

## **GREED**

Divonmorsk

(01\_Devamrita Swami 29.09.03)

Hare Krishna, welcome. We're going to be having a very emotional seminar, we're going to be dealing with very emotionally dynamic subjects, and we're going to try to apply this emotional dynamic to our everyday life. We will discuss Krishna, of course. I hope you all have a desire to hear about Krishna, since that is what the process of *bhakti yoga* is about. Specifically we want to discuss greed in Krishna consciousness. In the material world, to be greedy is not a nice thing. Every one of you has the experience what it's like to be greedy. And you know that *Bhagavad Gita* describes that material greed is a doorway to hell.

*tri-vidam narakasyedam  
dvaram nasanam atmanah*

There are three gates to hell, Lord Krishna says: lust, anger and greed. Every sane person must avoid these gates, because *dvaram nasanam atmanah*--these three doors lead to self-destruction. Before exploring spiritual greed, let us discuss material greed, because my goal is to show you that you do have some idea how to be greedy.

At the annual festival in Odessa, Ukraine, when I asked how many persons in the seminar knew what it was like to be greedy, almost everyone raised their hand. Yes, you've all had the experience of being greedy at some point in your life. Let me ask you here: How many of you have had the experience of being greedy? Please raise your hand. Very good, now please tell me some of the things you were greedy for. Quickly, who will be the first one?

**Devotee:** *Prasad.*

**Devamrita Swami:** *Prasad*, okay what else.

**Devotee:** Fear that I will not get anything anymore.

**Devamrita Swami:** Huh? What were you greedy for?

**Devotee:** That I will not get.

**Devamrita Swami:** That's not greed--greed means you already have something and you just have to have more, more MORE!

**Devotee:** Money.

**Devamrita Swami:** Money, okay, what else? Anyone else, come on tell me what you've been greedy for.

**Devotee:** *Saris.*

**Devamrita Swami:** *Saris!* More, more, quickly!

**Devotee:** Things, consumer goods.

**Devamrita Swami:** Like what, come on.

**Devotee:** Decorations, glory, sweets.

**Devamrita Swami:** (laugh) You're not telling me the truth. Just think what it's like to be greedy--you taste something and then you intensely hanker: "Oh, I've got to eat much more." Then you start packing your belly until it hurts. Even though you know you've had enough, still you want more.

In material life greed leads to pain and suffering. The first miserable gate, lust, because it can never be fulfilled, leads to the next gate, which is anger. When your desires aren't fulfilled, you become bitter, angry at the world and yourself. Maybe some of you have experienced being attached to someone, but that person didn't fulfill your desires. So you became so angry, remember? First there was powerful attachment, and then anger. Next, you scream at the person, "Get out of my life, I never want to see you again!" How many of you have done that? The general formula is to double the number of those who bravely raised their hand, since many are shy.

Just think: One minute you were so attached: "Oh, you are my everything, I cannot live without you." The next month: "Get out of my life—you disgust me!" It's the same person you embraced so tightly, but now you never want to see that person again. The truth is that no material person can satisfy you; therefore in relationships there must be anger. Now you may say, "Well, I remember a few times when I felt that I was satisfied." Yes? Everyone has had that material experience of temporary satisfaction, right?

Sometimes *maya* seems merciful--not very often, but sometimes, right? Those magical moments of *maya* that you relish all your life--they come back, these thoughts, these memories, and they disturb your Krishna consciousness. Yes? Everyone has had a few of those absorbing moments when it seemed *maya* was good, right? Therefore when Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita, dukhalayam asasvatam*--this material world is a miserable place--you say quietly, with devotion, "True, but not all the time." Maybe we think Krishna is just exaggerating to make us more enthusiastic in devotional service.

What else does Krishna say in *Bhagavad Gita? anityam asukham lokam*: this material world is a temporary, miserable abode. But we say "Yeah, that's mostly true, but there have been some good times." And those so-called magic material moments are enough to make you attached to suffering in the material world. Generally it is so that lust leads to anger, because generally your desires are not fulfilled, or else they're not fulfilled in a satisfactory way. But what happens when you *do* think you've been satisfied? What happens? Who knows? Something worse than anger happens. What I'm going to explain to you is that it's better that lust is followed by anger, because if lust seems to have been satisfied, then something much worse comes along--the third gate to degradation: greed. Unsatisfied lust explodes into anger, but those apparently magic moments, when lust seems to be satisfied, bring something worse than anger--passionate greed. "Give me some more! Oh, that was so good! I've got to have it again, again, again! I don't care if I have to wait twenty years for another moment like this--I want it!"

Material greed is worse, because you can't get the greedy experience out of your mind, right? "I had a few good times, a few nectar moments of *maya*. I just want more of those. I don't care if I have to suffer, if only I can just get a few more merciful moments of *maya*." You understand? This is the most dangerous result: "I'll agree to suffer birth after

birth, I don't care. Just let me indulge in a few more moments like that." You practically beg the material energy: "You can smash me, you can abuse me, but please, just bestow upon me a few more precious moments like what I had when times were good. I'm so greedy for it. I can never get enough." This greed is the most dangerous thing in the material world. Actually, it is better that your lust is *not* satisfied, because then you'll just get angry. Anger you can sort of satisfy by assaulting, verbally or physically, the person you're angry at. Some of you have done that? There's a sort of primitive, imaginary satisfaction in venting anger: "You made me angry at you, and so I attacked you, and now I feel better." Yes, you've all had that experience. But there's no even imaginary satisfaction produced by greed. When lust turns to greed, then the flames just burn in your heart: more, more, More, hotter, hotter, Hotter! When you're angry, there's a chance that you can relieve that anger by smashing someone. But when lust leads to greed, then the fire just burns on and on. Greed intensifies your status as a believer in material happiness, so greed is the worst.

We want to talk about spiritual greed. Spiritual greed is actually something that is beyond the platform of *sadhana bhakti*, devotional service performed in response to rules and regulations. Please understand that we are performing the rules and regulations of devotional service so that we can develop spontaneous greed for Krishna. To be greedy for Krishna is not an ordinary thing. In material life it's an everyday event to be greedy, but to be greedy for Krishna--that requires purification.

Now I will tell you my worry, my anxiety for you all. In my doing so, let's see how different you may be from the Ukrainian devotees.

**Devotee:** We are different here (laugh).

**Devamrita Swami:** Of course. Russia and Ukraine are so far from each other (laugh). You see, my worry is that some of you are thinking sometimes, "Oh, what's the point of all these rules and regulations in Krishna consciousness;

sometimes it just seems that we just follow these rules and regulations, and it's so hard!" How many feel like that sometimes? Raise your hands. Yes, just as I thought. Silently we think: "In *bhakti yoga* there is such a long list of things you can't do. You are prohibited from doing this, you can't do that, and that, and That!" Sometimes we are thinking, "What will my future be--just following all these rules and regulations all my life!" Yes? Sometimes you think like that?

And sometimes we even think that Krishna must be cruel to offer us such a wonderful thing as *bhakti* but He makes it so difficult. How many of you think that Krishna has made *bhakti* too difficult--raise your hand. Yes, yes, everyone agrees *bhakti* is a wonderful thing. All the devotees will shout: *bhakti ki jaya*. But at the same time, we think the rules and regulations are too hard, huh? I know some of you are thinking if Krishna is actually fair He will just give us *bhakti*, without our having to follow the rules strictly. Yes, that would be a good God, right? A God who says, "Just believe in Me, that's all you have to do." That would be a good Krishna, yes? But instead, Krishna asks us in *Bhagavad Gita* that if we haven't developed our spontaneous love for Him, then we should follow the rules and regulations--this is the problem, right? Why can't God just make us Krishna conscious! We're walking from our house to the temple, and then all of a sudden a lightning bolt strikes us and fills us with Krishna consciousness. Why can't it be like that? Why do we have to struggle to control our senses? Especially those of you who are in your teens and twenties. Of course I know that those in their thirties and forties are perfect at sense control--it's just the younger ones who are having difficulty!

So we're thinking, "All my life is going to be a struggle; what does Krishna want from me--agony? Why do we have to be so different from the general population; why can't we just relax, believe in Krishna, and do like everyone else does?" Yes, I know many are thinking like that; thank you for being so honest.

We should always remember that the purpose of following the rules and regulations of *sadhana* is to develop intense greed and eagerness for Krishna. I know it may seem unusual for you to think in this way: that to develop greed, you need to follow rules and regulations. You see, greed for Krishna is so special that you have to become purified to feel it. You all know what material greed feels like: You see a nice bowl of ice-cream and you just eat it immediately and then want more and more. You become absorbed in the feeling of the ice-cream sliding down your throat into your stomach. First you move it around in your mouth, and feel it in your belly. You eat more and more, and your belly gets bigger and bigger--that's material greed. Now how does greed happen in Krishna consciousness? How do we get this intense hankering for more Krishna, more Krishna--never enough Krishna? How do you develop that? The process is *sadhana-bhakti*, but I find that many devotees don't understand the goal of their following the rules and regulations of devotional service. I notice many devotees become overwhelmed: "Such a struggle--will it always be like this! How long can I follow these rules?" Let me tell you that if you don't understand what the goal is, then you won't have the enthusiasm to follow the rules. Therefore it's very important to hear about Krishna and His pastimes so you know what the goal is. Otherwise, after some years of practising Krishna consciousness, you may lose your determination.

What happens when you first come to *bhakti*? Remember? Generally you're very enthusiastic, because you've suffered so much in material life. You tried to enjoy in so many ways and failed. Then suddenly there's Krishna, the *maha-mantra*, *prasada*, festivals, devotees--everything's so nice. But what happens after some years go by? You may lose that remembrance of feeling distress, you start to forget that you suffered so much, you start to think: "The material world doesn't look so bad, and I wasn't that bad before. Now that I've been some years in Krishna consciousness, I have to follow these rules. But what will be the point of this! Year

after year, rule after rule, year after year, rule after rule . . .” Isn’t it so that you may start to feel like this? The older devotees? You don’t have to admit. Don’t raise your hands. So this dry consciousness happens because we’re not getting enough Krishna. If we don’t know the goal of following the rules and regulations, then the whole process of Krishna consciousness will seem a burden.

Here is an important point: I would like that you be able to discriminate between two things, and it’s very important that you know how to do this. I would like that you be able to separate your original feelings in coming to Krishna consciousness, feelings mostly based on the desire to escape distress, from what actually is attraction for Krishna. How does that sound to you? Is it possible? Do you understand what it feels like, relief from material distress? Suppose someone is hitting our translator, Premavardhana das, in the head again and again. Maybe his wife is angry at him and she has a pot in her hand. When she finally stops banging him on the head, what’s the first thing he’s going to feel?

**Devotee:** Gratitude.

**Devamrita Swami:** No, he’s going to feel relief! “She’s stopped; I don’t feel this pain anymore.” But is that the same feeling as if he had positive feelings for her? You see, my point is that there are two different things: One, the feeling of relief--“Oh, no more pain”—and two, the positive attraction--“I am so attracted to you again.” Please think about this. You have to be able to distinguish your feelings in Krishna consciousness; you have to be able to recognize the feeling of relief from material distress. Actual Krishna consciousness means to feel positive attraction for Krishna's name, form, qualities, pastimes. Many devotees come to Krishna consciousness and after one, two, three, five, or six years, they note: “I’m happier, at last.” Often, what they really mean is “I’m suffering so much less; *maya* is not kicking me anymore.” That’s very good, but what we should strive for is feeling attraction for Krishna’s name, form, qualities, and pastimes.

The actual purpose in following the rules and regulations is to develop greed for tasting Krishna. In Caitanya-caritamrita, we read about Lord Caitanya's discussion with Ramananda Raya. Lord Caitanya kept pushing Ramananda Raya, "tell me higher and higher things." So Ramananda Raya described that when you have some hunger and you eat some nice food you feel your satisfaction increasing, similarly when you follow the rules and regulations of *bhakti*, you start to feel your Krishna consciousness awaken. Your natural love of Krishna starts to awaken, but that still is the stage of *sadhana bhakti*. Now you must go to the next level and for all of you who sincerely follow the practise of *sadhana bhakti* year after year, the next level will come. Have no doubt, the next level will come. Krishna consciousness is a lifetime career. Why lifetime? We're *nitya-krishnadas*, we're eternal servants of Krishna. We cannot easily conceive of eternity, but at least we should think of this lifetime. Every man and woman here should have a lifetime plan how you're going to practice Krishna consciousness. You should think about this: How am I going to plan my life for increasing my attraction for Krishna? It is your responsibility to plan in this way. Don't just think, "Such thoughts are my Guru Maharaja's department; he'll worry about all that for me; or, that's the temple president's concern, or the senior devotees' worry." No, *you* have to think about this, how you're going to manage and shape your life so that you develop attraction for Krishna. This responsibility is yours, and you can't push it off on someone else. This responsibility is actually the chance for you to develop love. So please don't just look at the rules and regulations as some burden you have to carry; instead look at the rules and regulations as a chance for developing love of Krishna.

As you know, *sadhana bhakti* begins to awaken your love. Never mind that it takes some years of your life--it will happen. Then what is the next stage? Ramananda Raya explained that to Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Both times, in answering the question, Ramananda Raya quoted a verse

found in Rupa Gosvami's book *Padyavali*. He said that you cannot obtain greed for Krishna in millions of births of pious activities. Eagerness for Krishna is a greed so intense that it's not experienced in the material world. We'll discuss it, but in order to understand eagerness and greed for Krishna, we need to understand begging.

How many in the room feel that they've never begged for anything in their life? Raise your hand. Everyone has begged... (*Someone raises their hand*) Oh really? You have never begged for anything, not one thing? Are you sure? At some point in your life you must beg, you must beg for something. You'll either beg Krishna for service or you'll beg the material energy, "Please don't harass me so much." Don't you remember though, when you were a little child, you did beg. Yes, you begged for toys to play with or begged for other children to play with you, you begged for your parents not to punish you, you begged for your parents to give you some candy. You just don't remember, nor do you remember that when you were in your mother's womb you begged to get out.

In the Third canto of *Bhagavatam*, Lord Kapila explains that the fortunate child in the womb prays to the Supreme Lord, begging, "Please get me out of this womb; it's so painful. If you get me out of this womb, I promise I'll be your devotee." You must beg. Because we are tiny parts of Krishna, we are not independent. Material nature forces you to *think* that you are self sufficient, but that will never be true. Therefore you have to choose, will you depend on the material energy or will you depend on Krishna. There's no complete freedom except when you depend on Krishna. Be peaceful and understand that you have to depend on something--that is your nature as the marginal energy of Krishna. Now choose: Are you going to depend on the material energy or are you going to depend on Krishna? What does it take so that day after day you can depend on Krishna? Are we just going to be Krishna conscious for three months, or one year, or three years . . . Who here has been practising Krishna consciousness for more than five years,

raise your hand. Who more than ten years, who more than fifteen years . . . raise your hand. None more than fifteen? (*counts*) One . . . two.

Who more than twenty-five . . . only one person . . . who more than thirty? Alright, I'm more than thirty.

So my question to you all is, how do you think you're going to go on in Krishna consciousness? Are you just going to be Krishna conscious for a short time? I'm sure you've seen in the Ukraine and Russia that some people take up Krishna consciousness and then they go away, yes? It's not that everyone who comes to Krishna consciousness goes on to practise Krishna consciousness without any break. We wish that everyone will stay but it doesn't happen. Maybe some of you will have a fear, "Probably I'll fall from devotional service, maybe I'll fall into *maya*." How many of you will say you have that fear? (*many raise their hand*) Yes, you should be humble and afraid of *maya*. Once Srila Prabhupada said that the only difference between his disciples and him was that he's always praying to Krishna, "Please don't let me fall down." Of course, he's speaking very humbly, very charitably. He also said once that the problem of his disciples is that they do not have fear of *maya*. So it is good that we are afraid of the material energy; however we should not let that fear develop in us in a negative way. You know what negative fear of *maya* is like? "*Maya* is so strong that everyone's going to fall down, so why should I try so hard—sooner or later I'm going to fall down too. Look what happened to that devotee, for three years he was very strong, but now he's in *maya*. I can feel that soon I will fall; therefore, why should I try so hard in Krishna consciousness, when I will fall down very soon!"

That's negative fear of *maya*; you know some devotees who fear like that?

Now what is positive fear of *maya*? Positive fear of *maya* means "The material energy is so strong, and I am certainly afraid of it. Therefore I take shelter of Guru and Krishna."

Balarama, Krishna's brother, gives the strength to carry Krishna's instructions. Once Srila Prabhupada explained that

the only prayer of a devotee is to beg Krishna "Please give me strength to serve you." That is begging. "My dear Lord I beg you, give me the strength to serve you." And if we don't beg Krishna in this way we will find we will beg the material energy. You will find what it's like to beg the material energy--you will look to the material energy for satisfaction: "Please satisfy me, please give me fulfilment, give me happiness, gratify my senses, and please don't give me distress." Do you all remember begging the material energy like this? You probably never thought before that this is also begging. Everyone here has done that sort of begging: "Please *maya*, fulfil my desires. Please make me happy and please--no more hurt, no more pain." You remember feeling these kinds of begging prayers in your heart—begging *maya*? Everyone remembers. When you wake up in the morning, you're unconsciously begging *maya*: "Please let it be a nice day for me today." You remember? This is begging--everyone has to beg. *Bhakti yoga* means to beg Krishna, not to beg Krishna's illusory energy. Rupa Gosvami gives a very interesting verse, quoted in Caitanya-caritamrita. This verse is going to be the theme of our seminar. As we proceed in our discussion of the pastimes in Dvaraka and Vraja, I want you to remember this key given by Rupa Gosvami. It's quoted by Ramananda Raya in his discussion with Lord Caitanya:

*krishna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih  
kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate  
tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam  
janma-koti-sukrtair na labhyate*  
(Madhya 8.70)

Rupa Gosvami, in the first half of this verse, explains what is Krishna consciousness. He explains that Krishna consciousness means absorption in the flavours of serving Krishna. Devotional service has different flavours and tastes, and a devotee is always absorbed in the flavours and tastes, of *bhakti*. So Rupa Gosvami says "If the chance to become

fully absorbed in the flavours of Krishna consciousness is available in the market, buy it immediately!  
*krishna-bhakti-rasa bhavitah matih*: the absorption in the flavours of love of Krishna, you should grab anytime, any place, at any price. *kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate*: if you see it somewhere available--a chance to be greedy for Krishna, grab it, buy it right away. But, he notes, this kind of opportunity will not come through millions of pious activities, for millions of births. *tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam*: The only price for the opportunity to be absorbed in Krishna consciousness is *laulyam*, intense greed. *janma-koti-sukratair na labhyate*: you can't pay the price for *krishna-bhakti-rasa* through even millions of births of pious activities. The only price is greed.

So please think about this. The greed that Rupa Gosvami is talking about is not found on the platform of *sadhana bhakti*. Properly following *sadhana bhakti* leads to the platform of spontaneous love of Krishna. And spontaneous love of Krishna is a fact—it's not impossible. *Maya* makes it look like it's impossible to you, isn't that so? *Maya* tells you, "Just look at you, do you think *you're* going to develop spontaneous love of Krishna? Impossible! Just put your beads down now--don't engage in a long unnecessary battle. Just surrender now to lust. You're having such a hard time following *sadhana bhakti*, so how will you ever go any further?"

But this propaganda is misleading, it's false, because if you indeed put your heart into following *sadhana bhakti*, year after year, you'll find that something starts to awaken, something that you never knew was there before. How many of you feel that you're really putting your heart into Krishna consciousness? Raise your hand (*looks at the hands*). That's honest. We all know what its like to put your heart into something, right? Everyone knows what that's like, to invest your heart into something. Now, why can't we do that for Krishna? What are some things you put your heart into? Someone please say.

**Devotee:** Family

**Devotee:** Children.

**Devotee:** Persons dear to us.

**Devotee:** Career.

**Devotee:** Business.

**Devotee:** Music.

**Devotee:** Car.

**Devamrita Swami:** Anything else? Computer, anyone?

Many wives accuse their husbands of putting their hearts into cars and computers. And many husbands accuse their wives for putting their hearts into endless talking on the telephone with their girlfriends. My point is that you all know what it's like to put your heart into something. So the question we have to ask ourselves is what's stopping us from putting our hearts into Krishna's service, because only when we put our hearts into devotional service will this special greed have a chance to develop. It's not that Krishna is just going to leave us to suffer under rules and regulations. First of all rules and regulations are Krishna's mercy. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes that the rules and regulations of sadhana lead to freedom.

raga-dvesa-vimuktais tu  
visayan indriyais caran  
atma-vasyair vidheyatma  
prasadam adhigacchati

But a person free from all attachment and aversion and able to control his senses through regulative principles of freedom can obtain the complete mercy of the Lord.  
(Bg 2.64)

So in Krishna consciousness the *bhakti* rules are setting us free, but sometimes it doesn't feel like that, does it? We may go through periods when we groan: "These rules are causing me pain; I have to follow them otherwise everyone thinks I'm in *maya*. I wish there was some way to be Krishna conscious without them. You know what I don't like about devotees? They always ask you, "are you chanting

your rounds; are you following the rules?" It's boring sometimes. Why so much emphasis on this? We should just be free!"

There's no freedom, however, without these rules and regulations. A patient who's following the doctor's orders doesn't protest, "Why are you giving me medicine and medical instructions? I want to be free!" Have any of you been very sick before? The doctor gave you some medical prescription, yes? And you had to live a certain way, change your lifestyle. Did you protest to the doctor, "I don't want to follow these rules anymore--I want to be free!" No one says that to the doctor: "No more medicine; I just want to be myself." You don't say that because you know that the doctor's medicine and rules are helping you to become free, in the sense of regaining your health. Similarly the rules and regulations of *sadhana bhakti* are for our benefit--they're to help us revive our original healthy spiritual nature, real freedom. The medicine is going to awaken the greed in you and then when that greed awakens, you're on the spontaneous platform of loving service.

What is Krishna doing to help you through all this?

Sometimes you may wonder about that: "What's Krishna doing for me? I'm doing so much service, I'm following all the rules, what's Krishna doing for me! It's been two or three years now since I surrendered to Krishna. When is Krishna going to show Himself?" How many of you feel like that sometimes? Come on, come on, don't be shy.

You see, in Saint Petersburg I've trained everyone. They know to raise their hands now. I was telling the devotees in Odessa about this. When I first went to Saint Petersburg and I would ask these revealing questions, personal questions like, "How many of you feel that Krishna's making things too difficult?" everyone would just sit motionless in silence. No one would answer. Everyone would just look straight ahead, restraining even the slightest expression, so that not even their eyes would blink. We have some devotees here from Saint Petersburg. They remember. But then I kept asking these questions: "How many of you feel like this, or that."

And after months of my asking these questions, they would start to look at the person next to them, to see if the other person would raise the hand. I could see their arm trying to raise, as they looked around to see what others would do. Then after one year, when I would ask a provoking question like, "How many of you think that its impossible to chant Hare Krishna with attention?" gradually they would raise their hand slowly. Now, after several years, they just raise their hands spontaneously, easily. It took a while to train them, so I'm not surprised that any of you here don't raise your hand. It's true that I am asking though--and heart-provoking questions. I do want you to think about these things, I don't want you to be ritualistic devotees--dry, mechanical. I want you to be alive in hearty devotional service, so that's why you have to think about these things: "How to develop attraction for Krishna." Its fun! It's actually our hobby: "Let me look at my life. How can it be more attractive to Krishna. Let me think--now I should do this, I should do that. Hmmm, I need more of Krishna's holy name. I need to see His form more, I need to read Krishna book more about the pastimes of Krishna, and certainly I need more of His practical service. And when I do this service, I've got to try and put my heart into it more!" This is how we think, scheme, and plan when *bhakti* is our life and soul. Please think, "Why does Krishna want an offering that doesn't have our heart in it?"

Nevertheless, I know a main concern for many devotees is how Krishna should make our lives easier. "Krishna, what are you doing to do for us--we're doing so much for you! We're following regulative principles, so what more do you want out of us? Don't you know this is *kali yuga*? We, your surrendered souls are following regulative principles . . . most of the time, that is. So Krishna why don't you just calm down and realise we're doing the best we can. Yes, we have bead bags. We keep our hands in the bead bag when we walk and talk, and sometimes we vigorously shake the bag--*bhakti* enthusiasm! What more do you want out of us?"

Yes, we have this feeling: "Krishna what are you going to do for us." Do we have any teenagers here? Is Vivasvan, from St. Petersburg, here? He knows what it's like: "Hey Krishna, I'm a teenager. That means I could be doing lots of wild things, but I'm not, so what more do you want out of me?" Or if you're in your twenties, those years can be quite passionate, yes? "Look Krishna, lets be for real. I'm twenty-two. Both you and I know that there are a lot of wild things I could be doing. I could be living like a *kali yuga* dog, but somehow right now I'm serving You. So You ought to be happy! I don't know what more you want out of me! I've got a twenty-two year-old body. It's exploding with passion, and here I am trying to be a saint, a *sadhu*. Really, Krishna, I just want you to realise what a big favour I'm doing for you . . . "

Yes, it's like that, isn't it? "Krishna, I want to be honest with You: What are You doing for me? Lets get real. I've got *kunti-mala* on my neck, I may even have a *brahmin's* thread. I'm wearing a *dhoti, sari, tilak*, and saying *Hari Haribol*." We feel that we have a right to ask, "Krishna what are you doing for me! I've been around for a few years now, and I really want to see what you're going to give me." Meanwhile, what is Krishna actually doing? Isn't that a good question for us to ask? Let us discuss that. While we are groaning and doubting, Krishna is attracting us. Krishna is not just simply creating the universe or destroying it-- Krishna is absorbed in loving pastimes with His devotees. Don't think that God is just dealing with the material cosmos. No. For example, ordinarily you don't want to work all day, every day (of course, we're happy to work for Krishna). You don't want to work a material job all day just for material purposes. What is the activity that you all like? Love and romance, right? You feel that way because you are part of Krishna, that's why. Krishna is the supreme expert at love and romance. For Krishna, creating and destroying the material world is very unimportant. Krishna is mainly interested in love--loving affairs, affectionate exchanges.

Why is it that we have some difficulty understanding that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has loving affairs? You never heard of this before coming to Krishna consciousness; you never knew that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has perfect girlfriends, with pure, spiritual bodies. I asked this question in Ukraine, and now let's see what your answer is--be honest again, please. How many of you, at some point in your Krishna consciousness years, felt a little uncomfortable hearing that God has girlfriends? Raise your hands. (*Many hands go up*) Those of you from Ukraine, you remember, it's the same percentage--many persons. To mundane senses, God's dancing with girlfriends sounds strange, yes? "What kind of God is this--with girlfriends!" But why think like that? *You* have girlfriends and boyfriends, right? For yourself, you accept this as normal, but then about God you're thinking, why should *He* have girlfriends? That is the wrong question; the right question is to ask yourself why should you have a girlfriend, why should you have a boyfriend. Krishna has a right to everything because everything is His energy--that's what it means to be God. Krishna enjoys with His energies, but what about you--you don't have any energies. In fact you yourself are energy that belongs to Krishna. So what is wrong with His enjoying loving affairs, especially since He has loving affairs with persons who have not one bit of material contamination. Furthermore, another question you should ask yourself--especially those who have studied Prabhupada's books--is if God is complete in Himself, then why is it that He seems to rely on others for love? You know what it feels like when you rely on someone else for love, yes? How many have experienced relying on someone else for love? Everyone, of course. Why do you do it? Because you feel emptiness inside and you want that person to fill that hole in your life, yes? You feel incomplete and then you look at another person and think, "You, you , YOU are going to fill the empty space in my life." And you feel unbalanced and unwholesome--something is missing--unless you connect with this other person. Therefore you look to someone else for completion:

"You are going to solve all my problems of inadequacy. I feel weak for you, I `m lonely for you."

What about Krishna? Does Krishna feel the same way? Does Krishna feel incomplete, empty, and therefore He has loving affairs? No. Here is the great mystery of *bhagavata-dharma*, the science of God: Krishna is perfectly complete, yet He still engages in loving affairs. He doesn't need anything, He doesn't want anything but still He engages in loving affairs-- that is God. So you have to think about this. If someone is full, complete, and satisfied, then why should they do anything? When you feel incomplete, then you want to do things that promise to fill the empty space in your life. Please think about what material desires mean. When you lack something inside, then you desire to plug the hole with something that you don't have. You go outside of yourself to get something to make you feel more complete, and then as soon as you go outside of yourself, expressing your material desires, then there are always problems.

Apparently though, Krishna also goes outside of Himself, because He has so many royal queens, so many forest girlfriends--isn't that going outside of Himself to fulfil His desires? This speculation is what materialistic scholars impose upon Krishna's pastimes. Because of their mundane consciousness, they cannot understand. Therefore sometimes they refer to Krishna as "the Hindu love God." They say crazy things such as "Because there's strict morality in the villages of India, the people all have unfulfilled, repressed desires. Consequently, they have imagined these pastimes, they have imagined these Krishna *lilas*, to fulfill their desires." The problem is that it is very difficult for mundane people to understand how Krishna, who is complete, still acts. How is it that Krishna is full and satisfied, yet He does things? Those of you who have read *Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-caritamrita*, I ask you: how is it that the Supreme Complete, the *om purnam*, apparently has need for love? The answer is that Krishna has no needs, but He still likes to stir up loving affairs.

Let me try to give you a material example, which though not precise, may help. Maybe you can remember when you were a teenager and you would flirt with the opposite sex. You had no desire to establish a serious, committed relationship, but just to have fun you were acting a certain way. How many remember doing that? You just did it for the fun of it, right? It was your so-called pastime—yes, you remember now? It's not that you wanted duties to the other person, but it was just something you did, for amusement. The ladies can remember how would just move their eyes and attract someone. Why? Just for the sake of it. And the men can remember pushing out their chests, flexing their muscles, flashing their maleness. Why? It's not that, at that moment, they wanted the responsibility of a relationship with someone. What the young men and women are doing is just stirring things up, making some action, even though they have no desire for a committed relationship.

Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is eternally like that--He has no need, but still He likes stirring the ocean of loving affairs. But He does it eternally and unlimitedly. Although He's perfectly self-sufficient, still He stirs the ocean of loving affairs--just for His own self-sufficient pleasure. That is God.

In our seminar here at Divonmorsk, we're going to talk about Krishna expanding the ocean of loving affairs with Srimati Rukmini in the palace, and with His most dear consorts, the cowherd girls in Vrindavan. What I would like you to acquire from this discussion is a feeling for how Krishna stirs the relationships with His devotees. I'd like that you get a feel for that in your own life--to feel how Krishna is maybe shaping things in your life to bring you to Him. I would like that you, with eyes open, see how Krishna is giving you the precious opportunities by which you can come to Him. Krishna comes to this world and displays His pastimes to attract your attention. He's trying to show you that "You want love? Okay, this is the real standard of love. Are you ready for it—the real thing?" Krishna doesn't simply say, "No, no--you can't do this, you can't do that." He

intensely shows you what the perfect pleasurable loving affair is.

But if you don't use your life to develop attraction for what Krishna does, then what is the use? Our problem is that we think "I need this, I need that, I need money, I need good health, I need to travel, I need a house, I need a good family, I need a husband, wife, child," but how often do we think, "I need attraction for Krishna." Our problem in conditioned life is that we neglect our prime necessities. Meanwhile, Krishna wants to help you, and therefore He displays His pastimes to catch your attention, so you will start to look and see what is real love, and become greedy for it.

My point is that for us to find out what is real greed, we have to turn to *krishna-lila*. Otherwise, we don't know what real greed is like, we don't know what real love is like, we don't know what real pleasure is like. We have to turn to *krishna-lila* to find out the real existence of these things. Those who have difficulty in Krishna consciousness are the ones who think, based on their material experience, "I know what pleasure is, I know what love is, I know what greed is." Such persons have difficulty in *bhakti yoga*. But those who can understand that the so-called pleasure and love they've experienced in the material world is so insignificant and fleeting that they actually have no idea what real pleasure and love are--that kind of person can make advancement in Krishna consciousness.

How many of you can admit that you don't know what real pleasure is? I remember the first time I saw devotees on television in 1972. They were explaining their lifestyle. I listened and I commented to my flatmate, "They're talking about bliss, but they don't know what real bliss is. We'll invite them to one of our parties, and show them what bliss really is." So I had this puffed-up, arrogant attitude: "We slaves of *kali yuga* know what pleasure is--the devotees don't." With such an attitude, you cannot become Krishna conscious. Naturally, you would wonder, "What happened to you then?" Remember that it's the golden age of Lord

Caitanya. Mahaprabhu gives the opportunity to everyone to become Krishna conscious--even to those who think they don't want it.

It is true that ordinarily you have to have some desire to become Krishna conscious. But what about in *kali yuga*, when no one knows who is Krishna, how can you have some desire for Krishna? Lord Caitanya is the answer. Because of Lord Caitanya, even persons who have no desire for Krishna receive the chance to be Krishna conscious. For example, though I don't know if it happens in Russia, there is such a thing as sun shower. What happens? Normally rain comes when there are dark clouds in the sky. When rain comes while the sun is shining, that is an exceptional case.

Similarly, normally the conditioned soul must have a desire for Krishna to get Krishna, but Lord Caitanya's mercy is like when the rain comes even though the sun is shining. In other words, you have no desire for Krishna, but still Krishna-conscious opportunities come upon you.

The proof? Exactly eight months after I saw the devotees on television and made my ignorant, arrogant comments—just eight months later--I was living in the *brahmacari ashram* and distributing *Bhagavad Gita* daily. This is Lord Caitanya's mercy! No apparent desire, but the chance to be Krishna conscious still comes. That opportunity to become Krishna conscious gradually reveals itself to be a chance for developing spiritual greed for Krishna. Even just the chance is so rare. Yet Lord Caitanya has given us that chance even though we don't deserve it.

Krishna knows how to increase our attraction. He's waiting and beckoning, "Come on, come on, follow the rules, become established in *bhakti*. I want to stir the ocean of love with you. I want to stir the nectar of loving exchanges with you. Krishna's more eager to reciprocate love with you than you're eager for him. \Did you know that? Krishna is eager: "When is the real greed going to develop in you." Remember our theme verse, which we will be repeating during the next few days of the seminar: *tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam*. There is only one price by which you can

get Krishna: intense greed. That greed will develop in you when you start to hear how Krishna relates with His devotees. One of the special qualities of Krishna is that He's surrounded by loving devotees and He has wonderful exchanges with these devotees. So we're going to be discussing the forests of Vrindavan and the palaces of Dvaraka. There's a difference in the kind of love in each place, but we'll be discussing both of them.

What is it that I want to leave you with today, so that you may start to see how Krishna's doing things, how He's stirring the love? Today I want to leave you with the vision of the autumn season in Vrindavan, the autumn season with the full-moon nights.

What's another name for Krishna? He's known as *Sarata-bihari*, the enjoyer of the autumn season. I want you to see that, the autumn in Vrindavan. How? First think of the moon--it's a full moon, rising and making the eastern horizon reddish. Night has come, and there is a particular night air. What is it like? The sweet smell of jasmine flowers is everywhere. Because Krishna is the Supreme Enjoyer, He looks at the full moon, He smells the fragrance of the forest flowers in the air, and he knows tonight's the night. That is God.

You are tiny, limited parts of Krishna, but you can remember in your material life this feeling: "Oh, what a night! Tonight's the night we're going to enjoy." How many remember that? Raise your hand. Yes, therefore if you have this tendency in you and you are part of the Whole, then certainly the Supreme, the Whole, has it. But Krishna never enjoys matter—never the material environment, never material bodies. He only enjoys the pure spiritual energy.

Krishna sees the full moon is in the sky, the *sarata-purnima*, just like you have *gaura-purnima*, when Lord Caitanya appeared, similarly there's *sarata-purnima*, the full moon of the autumn season. Remember, Krishna is just eight years old; therefore how can you accuse an eight-year-old boy of having amorous affairs? Obviously these pastimes are not an

ordinary material thing. These are the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Krishna observes the night-time atmosphere of Vrindavan. This scanning of the all-spiritual environment is pointed out in the first verse that Sukadeva Gosvami speaks when describing Krishna's *rasa-lila*. Srila Sukadeva says: *bhagavan api ta ratrih*. That means Bhagavan, Sri Krishna, is self-sufficient and complete; yet He still looks, with consideration, at the night atmosphere. He sees the jasmine flowers blossoming. *saradotphulla-mallika*: He smells the jasmine flowers. *viksya rantum manas cakre*: He starts to think in His mind "The time is now, for love." That is God--perfectly full in Himself, yet still He enjoys loving affairs. Upon His deliberating "This is the perfect moment for loving exchanges," then what happens? Does He have to work, to earn His play? Does He have to endeavour, to arrange His pleasure so it happens satisfactorily? No. He has His Yogamaya, His internal potency, which arranges everything perfectly for loving affairs.

*viksya rantum manas cakre*: He thinks in His mind that He has a special purpose: "It's time to attract My devotees who are especially greedy for me." Immediately, *yoga-mayam upasritah*. His internal potency, Yogamaya, arranges the whole situation: the radiant beauty of the full moon, the luscious reddish horizon, the blossoming jasmine flowers, the sweet fragrance everywhere—all is arranged perfectly for Krishna's perfect loving affairs. Krishna's energies automatically know how to create a pleasure atmosphere. Yogamaya creates a wonderful, spiritual environment for Krishna to exchange love with His devotees. I'm explaining this to you because I want you to have a feeling, a confidence, that even though you may be a beginning devotee, still Krishna will arrange things for you to come to Him.

Now please tell me why is the moon so important in Krishna *lila*? Who knows?

**Devotee:** Because He descended in the moon dynasty.

**Devamrita Swami:** Yes, Krishna came in the dynasty of the moon; therefore the moon always plays a special role. So Krishna sees the full moon, He sees the red effulgence spread over the horizon, He sees the lotus flowers opening in response to the moonlight, He sees the moon illuminating the forest. Are you seeing this? Sukadeva Gosvami is describing these things so you can see them. Gradually, by meditating on these things, they become a vibrant reality for you. In the Krishna Book, Prabhupada describes these things very beautifully. Don't just read through these passages very quickly, in a routine way. We should feel the descriptions with our mind's eye and our heart.

Next, what does Krishna do? He starts playing His flute, pouring out the nectar that no one can resist. What happens when Krishna's devotees, the girls of Vrindavan, hear that flute? It immediately captures their mind. Do you know what it's like to have your mind captured by something? It feels like someone just reaches for your mind and grabs it! That's what Krishna's flute does to His devotees. Immediately romantic feelings overflow in their hearts, and their mind is stolen. Immediately, they all run to the forest to meet Krishna. This is the highest example of pure greed.

As they're running, their beautiful earrings are swinging back and forth. Do you know what each *gopi* was thinking? "Let me leave for the forest without the other *gopis* seeing, because I want Krishna all to myself." This is greed, *laulyam*: "I don't want the others, the other girls, to see me running to the forest, because I want Krishna to focus on only me." Each *gopi* was thinking like this: "No one else is seeing; it'll just be Krishna and me."

The flute of Krishna performed the most cherished act of thievery. It entered through the ears, into the heart, and there, in that inner chamber, it stole all the *gopis'* private possessions. The flute stole their shyness, their fear, their discrimination. It took their minds and in a split second delivered all these stolen goods to Krishna. What is Krishna doing? He is waiting in the forest at *vamsi-vata*, in the Yamuna forest, and He has collected all this stolen property

in a fraction of a second. His music confiscated all the mental faculties of His devotees, all their reputation, their fears, their social discrimination. So what could the devotees do?

The cowherd girls had to run to the forest to retrieve their stolen property, each one thinking: "I have to capture that great thief, to reclaim my stolen property back." This is greed. The Hare Krishna *mantra* is the sound of Krishna's flute. But what happens every morning when we hear the Hare Krishna *mantra*? When we're chanting our *japa*, our attention is not very good, and then we wonder, "Where is my Krishna consciousness?" We need to arrange our life so that we can respond to the Hare Krishna *mantra* properly. How the cowherd girls of Vrindavan responded is the perfection of hearing the *maha-mantra*.

Tomorrow we're going to hear how the *gopis* dropped everything, to be completely attentive to Krishna's pleasure—whenever He wanted it, however He wanted it, wherever He wanted it.

There are different types of cowherd girls, with different degrees of spiritual maturity in perfection. The different groups left the village at different times to meet Krishna. First the *nitya-siddha gopis* ran to meet Krishna. They are the eternally liberated *gopis*, who are expansions of Srimati Radharani. But they are not the only ones in town, because also in Bhauma Vrindavan are devotees coming up from the ranks of conditioned souls.

You know that before you go to the spiritual world, first you join Krishna in a particular universe where He's having His pastimes and there you become trained. So when Krishna blew His flute, not simply the *nitya-siddha gopis*, the eternally perfect ones, responded to the call. Some of the respondents freshly elevated out of conditioned existence came forth. According to their nearness to mature perfection, that's the order that they ran into the forest. Yogamaya arranged all this. Successive waves of *gopis* departed for the forest.

I'll give you one last example you can think about for tomorrow. It's about fruit growing on a tree. You can look at the fruit and observe that it is ripe; consequently you pick it, put it into a basket, and take it home. Then when you arrive home, what happens? You look at the basket of fruit and notice that some of the fruit is more ripe than others, yes? You immediately eat the very ripe fruit, while about the less ripe fruit you think to put it on the windowsill, so it can mature more, in the sun. In Vraja this is how Yogamaya arranged the forest-departure for the different groups of devotees.

First the very ripe devotees, hearing the flute, ran to the forest. They were the eternally perfect and those who were very advanced by the association of the eternally perfect. Later came the others--we'll discuss that tomorrow. You see, Krishna knows what He's doing, He knows how to satisfy everyone, according to their individuality. This is art, this is love--how to relate to everyone perfectly. We're discussing these topics so that you can start to think about what spiritual greed is like, how these devotees dropped everything immediately and ran to the forest. The flute left them no choice.

But then what happens when they arrive in the depths of the forest? The drama of pure love of the highest intensity has only just begun. Krishna knows how to produce even more love—He's going to act in such a way that the devotees increase their feelings even more. He has stolen their minds; they're racing to get their minds back; and then Krishna's going to say, "Why are you here, what happened? It's the middle of the night, in the dangerous forest--why are you here?" Is Krishna torturing His dear devotees? Certainly not, though to mundane vision it can appear that way. The devotees understand that Krishna knows how to stir love and thicken it. Krishna is the most expert in producing the greatest, most concentrated love of the highest purity. I want that you all acquire more confidence that Krishna knows how to produce the most love. Then you'll give yourself to Krishna's service--right?

Haribol! We'll see you tomorrow.