australia, he should come to the *guru's* house. *Guru's āśrama* is *videśa-ghara*, the foreign land. A *brahmacārī* must leave the comfortable home of his parents.

*evam-vṛtto guru-kule
vased bhoga-vivarjitaḥ
vidyā samāpyate yāvad
bibhrad vratam akhaṇḍitam*

“Behaving in this way, strictly following a vow of celibacy the *brahmacārī* should avoid sensual pleasures and reside in the *āśrama* of the *ācārya* to the end of his studies.”¹¹

A *brahmacārī* should not have any sensual pleasures at all. He should be very strict, eating only whatever little food his *guru* gives him. On the days that his *guru* does not give him anything to eat he should fast, learning to tolerate the urge of the belly. His *guru* trains him to control his senses, the objects of the senses, and his mind.

He is a Vaṇik, a Merchant

*evam bṛhad-vrata-dharo
brāhmaṇo 'gnir iva jvalan
mad-bhaktas tīvra-tapasā
dagdha-karmāśayo 'malaḥ*

“A *brāhmaṇa* observing the great vow of celibacy becomes brilliant like fire and by serious austerity burns to ashes the propensity to perform material activities. Free from the contamination of material desire, he becomes My devotee.”¹²

When the *guru* observes that a *brahmacārī*, *naiṣṭikī brahmacārī*, is as brilliant as fire, with all his karmic reactions burnt to ashes, and is free from all material desires, then he will become engaged in devotional service. How can you render devotional service when you still have material desires? You are rendering some service but are demanding something in return. Prahāda Mahārāja says, *sa vai vaṇik na sa bhṛtyaḥ*— “O Lord, one who negotiates a business transaction with You, giving something to You but demanding something from You, he is a *vaṇik*, a merchant. He is not a servant.” We should give everything to the Lord. We should never demand anything from Him:

*na dhanam na janam na sundarīm
kavitām vā jagad-īśa kāmaye
mama janmani janmanīśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi*¹³

This is a teaching from Mahāprabhu’s *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. “O Lord, I

am not asking for material wealth, I am not asking for material followers, I am not asking You to give Me a beautiful woman to enjoy. I am not asking for liberation. I only pray please give Me pure *bhakti*, life after life, ‘*śuddha-bhakti*’ *deha*’ more, *kṛṣṇa kṛpā kari*’. [Cc Antya 20.30]

Please give Me pure devotion, *śuddha bhakti*, unalloyed devotion. I want to serve You life after life and give You all happiness, all enjoyment. I don’t want happiness and enjoyment for Myself.” That is desirelessness. A *brahmacārī* should become like that. No desires. The *guru* will observe this. A *naiṣṭika brahmacārī*, a strict *brahmacārī* is not allowed to marry. The *sannyāsa* order will be awarded to him. It is not a cheap thing. Therefore Prabhupāda says so many *sannyāsīs* fall down because their material desires are not satisfied.

Brahmacārīs with Material Desires Enter the Gṛhastha-Āśrama

The next āśrama is the *gṛhastha-āśrama*. Those *brahmacārīs*, whom the *guru* observes have not satisfied their material desires, should marry and become a *gṛhastha*. The *guru* allows them to fulfil their material desires. They will never be fulfilled. The more you please them, the more they will demand. Similarly, when you pour ghee on a blazing fire, the fire will never be extinguished, but rather it will burn more and more.

The verse wherein Yayāti explains that he still has no satiation, even after enjoying with Devayānī for hundreds of years, is mentioned later in this chapter of the *Bhāgavatam*. This is an apparent contradiction, to have had so much enjoyment but still not achieved any satisfaction. One thing he says is to have experienced the enjoyment and that he knows what kind of enjoyment it is. If you have the experience already, why would

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you desire it again? If such desires are there, you will not be able to render devotional service.

Therefore this *āśrama-dharma* (of the *gṛhasṭha*) is continued up to the fiftieth year. Up to twenty-five years of age he must remain as a *brahmacārī* in the *guru-gṛha*. When the *guru* observes that a *brahmacārī* has material desires and cannot remain as a *naiṣṭhika brahmacārī*, a strict *brahmacārī*, he orders him to enter the *gṛhasṭha-āśrama*.

In the *gṛhasṭha-āśrama* there is some concession for material enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, but there are restrictions in this *āśrama* also. Unless one has been a *brahmacārī* and lived in the *guru's āśrama* and has been trained to control his senses and mind, one cannot become a real *gṛhasṭha*. If he is not trained, he becomes a *gṛha-vrata*, a *gṛhamedhī* and develops attachment to his home, hearth, wife, son and daughter, till the end of his life. For him it is very difficult to give up *gṛhasṭha* life.

Generally *gṛhasṭha* life continues up to the fiftieth year. Twenty-five years will be spent in the *gṛhasṭha-āśrama*. Now in his fiftieth year, after having different kinds of enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, producing sons and daughters, he still experiences a big burden. He cannot sleep at night thinking of his wife's demands, his son's demands, his daughter's demands. All their demands devour him as he enters old age. He is only earning so much money but there are many demands. This is the experience he gains in *gṛhasṭha* life. Therefore it is said,

*dīḷika laḍu yo khāyā jo pastāyā
yo bahi khāyā yo bhī pastāyā*

One who has eaten *dīḷika laḍu*, he laments. One who has not eaten *dīḷika laḍu*, he also laments. One who has experienced *gṛhasṭha* life, and has eaten its fruits, he thinks, "I have experi-

enced this enjoyment— Oh, no more! No more! No more!”

The Fruit of the Sugarcane

Once, a jackal saw a field of sweet sugarcane. Entering the field he saw a round-shaped hive. Assuming it was the fruit of the sugarcane he thought, “The sugarcane is very sweet, so the fruit of the sugarcane must be much sweeter. First I will eat the fruit then I will eat the sugarcane.” When he bit into that round-shaped fruit a swarm of wasps flew out and stung him, “Waaaaa! waaaaa! Oh, no more! No more! I will never eat that round-shaped fruit again.”

Similarly, now that you have gained nice experience there is no longer any need of eating that ball-shaped fruit. That is why it is said, in youth you have that strong desire to eat the fruit, then when you get stung, “Oh, no more! No more! *dilika laḍu yo khāyā jo pastāyā yo bahi khāyā yo bhī pastāyā*— One who has eaten *dilika laḍu*, the round-shaped fruit, he laments for having eaten it. One who has not eaten, he laments: “Oh, I have not eaten it. What is it like? Let me eat it.” Therefore, to gain that experience *guru* says, “Accept a wife and enter *gṛhastha-āśrama*.” Gain some experience and get the reaction. Then you will think, “Oh, no more, no more.”

A Gṛhastha is Also a Brahmachārī

In the eleventh canto Kṛṣṇa explains to Uddhava the duty of a *gṛhastha*.

*brahmacaryam tapaḥ śaucam
santoṣo bhūta-sauhṛdam
gṛhasthasyāpy ṛtau gantuḥ*

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sarveṣāṃ mad-upāsanam

“Chastity, penance, purity, peacefulness and kindness to all living beings constitute *gṛhastha-dharma*. A *gṛhastha* who approaches his wife for procreation only on those days sanctioned by scripture is thus considered chaste. Worship of Hari should be practiced by everyone.”¹⁴

Celibacy is practiced by *brahmacārīs*, *gṛhasthas*, *vānaprasthas*, and *sannyāsīs*. There are two types of *brahmacārīs*: *naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī* and *upakurvāṇa-brahmacārī*. A *gṛhastha* is also a *brahmacārī*, an *upakurvāṇa-brahmacārī*. Both types of *brahmacārīs* strictly follow the rules and regulations of the *brahmacārī-āśrama*, like Upamanyu did. He never discharged a drop of semen and become free from all material desires for enjoyment.

One who is free from all material desires and is as brilliant as fire—*brāhmaṇo* ‘*gnir iva jvalan*, is recommended not to accept a wife but remain in the *guru-gṛha* and will be given *sannyāsa* later on in life. He is the proper candidate for *sannyāsa*.

After you have been trained how to control your mind and senses during your *brahmacārī* period and when the *guru* observes that you still have material desires and cannot remain a *brahmacārī* throughout your whole life, you can accept a wife. Therefore, unless you become a *brahmacārī* in the *guru-gṛha*, you cannot become a proper *gṛhastha*, but you become an attached *gṛhamedhī*. Then you are an *adānta-gobhiḥ*, which means that you have no control over your senses. Prahlad Mahārāja’s version of *adānta-gobhiḥ* is: *punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*—repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed.

An *upakurvāṇa-brahmacārī* has to follow very strict regu-

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lations and only approach his wife for procreation during the proper fertile time, *vyavāyaḥ prajayā na ratyā*. The purpose of a wife and marriage is to produce a worthy son. Who is a worthy son? A *kṣṇa-bhakta-putra*. A Vaiṣṇava son, who will become a devotee and render service to the senses of Kṛṣṇa.

A Religious Principle of Gṛhastha-Dharma

Kṛṣṇa has said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*balaṁ balavatāṁ cāhaṁ
kāma-rāga-vivarjitam
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu
kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha*

“I am the strength of the strong, devoid of passion and desire. I am sex life, which is not contrary to religious principles, O lord of the Bhāratas [Arjuna].”¹⁵

This verse says: ‘principles of religion’. That is *gṛhastha-dharma*. It is a principle of religion. There is a specific time, and when the wife is willing and desirous of having a child, the husband must go to her in her fertile period. This is *dharmā*, a religious principle of *gṛhastha-dharma*, that the husband will give her a child. Therefore we have this strict rule, a regulative principle for *gṛhasthas* that once a month the husband and wife will unite in sexual union only for procreation. Otherwise husband and wife will lead their lives as *brahmacārī* and *brahmacārīṇī*. They should sleep in separate beds, in separate rooms.

This is *brahmacārī*, *upakurvāṇa-brahmacārī*. In this way you can maintain *brahmacarya*. You should not discharge semen

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unnecessarily. If you do so then your mind will be fickle. You will lose bodily vigour, giving way to moroseness and untimely old age. If you unnecessarily discharge semen you will experience tiredness, inability to walk. You will not be able to chant or serve properly.

A *grhastha* must lead a life of austerity—*tapasya*, maintain cleanliness—*śaucam*, and should always be satisfied—*santoṣa*. You should be content with whatever is available by providential arrangement, and keep friendship with all living entities because by developing complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness you see the relationship of all entities with Kṛṣṇa, *kṛṣṇa-jīva*. Therefore it is said that the duty of a *grhastha* is to cook food, and feed all the *jīvas* in his house.

Generally a *grhastha* keeps domestic animals like cows, not dogs. There might be some other animals, insects, ants, scorpions, cockroaches, or serpents, so you should place some food outside for them to eat. When any guests come they will be fed first. Offer the guests some food, a nice place to sit or lie down on. Everything should be nicely offered to the guest. You should accept any guests coming to your door as Nārāyaṇa.

Maintenance is Not a Problem at All

*kuṭumbeṣu na sajjeta
na pramādyet kuṭumby api
vipāścīn naśvaram paśyed
adṛṣṭam api dṛṣṭa-vat*

“A householder taking care of many dependent family members should not become materially attached to them, nor should he become mentally unbalanced, considering himself to be the lord.

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An intelligent householder should see that all possible future happiness, just like that which he has already experienced, is temporary.”¹⁶

You should not become attached to your dependent family members. Do not become bewildered by their maintenance or how to earn more and more money. As daily demands grow, more money is required. Do not act upon that. Kṛṣṇa is known as Viśvambara—the maintainer of the universe. When the whole family is engaged in Kṛṣṇa’s service, there is no question of maintenance; you will definitely be maintained, as Kṛṣṇa maintains the whole universe.

Śrīvas Ṭhākura was a *gṛhastha* with a large family. He had a wife and so many children, but he never worried about their maintenance. All the members of his family were engaged in the loving service of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa. They were engaged in the nine types of devotional service: śravaṇa—hearing, kīrtana—chanting, *smaraṇa*—remembering, *pūjana*—worshiping, *vandana*—praying, *paricaryā*—serving, *dāsyā*—accepting servitorship, *sakhya*—friendship, and *ātma-nivedana*—surrendering fully. Śrīvas Ṭhākura never thought about how to maintain himself, because, *goptṛtve varaṇam tathā*—he had firm faith that Kṛṣṇa is my protector and my maintainer. A completely surrendered devotee has firm faith that he will be maintained.

One day, as a test, Mahāprabhu asked Śrīvas Ṭhākura, “Śrīvas, you are a *gṛhastha* with a big family, why aren’t you going out earning money to maintain your family?”

Śrīvasa was a completely surrendered pure devotee, whose whole family was surrendered and engaged in the loving service of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa. He did not have a problem maintaining his family at all. He did not say anything; he only clapped his hands three times.

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Mahāprabhu said: “What does that mean?”

Then Śrīvas Ṭhākura explained: “If we are not maintained for one day, we will fast. If we are not maintained on the second day, we will also fast. If we are not maintained on the third day, we will also fast. For three days we will fast. I have firm faith that we will definitely be maintained, because *goptṛtve varāṇam tathā*, Kṛṣṇa is my maintainer.”

“I am engaged in His service twenty-four hours a day, so why wouldn't I be maintained? Kṛṣṇa maintains the whole universe, He is *viśvambara*, why wouldn't He maintain His devotee?” Śrīvas, with firm faith, continued: “For three days the whole family will fast if maintenance does not come. If no food comes on the fourth day we will drown ourselves in the Ganges, finished!” Thus, Mahāprabhu became greatly pleased with him. Can anyone do that? No, because you have no faith, you are lacking faith. Maintenance is not a problem at all, not at all.

*ananyāś cintayanto mām
ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānām
yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham*

“But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.”¹⁷

Kṛṣṇa has said: “A *gṛhastha* should exclusively think of Me and have no other thoughts.” It is not that *gṛhasthas* cannot become devotees. A *gṛhastha* is also a *bhakta*. He should completely surrender to Kṛṣṇa and be completely dependent upon Kṛṣṇa. His duty is to make his whole family Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Otherwise, *pitā na sa syāt*—that husband is not fit to be a father, and *jananī na sā syāt*, that wife is not fit to be a mother. Both husband and wife should be completely Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees so that they will procreate a Kṛṣṇa conscious son or daughter. When they have firm faith, Kṛṣṇa maintains them. Therefore when Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura spoke in this way, Mahāprabhu became very pleased.

Material Relationships are Temporary

*putra-dārāpta-bandhūnām
saṅgamaḥ pāntha-saṅgamaḥ
anu-deham viyanty ete
svapno nidrānugo yathā*

“The association of children, wife, relatives and friends is just like the brief meeting of travellers. With each change of body one is separated from all such associates, just as one loses the objects one possesses in a dream when the dream is over.”

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Material relationships are compared to travellers from different countries who spend one night in a motel. They develop a brief relationship, and in the morning that relationship is over and they continue travelling to their different destinations.

Similarly, this is how our relationships are within one family, or one house—*grha*. A family relationship is a temporary relationship. Material relationships are temporary, but the relationship with Kṛṣṇa is a perfect and eternal relationship. A *gṛhastha*—householder should develop this perfect, eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. He should not be attached to his home and

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family as these are temporary relationships. Just as upon waking you forget the people in a dream, upon leaving this body to accept another body you will no longer be able to remember your friends and relatives.

For example, when you are asleep you may dream that you have become the King of heaven, living in a palace in Indra Bhavan with many beautiful dancing ladies, like Urvaśī, Menakā and Rambhā and you are enjoying as King Indra, but as soon as you wake up you realise that it was only a dream and you are sleeping in your own bed. Where is that dream now? The dream is finished.

Similarly, when you leave this body your householder dream will also finish. Where is your wife? Where is your son? Where is your daughter? Where is your home now? Those relationships will be over. This is *gṛhasṭha* life. So, do not be too much attached to temporary relationships.

*itthaṁ parimṛśan mukto
gṛheṣv atithi-vad vasan
na gṛhair anubadhyeta
nirmamo nirahaṅkṛtaḥ*

“Having realised the truth of such transitory relationships, the *gṛhasṭha* lives in his house like a pilgrim, as a guest, or as a stranger in a strange land. Dedicating himself entirely to Kṛṣṇa and giving up attachment to his body, his relatives, his house and home, he is liberated even in this lifetime.”¹⁹

However, you have developed an attachment to your home, hearth, and relatives that is as strong as glue, and you are unable to give up these attachments.

The Duty of a Family

*karmabhir gr̥ha-medhīyair
iṣṭvā mām eva bhaktimān
tiṣṭhed vanam vopaviṣet
prajāvān vā parivrajat*

“Having satisfied Me by executing his family duties properly My devotee may continue to remain at home or he may go to the forest as a *vānaprastha* or if he has a son he may take to wandering about as a *sannyāsī*.”²⁰

Lord Kṛṣṇa says here: “Having satisfied Me by executing his family duties properly.” What does He mean by properly? He means that all family members should be rendering service to Kṛṣṇa, because they are all servants of Kṛṣṇa. That is the duty of a family.

The son and daughter should be given proper education from early childhood. Proper education means to develop their Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the duty of the father and mother. It is a family duty to maintain them nicely, give them nice food and clothing, so that they will never feel disturbed. This verse explains that the duty of the parents is to train their children to become *bhaktas*, and serve Kṛṣṇa.

When a *gṛhastha* has completed his family duty, after his children have grown up and been properly educated and are capable of maintaining the dependent family members, then a *gṛhastha* will take *vānaprastha*.

Renouncing All Connections

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The third āśrama is the *vānaprastha-āśrama*. When the *grhastha* is finished with all the comforts of home: air-conditioning, electricity, fridge, television, running water, swimming pool, sleeping on soft cushions, he goes to the forest and lives a simple life. He only eats whatever is easily available to him otherwise he fasts.

Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda said that: “The *varṇāśrama* institution is most scientific. It aims at giving one the facility to return home, back to Godhead, which one will not be able to do without completely renouncing all connections with the material world.”

A *grhastha* has to leave and give up all connections with his home, hearth and wife; otherwise he is not a *grhastha*, but a *grhamedhī*. Are there any *grhasthas*? Almost all householders are *grhamedhis*.

*yas tv āsakta-matir gehe
putra-vittaiṣaṇāturaḥ
straiṇaḥ kṛpaṇa-dhīr mūḍho
mamāham iti badhyate*

“On the other hand a *grhastha* whose heart is attached to hearth and home, who is always worried about money and children and who is obsessed with sex is a fool. Such a person is bound by misconceptions of ‘I and mine’.”²¹

For the person that is attached to home and family, money, property and all other objects of enjoyment, the more he develops attachment the tighter that bondage becomes. He is not a *grhastha*, he is a *grhamedhī*. What is his destination? Where will

he go? *Bhāgavata* says:

*aho me pitarau vṛddhau
bhāryā bālātmajātmajāḥ
anāthā mām ṛte dināḥ
katham jīvanti duḥkhitāḥ*

*evam gṛhāśayākṣipta-hṛdayo
mūḍha-dhīr ayam
atrṛtas tām anudhyāyan
mṛto 'ndham viśate tamaḥ*

“At the time of death such a fool thinks ‘alas, I am going to die! My mother and father have reached old age, in my absence, who will take care of them? My wife and children are helpless without me. How can any of these poor souls survive without me?’ With his heart overwhelmed by family sentiment and filled with anxieties, because of attachment to house and home. Such a fool filled with worries dies unhappy and dissatisfied with his inability to realise his plans he enters the blinding darkness of hell.”²²

He goes to the hell named Andha-tāmisra. That is his destination. While lying on his deathbed he is worried about who will take care of his wife and children, and how they will survive without him, but he does not realise that Kṛṣṇa is their maintainer.

One should only develop attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. A *gṛhastha* must be detached from his home and hearth, which is the strongest attachment. One who lives as if he were

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a guest in a motel, staying for a temporary period, is a true *grhastha*. This is the training we give. Wherever you go Kṛṣṇa is there to help you. Your maintenance is of no botheration. Why should maintenance or protection be a problem if you are always exclusively thinking of Kṛṣṇa and are engaged in His loving service? There is no problem because you are protected and you are maintained by Kṛṣṇa.

*ananyāś cintayanto mām
ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣām nityābhiyuktānām
yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham*

“But those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack, and preserve what they have.”

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Kṛṣṇa has promised that when you think exclusively of Him, *ananya cintā*, and are constantly attached to Him, *teṣām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ*, He will assume the responsibility of maintaining those who are dependent on you and He will carry what they lack. A pure devotee may be a *grhastha*, but he is completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa for his maintenance and protection.

Therefore one who never says ‘I’ and ‘mine’, is a *grhastha*. One should have no connection with the material world, only an outward, external connection. In this way the scientific *varṇāśrama* institution gives one the facility to return home, back to Godhead, which one cannot do without completely renouncing all connections to the material world.

A Gradual Process

The following is Mahāprabhu’s instruction to Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī:

*antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra
acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, ‘within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus Kṛṣṇa will soon be very pleased and deliver you from the clutches of *māyā*.’”²⁴

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī was always running away from home. He was a young man, married to a wife who was as beautiful as a heavenly angel, but no one could bind him. He was the only son of a very wealthy *jamidāra* king, still he was running away. His father would catch him and drag him back but he would run away again. When Mahāprabhu came to Śāntipura, Raghunātha had run to Advaita’s house. He cried and cried at the lotus feet of Mahāprabhu. “Please Mahāprabhu, please, I will go with You, I’ll go with You. Please take me with You.”

*sthira hañā ghare yāo, nā hao vātula
krame krame pāya loka bhava-sindhu-kūla*

“Be patient and return home. Do not be a crazy fellow. By and by, you will be able to cross the ocean of material existence.”²⁵

Mahāprabhu said, *sthira hañā ghare yāo, nā hao vātula* ³⁴

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“Don’t become mad. Go back to your parental house. *krame krame pāya*—it is a gradual process. Gradually develop renunciation, completely renouncing connections with the material world, then you will be able to go out.”

markaṭa-vairāgya nā kara loka dekhāṇā
yathā-yogyā viṣaya bhujja’ anāsakta haṇā

“You should not make yourself a show bottle devotee and become a false renunciant. For the time being, enjoy the material world in a befitting way and do not become attached to it.”²⁶

antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra
acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra

“Within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus Kṛṣṇa will soon be very pleased and deliver you from the clutches of *māyā*.”²⁷

Markaṭa-Vairāgya — Monkey Renunciation

Renunciation like a monkey—*markaṭa-vairāgya* is only external and temporary behaviour. A monkey continuously jumps from one branch of a tree to another branch. It is fleeting. Mahāprabhu said, “Don’t be a *markaṭa-vairāgī*, only showing externally that you are renounced. One who has developed strong attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa is a real *vairāgī*. He may be living in the *gṛhasṭha-āśrama*, still he is a renunciate. Rāya Rāmānanda is a *gṛhasṭha* but he is not attached to his home at all. He is better than Me. I have taken *sannyāsa*. He

has not taken *sannyāsa* but he is completely detached from the material world and is completely attached to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.”

A *gṛhastha* should stay in the world like a guest. When a guest comes to your house, does he develop any attachment to it? No. This is not his house. He is a guest. After two days he will leave. Why would he develop attachment to your house? This is a *gṛhastha*.

A Real Renunciant Develops Yukta-Vairāgya

Mahāprabhu said, “Go back home. You are the only son of a king therefore you have enough material wealth. *Yathā-yogyā viśaya bhujja’ anāsakta hañā*—for the time being, enjoy the material world in a befitting way and do not become attached to it. Develop *yukta-vairāgya*. *Markaṭa-vairāgya* is monkey renunciation, false renunciation, but *yukta-vairāgya* is real renunciation. You are in the midst of family members where enjoyment is available to you, but you are not attached to it. That is *yukta-vairāgya*. He whose only attachment is the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa is a real *vairāgī*. You should understand everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. Offer everything to Kṛṣṇa. Whatever Kṛṣṇa gives as His *prasāda*, just accept it. Accept only the minimum requirement to keep this body and soul together, to render service to Kṛṣṇa.

Antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra. In your heart always think of Kṛṣṇa and develop strong attachment to His lotus feet. Do not develop any attachment to your home, hearth, and family members. Behave externally in such a way that satisfies your parents and wife. Be a real *gṛhastha*, like Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who could leave at any moment, because he was not attached at all. *acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra* ^{3/4} *acirāt* means very soon. “Go back home and

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act like this. Very soon Kṛṣṇa will take you out from that home.” And that happened in the life of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

If a *gṛhastha* is too attached to the home and family, at the time of death he will be thinking, “Oh, I am going to die. My old parents are there, who will take care of them? My wife, my children will be uncared for, who will take care of them now that I am dying.” Thinking in this way he dies, then he goes to hell, *andhā tāmasī*. This is *gṛha-vrata*.

There are so many instructions in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. This long purport covers many topics. It will take a week to explain them all properly. Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes, “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who said, *niṣkiñcānasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya*: one who wants to go back home, back to Godhead, must be *niṣkiñcana*, free from all affinity for material enjoyment.”

Willingly Drinking Poison

*niṣkiñcānasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya
pāraṁ paraṁ jigamiṣor bhava-sāgarasya
sandarśanaṁ viṣayiṇām atha yoṣitām ca
hā hanta hanta viṣa-bhakṣaṇato 'py asādhu*

“Greatly lamenting, the Lord then informed Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, ‘Alas, for a person who is seriously desiring to cross the material ocean and engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord without material motives, seeing a materialist engaged in sense gratification or seeing a woman who is similarly interested is more abominable than willingly drinking poison.’”²⁸

This material existence is like a dreadful ocean. In the dreadful ocean there are big waves. The five objects of enjoyment—form, taste, touch, sound, smell are compared to waves in the ocean and they are constantly crashing against us. Therefore one should not be attached to the objects of sense enjoyment. Those who are very eager to go back home, back to Godhead, completely renouncing all connection with the material world, should not run after the objects of sense enjoyment. “It aims at giving one the facility to return home back to Godhead, which one cannot do without completely renouncing all connections with the material world.”

Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “He who is very serious, very eager to go back home, back to Godhead should not be attached. He will completely renounce all connections with the material world. He should not even see a materialistic person attached to a woman. For a person who is very eager to go back home, back to Godhead, this is more abominable than willingly drinking poison.”

Develop the Proper Vision

We are seeing so many materialistic persons. That means we are drinking very dreadful poison. So how can you go back home back to Godhead? Will you blind yourself like Bilvamañgala? Should we become blind and not able to see? So many materialistic people, so many women are coming here, and some are residing in the temple also. Does that mean we should not see them, that we should become blind? No! What is the purport, the *tattva* here? It means you should only see one connection, the connection with Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda said, “Completely renouncing all material connections.” Everyone, everything is connected with Kṛṣṇa. We will see that connection.

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We should develop the vision to see how all *jīvas*, everything, everybody is connected with Kṛṣṇa, and see that there is only this one relationship, the relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Whatever you see here, whatever you find here is all paraphernalia for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment. Kṛṣṇa is the only enjoyer. The *jīva* is not the enjoyer. The *jīva* cannot be the enjoyer. Only that person who develops complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness can develop this vision.

Everyone says, "This home and hearth is mine, my wife, my son, my daughter, my bank balance, everything is mine. They are all meant for my enjoyment." Does anyone say it is for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment? A dog cannot say it is for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment, or a hog cannot say this is for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment. Only a human being, who is completely Kṛṣṇa conscious can say this. He has developed this vision and can see, "Oh, this is Kṛṣṇa's. It is all paraphernalia for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment. It is not for my enjoyment. It does not belong to me. I belong to Kṛṣṇa. I should be enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa." He sees and thinks like that. Whatever is available he utilises for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment.

So how does he look at women? He is not blind. He must look at them. "Oh, she is a very beautiful woman." "Oh, this is a fragment of Kṛṣṇa's beauty." "Kṛṣṇa will enjoy her." "She is Kṛṣṇa's maidservant." He will think like that and he will see in that way. He should not blind himself as Bilvamaṅgala did. Kṛṣṇa is the enjoyer. She should be enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa. She is Kṛṣṇa's *jīva*, Kṛṣṇa's maidservant. Kṛṣṇa will enjoy her and be happy." He sees a woman with this angle of vision. It is not that we should not look at a woman. It is a question of how we see her. Usually what happens? As soon as a man sees a beautiful woman, immediately the desire for enjoyment arises in his heart. It is automatic and immediate. "Oh, this nice woman is the object of enjoyment for me." Seeing with this vision is *viṣa-bhakṣaṇa*, more abominable than drinking poison willingly.

For that person who is very eager to go back home, back to Godhead, he sees that everything is for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment. So the instruction is to develop the proper vision. You should develop complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness and see Kṛṣṇa everywhere, see how everything and everyone is connected with Kṛṣṇa. A pure devotee thinks like this. He sees everything from this angle of vision. He sees things in this perspective. He never thinks in his mind that it is for his enjoyment. No. He knows everything is for Kṛṣṇa to enjoy. That is the teaching here.

When it is said that one should not see a woman or materialistic person, it doesn't mean that we will blind ourselves. No. We will see. But how we will see, with what sort of vision we will see, that is the question. That training is given by *guru*. *Guru* has developed that vision. He gives instruction and trains you to develop this vision. Then you will never be in bondage. The only attachment is Kṛṣṇa. This is our Vaiṣṇava teaching. Therefore it is said, *niṣkiñcanasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya*. One who wants to go back home, back to Godhead must be *niṣkiñcana*, free from all affinity for material enjoyment. Therefore the question may be raised, who is *niṣkiñcana*?

Niṣkiñcanasya Bhagavad Bhajanonmukhasya Completely Detached from Material Enjoyment

The question arises, who is *niṣkiñcana*? There are *jñānīs* who have no attachment to the objects of sense enjoyment. They have already tasted it and they say, "No more, no more. No more eating that ball-shaped fruit." They have felt the stinging of the wasps. So, *jñānīs* also develop detachment. The whole trouble is they are not *bhaktas* and have not developed attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. It is not that you only develop detachment from the material world. That is dangerous. Unless

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you develop strong attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, there is no true detachment. Rather it is *phalgu-vairāgya*, false *vairāgya*, hypocrisy.

There is a river in Bihar known as the Phālgū River. It appears deceptively dry. If you remove a little sand, though, you will find so much water is underneath. In the same way, *phalgu-vairāgya* means cheating *vairāgya*, hypocrites who deceive others. These so-called detached *jñānīs* take *karma-sannyāsa*, but they are great cheaters because they have many unfulfilled desires. When they take *sannyāsa*, they fall down after some time.

We should develop real detachment. True detachment from the material world manifests when you develop strong attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise there is no detachment. But the *niṣkiñcana-bhakta*, pure devotee, one who has developed strong attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, he is free from all desires for material enjoyment including the desire for liberation. He is the real *niṣkiñcana*.

Śāstra says, the learned scholars, *paṇḍīts*, say that one who has no separate desire from Kṛṣṇa, who is completely free from all sorts of material desires, even the desire for material liberation, and whose only occupation is *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, is *niṣkiñcana*. The *niṣkiñcana-bhakta* sees that they are great fools, those who are tightly attached to home and hearth, wife, son, daughter and all other objects of material enjoyment. They have obtained this rarely achieved human birth but they do not engage in *bhajana*.

A Fool's Paradise

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a *niṣkiñcana-sādhu*, has said:

*durlabha mānava-janma labhiyā saṁsāre
kṛṣṇa nā bhajinu-duḥkha kahibo kāhāre?*

“Although the human form of life is the rarest opportunity for attaining spiritual perfection, I am now lamenting bitterly. This is because somehow or other I have been born with such an opportunity, but have simply wasted it by never worshipping Lord Kṛṣṇa. O, to whom shall I tell the tale of my misery?”²⁹

Such a great fool, a distressed person, he has obtained this rare human form but he is not engaged in *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. Instead he is madly running after the objects of material enjoyment: sound, touch, form, smell, taste, running to eat that ball-shaped fruit. *Sādhu* sees that this greatly distressed person, who is not doing *bhajana*, is suffering so much. When he asks him, “How are you?” He says, “I am fine. I am fine.” He says he is fine. He is living in a fool’s paradise, not a real paradise. He is suffering so much but says, “I am happy.” *Sādhu*’s vision is that he sees he is not engaged in *bhajana* but engaged in material enjoyment. He is running after the objects of sense enjoyment. He is a careless person. Though he is suffering so much, he says, “I am enjoying.” *Sādhu* sees his distress and goes to help him.

A Sādhu’s Vision is Different

In the tenth canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the vision of the *mahātmā sādhu* is expressed:

*mahad-vicalanaṁ nṛṇāṁ
grhiṇāṁ dīna-cetasām
niḥśreyasāya bhagavān
kalpate nānyathā kvacit*

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“O my lord, O great devotee, persons like you move from one place to another not for their own interests but for the sake of poor-hearted *gr̥hasthas* [householders]. Otherwise, they have no interest in going from one place to another.”³⁰

A *gr̥hastha*, a great fool who is suffering so much because of his attachments is careless and cannot understand that he is suffering. Therefore, *dīna akiñcana sādhus* go to the doorsteps of these suffering householders—*gr̥hasthas*, in order to shower their mercy on them, and to inculcate Kṛṣṇa consciousness unto them. With this intention, a *sādhu* visits a materialistic person. He does not go there thinking, “He is a very wealthy man. I’ll go there so he can feed me nicely. He will give me a nice donation, good *dakṣiṇā*, and *praṇāmi*.” No, visiting a materialistic person in this way is called *viṣa-bhakṣaṇa*—willingly drinking dreadful poison.

A real *sādhu*’s vision is different. You should understand the purport, the *tattva-vicāra*. The *sādhu-mahātma* goes there because his heart bleeds seeing the suffering of the *dīna cetah gr̥hastha*—foolish *gr̥hasthas* who are so attached to the home, so attached to objects of sense enjoyment, but are only getting suffering. With no other motive a *sādhu mahātmā* gives Kṛṣṇa consciousness to them. Such a *mahātmā*, he is *akiñcana-niṣkiñcana*.

mahānta-svabhāva ei tārīte pāmara
*nija kārya nāhi tabu yāna tāra ghara*³¹

It is the nature of a *sādhu-mahātmā* to deliver those foolish attached *gr̥hasthas*—*mahānta-svabhāva ei tārīte pāmara*. They

only visit these suffering and distressed persons to inculcate Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to deliver them. This is the meaning of *akiñcana* and *niṣkiñcana*.

It is quoted here that such *sādhus* have no material connection. Their only attachment is the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. They have renounced all connections with the material world. This is called *niṣkiñcana*—free from all affinity for material enjoyment. One, who is fully renounced and completely cent-percent engaged in devotional service, is on the Brahman platform.

Questions & Answers

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: In Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport, first paragraph, this is mentioned: *niṣkiñcanasya bhagavad-bhajanon-mukhasya*. Then another point is there also, Prabhupāda quoted, *niśreyasaya*, which I have not explained completely. It would take one week if I were to explain the purport completely. It is now 11.30 am. I began class at 8.00 am, it took me three and a half hours. If I speak daily three and a half hours for one week then I can give the complete explanation. How can you understand Prabhupāda’s purport? Can you understand?

Devotee 1: Gurudeva, the *jñānīs* who attain *brahmānanda*, are they detached?

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: No. They are hypocrites. They are only cheating. They are *phalgu-vairāgīs*, only showing externally that they renounced. But inside they have many desires. The Phālgu River appears dry. Just remove a little sand and you will find so much water underneath. That is cheating *vairāgya*, monkey *vairāgya*, *markaṭa vairāgya*. Not real *vairāgya*.

Devotee 2: It could be said that even though a devotee is not

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qualified, still he may take *sannyāsa*, and that is good because he may serve his *guru* in the preaching mission, and even if he falls down, still there is some benefit.

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: Very good, yes, very good. Holding *daṇḍa*, then throwing *daṇḍa*, catching a woman. “Very nice *daṇḍa* I have now.” What service is it? Is it service?

Devotee 2: Is it important to condemn oneself after eating that *dillika-laḍu* you were speaking about? Is it important to feel, “Oh, I have done wrong. I am such a fool.”

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: Yes, yes. “Such a fool I am.” He condemns himself, yes.

Devotee 2: I am not serving *guru* and Kṛṣṇa. I am serving my family members.

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: Yes, so many are attracted and are running after that round-shaped fruit.

Devotee 2: You said that the householder stays in the *grhastha-āśrama* until he is fifty years of age. Does the *guru* force him to stay next to that round-shaped fruit till he has exhausted his material desires?

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: Therefore the system is there. At the fiftieth year you have to leave it, *bābā*. No more staying at home.

Devotee 2: What if I want to leave *grhastha* life after two years?

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: Nonsense. Not two years, leave it as soon as possible. You should remember it. “The whole night I was crying. Wasps from that round-shaped fruit are stinging me. No more! No more! Right now I am leaving.” You are suffering but saying, “I am enjoying.” You are living in a fool’s

paradise. You are such a fool.

Devotee 3: You were explaining that the perfect *gṛhastha* is also a *brahmacārī*.

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: Yes, a *brahmacārī*.

Devotee 3: Why is it said that spiritual advancement is very slow in the *gṛhastha-āśrama*?

Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami: That is talking about the attached person. He is not a *gṛhastha*. He is a *gṛhamedhī*, *gṛha-vrata*. For the real *gṛhastha* progress is very rapid. Like Śrīvas Ṭhākura, he is not attached at all. There are many *gṛhastha* devotees. Rāya Rāmānanda is a *gṛhastha*. He is not a *sannyāsī*. Mahāprabhu said, “He is superior to Me. I am *sannyāsī* still, when I see a woman, My mind is agitated, but he is not agitated at all. He is better than Me, though he is a *gṛhastha*.” Mahāprabhu said that. When Mahāprabhu sent for Pradyumna Miśra and told him: “Go to Rāya Rāmānanda, take lessons from him.” At that time Rāya Rāmānanda was staying in Purī in Jagannātha-vallabha garden. He had written a drama, *Jagannātha-vallabha*. He was personally training 16-year-old girls to sing and dance for the pleasure of Jagannātha.

When Pradyumna Miśra went to see Rāya Rāmānanda he saw he was allowing young girls to sit on his lap. He was massaging their limbs to give them shape. They will dance before Jagannātha. For Jagannātha’s pleasure they will take part in the drama and dance for Him. But Pradyumna Miśra had a different vision. “What is this? Mahāprabhu sent me to such a person who is attached to young girls. He has so much desire for sexual enjoyment that he is allowing them to sit on his lap and he is massaging their naked limbs.” With this thought in his mind he went back to Mahāprabhu.

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Mahāprabhu is the Lord, He knows everything. He is in the heart. Mahāprabhu chastised him. “Hey! What are you thinking? I am *sannyāsī*, still when I see a woman my mind is agitated. Rāya Rāmānanda is not a *sannyāsī*, he is more than Me. He has no attachment at all. He is completely detached, completely free from all sexual desire. Though he allows the girls to sit on his lap while he massages their naked limbs, his mind is not agitated at all. He is thinking of Jagannātha, and how Jagannātha will be happy. They will dance for Jagannātha with well-formed limbs. All his thoughts are there for Jagannātha’s enjoyment.” He is so detached. He is a real *grhastha*. Can you find such a *grhastha* nowadays?

Vedic Dharma and the Gṛhastha-āśrama