

## GREED

(05\_Devamrita Swami\_03.10.03)

Divonmorsk

We are ready today to continue talking about our favourite subject matter. Does anyone have any doubts what it is? As we all know, our most cherished topic is Krishna. We want to hear about Krishna, Krishna, and more about Krishna. In this way our material desires will reduce. The beginning of the tenth canto of the *Bhagavatam* states this: *nivṛtta-tarsair upagiyamanad bhavausadbac chrotra-mano-bhiramat* (SB 10.1.4) When you hear about Krishna your material desires will become extinguished. You all know how troublesome material desires are. In illusion it seems so nice to have material desires, but then there are always problems—past, present, and future.

Let's just practice for a few moments, let's now think, let's remember all our material desires. I'll count to three and then you just remember all of them at once. Are you getting ready? Do you feel them starting to well up inside you--all your material desires? Ready? Now: 1,2,3—let them explode! (*laughter*) Feel them, crave them, swallow them, wallow in them, drown in them! Scream inside: "I have to have this, I have to have that, I want this, I want that! Give me this person, that person, this body, that mind, all for me, me, me--my desires, my senses!"

Now analyze. Does the gushing of material desires, like a geyser, turn out to be satisfying? Actually, the so-called pleasure is all in your imagination. With your mind you imagine "It's going to be so nice when I get these material things." In fact, in your mind, first you convince yourself that these things are necessary, right? "These things are essential; without them my life cannot go on." But many times, after you may have gotten what you want, you can't even remember why you wanted such a thing in the first place. You've had that experience? You've gotten something and then you think . . . "Why did I want this?" How many of you have had that happen? "Wait a minute," you tell yourself. "Why did I want this? It's not making me happy—actually it's paining me."

Just like I remember talking to a young lady disciple yesterday. I asked, "Is that the real colour of your hair or is it originally another colour?" And she told me, "I don't know why I did it, but one day I just dyed my hair." I said, "Well did it make you feel any different?" She replied, "No it didn't. I still feel the same--I probably won't ever do it again."

So material desires are like that: You get yourself implicated in them and then later you think, "Hey, wait a minute! I'm not happy, it didn't satisfy me. In fact, my life has become so complicated." Therefore the question is: What are we going to do about these powerful material desires? It sure seems that we can't win with them. It's always a losing battle when we act on them. So how do we get rid of them?

The only cure is to connect them to Krishna. We should be always thinking how to increase our appetite for Krishna. We should be thinking how to arrange our life so that the eagerness for Krishna increases. I'm pleading that you understand that Krishna consciousness is not just some inactive religious belief, in which you simply sit in formal church-like seats, sing stern hymns, express your belief in God, and that's it--finished. We need to see that desire is the most important thing in our life. Your independence is shown in your desires and Krishna fulfills your desires. All you can do is desire, you cannot even fulfill your desires, you cannot make or provide the facilities to fulfill your desires.

An essential point to understand in Krishna consciousness is that all you can really do is desire, nothing more. For everything else except your desire you have to depend on Krishna--you can't fulfill your own desires. This is how tiny and insignificant we are.

When you desire something in association with Krishna that desire starts to become purified. Otherwise we cannot stop desiring. Not possible. So if you want to know the secret to your life you should understand the power of desire. There is the trigger to the power in your life. So I wonder how many of you are smart enough to figure that out. The most powerful thing about you is not your muscles or your brain. It is your desire, your desire potency. This is what shapes your life. This is the engine that powers your existence.

So if you want to be able to manage your own life, you have to be able to manage your desires. Let me ask: how many of you have ever thought about this before? Raise your hands. (*a few hands raise*) Yes, not so many. Desire management - that is the key to success in your life. Those men and women who know how to manage their desires become successful in Krishna Consciousness.

It's fun and exciting to manage your own desires. Try to imagine how desire management feels. It means that your desires don't trouble you, because your desires are things favourable for Krishna's pleasure. Then it becomes fun to have desires. So *bhakti yoga* is leading you to the fun of having blissful desires. Now in material life you experience the misery of material desires. Those of you who were here yesterday, you remember my talking about the misery of

my desires when I was a teenager. Anyway I'm not going to tell the story again—it's too embarrassing.

But I remember the misery, how it felt. I was fourteen years old, looking out the window of my house, seeing all the young boys and girls talking together and playing with each other. I thought, "Just look! They are having sense gratification, just like the movies promise. How I want to do this, but I can't! My mother won't let me. Jesus won't let me. Moreover, something inside me won't let me. I remember looking out the window on a blazing hot, lazy summer day--nothing to do, just watching the teenage boys and girls laughing and joking and making excuses to nudge each other. I remember thinking, 'Oh I want to be like that, I want it—give me sense gratification.'

And then I remember some of the boys in the neighbourhood, they would swagger past me, boasting, "Wow! We had such a good time with the girls last night! They gave us . . . everything . . .!" They were lying, but overpowered by my own naiveté and insecurities, I just believed it all. They were boasting, "Yeah I was with this girl and then this happened, that happened . . . you don't know what you're missing!" I felt so miserable.

I remember once even standing in front of a big mirror in my house and asking myself, "Do I look like I qualify to be a sense gratifier . . . ? Am I up to the standard? How does a sense gratifier walk, how does a sense gratifier talk? I've got to be that way. Let me practice in the mirror how the successful gratifiers carry themselves. Finally, as I told you yesterday, I prayed to God, crying out, "O Lord, why do I have to think so deeply about everything? When will that day come, when will it be mine, the day when I can be a spontaneous, carefree sense gratifier—with no thoughts or analysis of the morals or the results?" I really did that, I prayed to God: "I despise this intelligence you've given me! I just want to be a happy, let-the-good-times-roll sense enjoyer. I want to go to parties. I want to exploit girls for my senses and not think anything is wrong. Why can't I just let my senses go wild and be happy like every one else?" I remember this painful misery, borne of ignorance and passion.

Did any of you feel like that when you were a teenager? (*some hands raise*) So I am not the only one. I remember when I was fifteen that since I would go to church every Sunday, sometimes I would arrange to go with the fourteen year old girl who lived across the street. I was fifteen, she was fourteen, and we would go to church together. There, while standing and singing the hymns, we would dare to look in each other's eyes. (*laughter*) But nothing more would ever happen than that. Then we would return home. I would go into my house and sit by the window, watching her come out of her house, and

watching her go back in her house. I would just contemplate, 'I wonder what sense gratification is like . . . O God when will that day be mine?' And I can still remember now how intensely miserable that feeling was. It was a hellish, oppressive feeling.

Please recognize the truth about what it's really like to be possessed by material desires. The illusory energy tells you that such desires will refresh you: "Ahhhhh, this is going to be nice, this is going to give me relief. By doing this, my anxiety will go away. I won't be lonely anymore, I won't be bored, my senses will be absorbed." And what always happens? Complications, miseries, distress, misunderstanding, problems . . . every time. So what are we going to do with these desires? Can we ignore them? Can we kill them? No, we have to learn to live with desire. In *bhakti yoga* we face the reality of desires: "I have desires-- now what am I going to do about it?" How many of you think like that? Raise your hands. Not too many, I see.

You have to be honest about the most powerful thing in your life--your desire power. Once you know how to manage your own desires, then your life in Krishna consciousness can be successful. The experience of having and gratifying material desires was never as nice and wholesome as you thought it was going to be. And the most amazing thing, as I said earlier, even if you get what you want - which is infrequent, still you're not satisfied. Just see how material nature is so embarrassing.

Hidden away in the depths of our consciousness, are the imprints of painful embarrassments forced upon us by material nature. These excruciating memories are hidden away within us--that is the nature of life for every conditioned soul. There is always great embarrassment, as you become excruciatingly humiliated by material nature.

One of the Maharajas here was talking about a former American president in the 80's who is famous for calling the former Soviet Union "The Evil Empire." He was a very powerful president, holding the most powerful position in the world for two terms of office, eight years. He challenged Brezhnev or whoever was in power in the USSR then: "You are the evil, and your empire is sick!" Do you know that this person, because of sickness, Alzheimer's disease, often could not remember that he was ever president of the USA! The same man who challenged "The Evil Empire" just twenty years ago, later could not remember that he was such a powerful president of the United States. This is the utterly humiliating embarrassment that material nature forces upon us—all because of our desires. Such embarrassment is normal, a daily event, in material nature.

Now what about desires for Krishna? They are never embarrassed. They are always increasing in fulfillment; therefore the more you connect your life to Krishna's desires, the more successful your life is. That is the secret of *bhakti yoga*. We do not deny desire. We say desire *ki jaya!* But the desire is for Krishna's service.

I want you all now to just start thinking about desire--feel the power of desire: "I want . . . I need . . . I've got to have . . ." All that energy of craving and longing is meant for Krishna consciousness. Maybe you didn't know that; maybe you thought that desire is meant only for material life, as if in Krishna Consciousness we just bow our head, press our palms together in *pranam*, and say with a low voice: *Jaya, Hare Krishna, Haribol prabhu*, all glories. The misconception is that in material life you can be so dynamic and energetic, whereas in spiritual life you have to behave feebly and passively—you should be droopy and limp. Is that what Lord Caitanya meant when He said *Trinad api sunicena*—to have the spirit, drive, and enthusiasm of a soggy towel abandoned in the corner of a bathroom floor? That is not the humility Lord Caitanya is talking about. Lord Caitanya is talking about being dynamic & spirited in Krishna's service, while always thinking you're insignificant. Think about it.

Yesterday a devotee was asking me what to do about pride. He said that when he's playing the *mrdanga*, he's thinking, "This sounds good." I replied, "Yes it's good, but just think: it could be so much better. Best to think that Krishna has given me whatever little ability I have, so I am proud of Krishna." A devotee feels pride in Guru and Krishna. Not in himself or herself. So there is such a thing as pride in Krishna consciousness. The pride, however, is not in us but in Krishna.

I'm telling you these things to try and get you to unlock your hidden potential in devotional service. I don't want you to think that becoming Krishna conscious means to be religious in the ordinary sense of village piety. Practising *bhakti yoga* is dynamic, action packed--it's full of excitement. Please understand that; and then once you start dealing with your desires properly, in devotional service, then you will begin to see the potential for ceaseless excitement. In the *Varana-hastra lila* Krishna talks about desire. That's the *lila* we talked about a few days ago, in which Krishna took away the garments of the girls in Vrindavan. After Krishna returned their clothes, what did He say? "I knew about your desire," He told them. You see, this is what you want in *bhakti yoga*. You want Krishna to approve of your desires. You don't want to deny desire, suppress desire. You want that your desires are full and overflowing--then you're happy. True delight means when your desires are exuberant and exultant in Krishna consciousness.

Remember in material life when your material desires simmered and then erupted, like lava from a volcano, and you thought in this way you would be happy? Remember what you felt like before the inevitable disappointment and letdown came? You all remember: “I am desiring; this feels good to desire—wow, actually it’s fantastic. Just me and my desires—how great this feeling is. Yes, when you were foolish and naive you hallucinated like this. Then as you became older, experience taught you that desires end in frustration and pain. But in spite of that guaranteed end, still the desires keep welling up within us. We come to Krishna consciousness having some realization that material desires are always thwarted, and we wonder: “What do I do in *bhakti* to express myself? I want to be me. I want to be alive with spirit; I want to do fulfilling things. So how can I be active for Krishna’s pleasure? I don’t want to negate myself and my capacity for enlivenment.”

Spirited action in *bhakti* is the whole point of Krishna’s teachings in Bhagavad-Gita. That’s why Krishna told Arjuna, *mam anusmara yudhya ca* (BG 8.7): “Fight and think of Me.” In other words: “Desire with Me as the goal.” Desire is so powerful that any kind of desire connected favourably to Krishna’s service will produce wonderful results. Krishna’s equal to all favourable desires. He even says when there’s procreative desire manifested in a Krishna conscious way, He is the ensuing process. *Dharmaviruddho bhutesu kamo ‘smi*: I am that kama, I am that desire, when the procreative process happens according to *dharma*. Isn’t that very powerful? Krishna’s showing you how all desires when executed according to *dharma* have such power that even regarding procreation, when properly executed, He Himself says “I am that desire.”

That verse reminds me of a family story I recently told in St Petersburg. My mother is a strict Christian according to today’s standard. She’s seventy-six or so, and a few years ago she told me something for the first time. I was born when she was I think twenty-one or two. Of course, she doesn’t know anything about *vaisnava dharma* for procreation, then or now. Only recently, in her old age, she said, “Do you know what was happening while you were being conceived?” I said, “No mother, I don’t think I know.” She said, “While you were being conceived, I was praying to God to send me a servant of the Lord as my child. So then I commented, “Okay Momma, so then what’s the problem? You were praying to God that He should send His servant as your son, so . . . well . . . maybe, just maybe it happened. Maybe you should be happy about my Krishna conscious life—why should you complain about it?” She replied, “Well . . . I meant a servant of Jesus--not for Krishna!” What could I say? I chuckled, “Mother, you should have been more specific . . .!”

Now just think how much more power *krishna-bhaktas* have at their disposal. By your desire you can make enormous things happen in this world. Prabhupada talked about his desire that there should be a temple in Mumbai--you know, where we have our present Juhu temple. How many have seen that magnificent temple in Juhu? So Prabhupada, when this land was empty, would walk past it as a solitary mendicant, retired from family life, penniless. Although this vacant land was filled with weeds, wild bushes, and rats, Prabhupada thought it an ideal future spot for a temple. At that time he had no followers, no money, nothing. Then years later, his magnificent Sri Sri Radha-Rasabihari temple arises there. This is the power of pure desire.

After Lord Krishna gave back to the *gopis* their garments, He said, "I know your desire and I approve of it." Here is when life becomes perfect: when Krishna approves of your desires. Then real life begins, when Krishna approves of the way you exercise your desiring capacity. That's what Srila Prabhupada demonstrated: the power of Krishna-approved desires. So what else did Krishna say to the *gopis*? He gave us a very revealing insight about desires. He gave the example of when you take some barley seeds and leave them out in the sun to dry, and then you take these same sun-dried seeds and you put them in the oven and cook them. You know what happens to such seeds. They cannot sprout; they cannot germinate into a plant. Krishna says that similarly any desire focused on Him cannot produce a material result. "Any desire completely fixed upon Me has no material fructification."

Please note that the *gopis* are showing you that they are full of desires, but their desires are one-hundred percent for Krishna. This is the zenith of life, to be overflowing with desire but it's all for Krishna's pleasure. Now you might question, "How do the *gopis* become happy, if they never think of their own pleasure?" You see, their happiness lies in Krishna's pleasure, because they are part of Krishna--just as we are. Furthermore, please know that although the *gopis* never desired their own pleasure and never acted for their own pleasure, still Krishna forced pleasure on them. This is what goes on at the highest levels of *bhakti*. The real devotee is not thinking of his or her pleasure. Nevertheless, Krishna is flooding that real devotee with pleasure: "Take it, take it, take it!"

Actually, Krishna and the devotee compete as to who can please each other the most. The devotee does something for Krishna, pleases Krishna, and then Krishna says, "I'm going to do something for My devotee and please My devotee even more." This reciprocal competition goes on and on, eternally. This boundless loving devotion is the process of *bhakti yoga* that you have embarked upon. This is what's going to happen to you, upon full attainment of *bhakti*.

Now what about the four regulative principles? What role do they play? I hope you know that they don't make us transcendental. It is the holy name and devotional service that makes us transcendental to the modes of material nature. The four rules simply make you into a human being. They're not such a big deal, you know. By following the four rules, you become an official human being. And then when you engage in devotional service you are engaging in activities of transcendence. The problem is that in *kali-yuga* we make such a big deal out of the regulative principles, when actually they just guarantee that you are truly human.

You'll find that you'll have an easier time following the regulative principles if you know what to do with your desires. When someone is not in good Krishna consciousness, what do they think? 'Oh, the devotee-life is very strict, you can't do this, you can't do that, you must curb your senses very severely.'" *Maya* tells you, "When you're in my embrace, you can just let your hair down--be relaxed, free-flowing, and easy--but when you're trying to be a devotee, you have to be repressed, pent up, mechanical and rigid."

Consequently, we think, "Krishna conscious is nice, of course, . . .but . . . it's just too strict. We have to bite our tongue, chain our hands to our body, we cannot look at the opposite sex . . . except out of the corner of our eye." Sometimes we think like that and we wonder, 'how long can I go on like this.' Right? How many think like that sometimes? Raise your hands, please. Alright, these are the honest ones. I'm trying to get you to understand that it's actually *maya* that is enslaving you through your mind and senses; whereas Krishna consciousness offers you the greatest creative and free opportunity for using your senses. Because we don't understand Krishna consciousness, we think it means our senses are going to have a very boring life--we imagine that *maya* offers freedom of expression and Krishna offers slavery. This attitude is the proof that we're crazy. This attitude is nuts. I'm telling you about Krishna's desires and Krishna's dearest devotees in Vraja so that you'll be able to activate your desire potency in Krishna consciousness.

We all really have to start thinking about our desires and how to use them in the right way. Therefore Krishna told His most expert devotees, the *gopis*, that any desire focused one-hundred percent on Him will never have a material, karmic, outcome. And then Krishna promised them that there's even more to come. "I've already acted in such a way that I am your husband, but still there is more. When the autumn nights come, I'll show you even sweeter pastimes. In other words, a devotee can never keep up with Krishna's unlimited power to satisfy. Krishna has the unlimited ability to satisfy His devotee.

I'm telling you these things so that you'll have confidence in Krishna. I want you to have that confidence that Krishna is worth trying for, sacrificing for. We've got to get the Hare Krishnas more into God, into Krishna. Because once you start having confidence in Krishna, then your spiritual life starts to move ahead better. And confidence in Krishna comes when you know Krishna can handle all your desires.

Whether you have been a devotee for eighteen years or for fifty years, as a devotee you have desires. And Krishna knows how to expertly deal with your desires. That's the conviction I want you to get by hearing this pastime.

After the *varana-bastra lila*, the next year the autumn season came. We talked about the full moon, the reddish sky, the lotus flowers opening to the moonlight, the moonlight illuminating the forest, and then Krishna playing in His flute. Immediately that flute captured the minds of the *madhurya-bhaktas*. Each of these devotees secretly ran to the forest to be with Krishna. Each *gopi* was thinking, "I don't want the others to see me going to Krishna; I want to be with Krishna alone." Each *gopi* dropped her household and family duties immediately. Never mind there's milk on the stove, never mind they're milking cows. Never mind even they're feeding their children, never mind they're taking care of their husbands. Immediately into the forest they ran, because Krishna had stolen their minds. Krishna initiated the fulfilling of their desires so easily, just by the sound of His flute.

Now remember that we explained that the Hare Krishna *mantra* is the sound of Krishna's flute. So our desire is that Krishna will steal our mind with the Hare Krishna *mantra*. Every devotee has felt a little bit of this nectar, a little drop, the Hare Krishna *mantra* stealing your mind - a little tiny bit of it. That's why you chant Hare Krishna. Who remembers even just slightly feeling the Hare Krishna *mantra* stealing your mind? Please raise your hand. Yes. Maybe it doesn't happen every day, yet, but at some point in your life I know you have experienced the Hare Krishna *mantra* pulling at your mind. At that moment, you knew Krishna consciousness is true. So now you have to work to make for better chanting, better service, so that the *maha-mantra* will pull your mind even more. Each *gopi* ran to Krishna to get back her stolen property. 'Krishna you are a thief, give me my stolen goods!' What did Krishna steal? Their modesty, shyness, fear, soberness, and of course, Krishna stole their minds. In less than a second, Krishna's flute captured these things and brought them to Krishna.

Previously we've discussed how some of you here had felt some embarrassment when you first heard that Krishna the Supreme Lord has girlfriends. When Maharaja Pariksit was hearing about the *rasa-lila* from

Sukadeva Goswami, he looked around, surveying the audience. Remember how Pariksit Maharaja was there on the bank of the river hearing from Sukadeva Goswami, and sages and mystics from all over the universe had gathered there. Not all of them were pure devotees. As Pariksit Maharaja scanned the faces of the assembled *sadhus*, he could see that not all were pure devotees: "I see doubts on some faces. I see that some are doubting, upon hearing of Krishna's affairs with His intimate devotees. I see that there's a lack of proper understanding."

Therefore, Pariksit Maharaja asked Sukadeva Goswami a very important question. He presented the question as if he himself had a doubt, but actually Pariksit was asking on behalf of others gathered there. He said, "Sukadeva, the *gopis* did not know that Krishna is the Supreme Lord. They did not treat Him as the Supreme Absolute Truth. They treated Him as their lover. Isn't it obvious, then, that their minds must have been caught up in the modes of material nature? After all, how could they become purified just by thinking about a lover? Even though that lover is Krishna, still, they were not thinking of Krishna as the Supreme Absolute Truth."

Why is this question so important? It is quintessential because many people can say, "Well, the *gopis* thought of their boyfriend, so I can think of anyone I want—my boyfriend, my favorite movie star, or whatever, and that's the same as thinking of Krishna." Just as impersonalists say: "We are all Brahman, we all are God, so thinking of anyone is thinking of God."

Fortunately for us, Pariksit Maharaja wanted to establish that thinking of Krishna is always different than thinking of an ordinary person. Please understand this point. The *gopis* did not think, "Krishna You are God, therefore we love You." No, they just thought, "Krishna we love You--that's all. This is pure love. Not that: "Krishna because You're God, we love You." No, they didn't think like that. They just thought, "Krishna, You are the heart of our hearts—we know nothing other than this. You're the son of Mother Yasoda, and we love You more than anything."

On behalf of others, Maharaja Pariksit was wondering how do you become spiritually perfect by thinking of your boyfriend? Let me ask you all: Have any of you become spiritually perfect by thinking of your boyfriend or your girlfriend? No, of course not. But the *gopis* achieved the highest perfection simply by thinking of Krishna as their boyfriend.

Next, Sukadeva Goswami will answer. First, he seems to be chastising Pariksit Maharaja. "Haven't we already talked about this before? Didn't you ask something like this before?" The spiritual master has a right to chastise disciples. Sukadeva Goswami did that, to set the example. He knew that

Pariksit Maharaja is asking on behalf of the doubters in the audience. Sukadeva said, “Remember when we discussed Sisupala? He was completely absorbed in envy of Krishna, but still he achieved liberation. If someone who hates Krishna can achieve liberation, by always thinking of Krishna, then why can’t the Lord’s dearest devotees attain spiritual perfection by always thinking of Him as their paramour?”

The point is, somehow or other come in contact with Krishna. Somehow or other absorb your mind in Krishna. If even Sisupala who hated Krishna attained liberation, what to speak of those who love Him unconditionally. Just see how wonderful Krishna is. Any way that you absorb your mind in Him will be beneficial. Thus, if you must hate, then hate Krishna. You’ll benefit. Of course I must add that it is not common to hate Krishna with the intensity enough to become liberated. So don’t try! It’s much easier to love Krishna with intensity. Still, those who hated Krishna did it with such rare power that in the seventh canto of the Bhagavatam even Narada Muni takes note of it.

You know what Narada Muni says? “Oh if I can only love Krishna as intensely as the demons hate Him.” A devotee sees value in everything. When you see a hard working non-devotee, do some of you think, ‘If only I could only work for Krishna that hard.’ How many of you have thought like that? There’s one airline, Singapore Airlines, that’s supposed to be the best airline in the world. Its staff are rated to have the best service attitude. They have very attentive flight attendant ladies. If you’re seated on the airplane and you simply look in the direction of one of the flight-attendant ladies and just move your eyebrow, then immediately one comes: “Yes, yes, you need something? Can I help you?” They’re world famous for this immediate responsiveness and care. This is how we’re supposed to surrender to Krishna. A devotee learns from everyone and everything how to serve Krishna better. Narada Muni is thinking about how certain *maha* demons hate Krishna with such intensity that he wants that same power in his love for Krishna.

Let us continue with Sukadeva Goswami’s defending the spiritual nature of the *rasa lila*. He gave the example of Sisupala. If that super demon could attain liberation by hating Krishna, then certainly the *gopis* could achieve the highest perfection through their love for Krishna. Sisupala didn’t know Krishna as God; he just hated Him, but he got liberation. The *gopis* also didn’t think of Krishna as God; they just loved Him unconditionally. Certainly, as the Lord’s dearest devotees, they would get the highest perfection.

What about Krishna Himself--what is His nature anyway? Is He an ordinary boy, a mundane teenage lover? No, Sukadeva Goswami says. He’s *avyaktaprameyasya nirgunasya gunatmanah*. He’s immeasurable, *aprameya*; he’s

inexhaustible, *avyakta*. How would you like to love someone who's inexhaustible and immeasurable? Are there any husbands here who are inexhaustible? No, you get tired of your work and family duties very quickly. Are there any men here who are immeasurable? No, all the ladies know you have very small limits. The advantage of loving Krishna, however, is that He is immeasurable and inexhaustible. He is free from the modes of nature because He is the controller of the modes of nature. And why is Krishna appearing in this world with His *lila*? He's appearing in this world with His *lila* to benefit the whole world. So shouldn't He give benefit to His dearest devotees, the *gopis*?

Now what are the different types of attachment that can bring you in touch with Krishna? Here comes Sukadeva Goswami's next point in his defence of the *rasa lila*. He's going to show that all types of constant attachment to Krishna bring about spiritual perfection. Srila Sukadeva says, *kamam krodham bhayam sneham aikyam saubrdam eva ca*. Whether it's *kama*, lust; *krodha*, anger; *bhaya*, fear; *sneha*, affection; *aikya*, eagerness to merge with the Lord; or *saubrdam*, hankering to be friendly with the Lord; all these different types of constant attachment will lead to the spiritual platform.

You see, just as when you touch fire, whether you know it or not, it's going to burn you. How many of you in your childhood touched something hot on the stove or even put your hand in fire? So many. When you did that as a little kid, do you remember the fire saying, "Oh, you are a child, you do not know; so I will not burn you." Did that happen to any of you? Did the fire ask, "Do you know about me, about my flames?" No, you stuck your hand in and you were burnt. Similarly, whatever way you come in contact with Krishna, you're going to become a changed person.

For example, Vijaya, our minister of book distribution, can tell you what Prabhupada said happens if someone just appreciates his books. In Melbourne, Australia, he said that if someone takes one of his books in their hand and thinks, "Nice book; looks very appealing," but they don't buy it, Prabhupada said that simply their brief appreciation is enough to grant them a human form in their next life-- guaranteed. I couldn't believe my ears. In 1975 I was listening to Prabhupada lecturing, on tape, and I played those very words thirty times over again.

If you come in contact with Krishna, somehow or other-- even if you don't know Krishna--there'll be a change. Of course, Rupa Goswami, in *Nectar of Devotion*, urges us to come in contact with Krishna favorably. Please understand that it's easier to love Krishna favorably than to hate Him demonically. What else did Sukadeva Goswami say? You see, he's defending

Krishna. Every devotee should know how to do that. What will you say if you meet someone who attacks Krishna? “You worship that Hindu forest-love-God, that immoral boy who dances with other’s wives.” How are you going to respond? “I don’t know, I don’t know.” You should know how to defend Krishna. Then you’ll know to say, “You cannot accuse Krishna of immorality. You are the immoral one. You are dancing with someone else’s wife, thinking her to be yours. Everything and everyone belongs to Krishna, including your wife. YOU are dancing with someone else’s wife!”

Remember that we have explained how Krishna has nothing to do with material bodies. You cannot enter into Krishna’s pastimes with a material body. What was Sukadeva Goswami’s final defence? Krishna is *aja*, unborn and He’s *yogesvaresvara*, the master of mystic power; therefore why be surprised what the *aja* and the *yogesvaresvara* does? Moreover, the Goswami explains, isn’t it Krishna who liberates the whole world? That means Krishna can liberate the world even through His romantic activities—indeed especially through His romantic activities. Those amorous pastimes are especially potent for people, because everyone in this world likes romance. Krishna says “alright, you like romance, eh? I’ll show you romance with an eternal sweetness and pleasure in love far beyond your comprehension. I’ll show you immeasurable and inexhaustible romance, pure romance, without a touch of material contamination.” In this way Krishna’s spotless romantic affairs purify even those affected by material lust.

So this cure is what lies ahead, as you become more mature in Krishna consciousness. You can take this medicine only when you sufficiently advance in Krishna consciousness. Yes, Sukadeva Goswami explains that the proper candidate can become cured of material lust by hearing about the intimate amorous affairs of Krishna in Vrindavan. But you do have to wait until you have progressed enough, to take this medicine. What happens if you take the *rasa-lila* medicine prematurely? Who knows?

**Devotee:** Sahajiyā

**Devamrita Swami:** Yes. How do you know it’s premature? You start reading Krishna’s pastimes with the *gopis* and you begin to think, “This sounds familiar. I know what this is like; I have had my own amorous affairs to which I can compare Krishna’s affairs.” Then you know you’re not ready--when reading such pastimes, your consciousness cannot rise out of the mode of passion. But there will come a time when you will be ready, after dedicating your life to Krishna’s service. Then you can take the medicine: “Such a relief to be free.” Upon hearing *gopi-lila*, the lust floats out the window. It’s impossible to keep material lust and move forward in attraction for Krishna’s

pastimes; therefore the lust-diminished and lust-free stage of *bhakti* will come, if you simply remain determined.

Sukadeva Goswami promises the efficacy of this cure, but you do have to be qualified to take the medicine. Therefore we should work very hard to satisfy Krishna's senses and we should hear all of Krishna's pastimes without discrimination. The childhood pastimes, the killing pastimes, the cowherd boy pastimes and also Krishna's pastimes with the *gopis*. But don't artificially spend more time on one set of pastimes than another. Later, as you advance in Krishna consciousness, certain pastimes will naturally start to attract your attention more. That will happen, but it takes time. Nevertheless, even in the beginning stages of Krishna's consciousness, you can feel the Lord's confirmation in your heart that you're on the right track. To the new devotee, Krishna makes it known in your heart that *bhakti* is the right thing to do. Krishna's pushing you in your heart "Come on, take *prasada*, dance, chant, hear about Me, associate with devotees." He's pushing you in your heart, "Come on, do it." Consequently, you build confidence even in the beginning stages. By your nurturing that confidence, it starts to grow, as the *bhakti-lata*, the creeper of devotional service. Alright, so now I hope you are all thinking about your desires and their power--yes? Let's desire about Krishna and His service.

Hare Krishna!