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WHEN TO STOP CHANTING (PART 1)

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We have been explaining the first verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Very high philosophical explanations are coming, but I fear that not everyone understands. If not, I will change the subject and speak about the sweet pastimes of Krsna.

Saunaka Rsi and the other sages asked Srila Suta Gosvami, the disciple of Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, “You know everything. You have read Srimad-Bhagavatam and all Vedic literatures, such as Mahabharata, Ramayana, the Puranas and Upanisads. We have strong faith in you, so please tell us, in a very easy way, how our soul may become eternally happy.”

Suta Gosvami replied:

sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati

[“The supreme occupation (dharma) for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self. (Srimad-Bhagavatam

laksanam bhakti- yogasya
nirgunasya hy udahrtam
ahaituky avyavahita
ya bhaktih purusottame

[“The manifestation of unadulterated devotional service is exhibited when one’s mind is at once attracted to hearing the transcendental name and qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is residing in everyone’s heart. Just as the water of the Ganges flows naturally down towards the ocean, such devotional ecstasy, uninterrupted by any material condition, flows towards the Supreme Lord.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.9.12)]

We have explained all these topics, and especially the verse:

anyabhilasita sunyam
jnana karmadi anavritam
anukulyena krsnanusilnam
bhaktir uttama

["The cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Sri Krsna, or in other words the uninterrupted flow of service to Sri Krsna, performed through all endeavours of the body, mind and speech, and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (bhavas), which is not covered by jnana (knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation) and karma (reward-seeking activity), and which is devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Sri Krsna, is called uttama-bhakti, pure devotional service." (Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.1.11)]

This verse tells the highest definition of bhakti, and we have also explained its meaning. If anyone will give up all worldly desires and sense gratification, and engage in visuddha-bhakti (pure bhakti, or bhakti that is free from any mixture of jnana (speculation or knowledge leading to impersonal liberation), tapasya (severe austerities with motives other than attainment of bhakti), astrology and all other activities, in a continuous unbroken stream or flow, day and night, always under the guidance of realized and rasika Vaisnavas, what will happen?

vasudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yoga prayojitah
janayaty asu vairagyam
jnanam ca yad ahaitukam

["By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.7)]

It is sure that by performing devotional activities and hearing hari-katha in this process, detachment for worldly things will come. Moreover, all kinds of tattva-jnana (knowledge and realization of established philosophical truths), sambandha-jnana (knowledge and realization of our transcendental and eternal relationship with Krsna), prema-bhakti (devotional service in love of God) and vraja-bhakti (the highest devotion; that of the residents of Vrndavana) will come. If you are chanting the holy name, worshiping hundreds of Thakurjis (Deities) day and night and performing other devotional activities – but if you have no real faith or taste in hearing hari-katha, then, after some time you will stop engage in your worship, chanting and all such activities, and you will give up bhakti-yoga. First, hear from a bona-fide guru and a taste in hearing hari-katha should come.

sravanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam pada-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-nivedanam

["Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Visnu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best

friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) – these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.5.23)]

Give preference to this. If any superior Vaisnava is giving hari-katha (speaking about the Lord's glories), give up all other devotional activities, such as chanting, doing parikrama of Govardhana and Vrndavana, and so on. They will be performed later on; but first hear. If Gurudeva or a high class Vaisnava is telling hari-katha, then don't chant. Rather, concentrate your mind on hari-katha.

srvvatam sva-kathah krsnah
punya-sravana-kirtanah
hrdy antah stho hy abhadrani
vidhunoti suhrt satam

[“Sri Krsna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramatma [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.17)]

These selected verses from the second chapter of canto 1 are the basis of the entire Srimad-Bhagavatam. The entire Bhagavatam is only an explanation of this. Try to understand all these teachings and try to follow them.

We should especially know the verse:

nasta-prayesu abhadresu
nityam bhagavata-sevaya
bhagavaty uttama-sloke
bhaktir bhavati naisthiki

[“By regular attendance in classes on the Bhagavatam and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.18)]

bhidyate hrdaya-granthih
chidyante sarva-samsayah
ksiyante casya karmani
drstva evatmanisvare

[“Thus the knot in the heart is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees the Self as master.” (SB1.2.21)]

First we should know what anarthas*[see endnote] are. By hearing hari-katha, Lord Krsna will come and purify your hearts, and all anarthas will go away. You should realize what these anarthas are, and whether or not you are covered by them. One of the anarthas is kutinati, which means criticizing others, especially Vaisnavas. We should not criticize.

END of PART 1.

[*Endnotes – (The following is the four types of anarthas, taken from Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-bindhu by Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura) Anarthas are of four kinds: (1) svarupa-bhrama (illusion about spiritual identity), (2) asat-trsna (thirst for that which is unreal; that is, material enjoyment), (3) aparadha (offences) and (4) hrdaya-daurbalya (weakness of heart).

Svarupa-bhrama is of four kinds: (1) sva-tattva- or jiva-svarupa-bhrama (illusion about one's spiritual identity), (2) para-tattva-bhrama (illusion about the spiritual identity of the supreme absolute truth), (3) sadhya-sadhana-tattva-bhrama (illusion about sadhana-bhakti, the means of spiritual perfection, and sadhya, the object to be obtained by such sadhana, or in other words prema-bhakti) and (4) maya-tattva-bhrama (illusion about the Lord's external energy, maya).

Asat-trsna is of four types: (1) varieties of desires for material enjoyment in this world, (2) desires for enjoyment in the higher planetary systems of Svargaloka, (3) desires for the attainment of the eight mystic siddhis. (4) the desire for impersonal liberation.

Aparadha is of four kinds: (1) offences towards Sri Krsna, (2) offences towards krsna-nama, (3) offences towards krsna-svarupa (the deity form of the Lord) and (4) offences towards the jivas (living entities who are infinitesimal particles of spirit belonging to the Lord).

Hrdaya-daurbalya is of four kinds: (1) tuccha-asakti (attachment for useless things), (2) kuti-nati (deceitful behavior. The word kuti-nati may be broken down into the constituent parts ku, bad or evil, and na or nati, that which is forbidden. In that case it would mean doing wicked deeds or doing that which is forbidden), (3) matsarya (envy) and (4) sva-pratistha-lalasa (desire for one's own fame and prestige).

(The following is the six types of unsteady bhakti (anisthitha-bhakti) From Madhurya-kadambini by Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura)

Utsaha-mayi: A brahmana child, having just begun study of the scriptures, thinks he has immediately become a learned scholar worthy of everyone's praise. Similarly, a person just beginning devotional service may have the audacity to think that he has mastered everything. This is called utsaha-mayi, or filled (puffed-up) with enthusiasm.

Ghana-tarala: The same child at times diligently engages in his studies, and yet at other times, due to inability to understand the schoolbooks or lack of real taste, is negligent. In

the same way, a new devotee will sometimes practice the different forms of devotional service and at other times neglect them. Being sometimes diligent and at other times negligent, his endeavor is called *ghana-tarala* (condensed-dilute, thick-thin).

Vyudha-vikalpa: "Shall I just spend my life happily in family life, making my wife and children Kṛṣṇa conscious and worshipping the Lord? Or should I give them all up and go to Vrndavana to perfect myself by engaging full time in hearing and chanting with no distractions? Shall I wait till the last stage, after enjoying all sorts of pleasures and I've finally understood that the whole material world is simply a forest fire of affliction? Or is it better that I renounce right now? In this way, the mind spends time vacillating between the life of renunciation and household life considering the different options. This is called *vyudha-vikalpa*, or extensive speculation.

Visaya-sangara: Seeing that material enjoyment is forcibly carrying him away and impairing his steadiness in serving Kṛṣṇa, the devotee resolves to renounce his addictions and take shelter of the holy name. But many times his attempts at renunciation often end in enjoying what he's trying to renounce. This on-going battle with his desires for sense enjoyment from former habit, where he sometimes meets with victory and sometimes with defeat, is called *visaya-sangara*, or struggle with sense pleasure.

Niyamaksama: Then the devotee will resolve, "From today I will chant such and such number of rounds of japa and will pay so many obeisances. I'll also perform services for the devotees. I won't talk about anything except the Lord, and I'll give up all association with people who talk gossip." Though the devotee makes such resolutions every day, he is not always able to carry them out. This is called *niyamaksama*, or inability to follow rules. *Visaya-sangara* is the inability to give up sense enjoyment, while *niyamaksama* is the inability to improve his devotional service.

Taranga-rangini: Finally, it is well-known that the very nature of bhakti is to be attractive, thus many people become attracted to the devotee. And, as the old adage goes, "By the public's attraction one becomes wealthy." Bhakti produces much opportunity for material gain, worship, and position (*labha*, *puja*, *pratistha*). These are weeds around the creeper of bhakti. Seeking one's pleasure (*ranga*) amidst these weed-like facilities, which are but small waves (*taranga*) in the ocean of bhakti, is called *taranga-rangini*, delighting in material facilities. (Madurya kadambini pages 15-18]

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