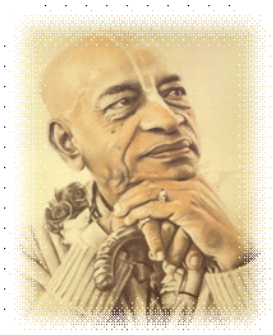

OCEAN OF NECTAR

Shayani Ekadasi (E-Magazine for every Ekadasi)
23 July 2018 Issue Number: 93

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1. SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM 3.1.15 PART 2

If you are in bad association no matter how exalted you maybe, all your good qualities will be lost. That also has been demonstrated very nicely by Bhisma. When Bhisma was lying on the bed of arrows after the battle was over, he was waiting for the sun to move to the northern course because the battle of Kuruksetra took place when the sun was in the southern course. When someone dies at the time the sun is in the southern course one goes to the lower planets but when one leaves his body when the sun is in the northern course then he goes to the higher planets. Bhisma was waiting for the sun to move north and when he was about to leave his body and the war was over the Pandavas came to see him and he was giving valuable advises to Yudhisthira how a ksatriya should rule the kingdom, what is right and what is wrong and how to bring justice and punish injustice. At that time Draupadi smiled and Bhisma noticed it and asked her why she was smiling. Draupadi asked Bhisma, "Where was your wisdom when the Kauravas were dishonoring me in the royal assembly? You were there and you did not protest and now you are speaking these wise words of advice." Bhisma replied, "Actually, Draupadi at that time my consciousness became affected because I was eating food given by Duryodhana therefore my consciousness was affected by that

but now that bad blood has drained out of my body lying on this bed of arrows so now my consciousness has become purified.

So this is how we can see how consciousness can be so subtly affected just by eating food cooked by somebody whose consciousness is bad and this affects the consciousness of others. Duryodhana was not even cooking, he was sponsoring the food but because the food was purchased with the money of Duryodhana the consciousness was affected. So this is the effect of bad association. On the other hand we can also see how good association influences the consciousness of others. We come to the temple and move into the ashram and live with the devotees and the first thing we notice is that we get rid of our bad habits very easily and that's one of the first things people notice as well. Many people have bad habits today like people are meat eaters, non-vegetarian but when they move into the temple they very easily become vegetarians. How many of you were non-vegetarians before? So this is it! If you had stayed at home could you give up eating meat? So many people want to give up smoking and they can't but when they come to temple very easily they give it up. So many people are addicted to alcohol but when they move into temple they give it up. Why? How can they do that? It is because of the good association. It would be difficult to practice Krishna Consciousness but when you move into the temple due to the association it becomes easy. What is the lesson we learn from that? Should we go for bad association or should we remain in bad association? What should we do? We should be in good association, give up bad association and remain in good association. You may not get money in good association but what will you get? You will get peace of mind whereas in bad association you will get so many material facilities and that's the problem that Duryodhana's accomplices had faced. They were getting material benefits due to Duryodhana. Karna got a kingdom due to Duryodhana's association. So many material facilities were available but what was the result of that? The mental peace was lost. Dhrtarastra had so much, he was the king but he could not sleep. He told Vidura to please help him because he could not sleep. Why could he not sleep? Because his consciousness was affected by his bad actions. In this way one thing becomes clear: The right action leads to real enjoyment and the bad action leads to suffering.

We notice devotees have bright faces so what does it indicate? Bright faces means they are internally joyful whereas materially people maybe opulent but their face looks so unhappy. Faces are the mirrors of the mind. The way the mind id the face will depict. If the mind id depressed then the face will look depressed and if the mind id happy the face will look happy. So what do we really want happiness or suffering? We all want joy and the way to become joyful is by being Krishna Conscious.

2. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1) Question inaudible
   Srila Prabhupada made the arrangement to get pure food. It is difficult to get pure food but we must try as much as possible and it's not that we should eat indiscriminately. The point Srila Prabhupada was making was even though we may try to maintain absolute purity of food it is not possible in this age that is why

Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave the holy name.

2) What is the meaning of a paramahamsa?
Parama means supreme, great and hamsa means swam. The great swan. The swan has some qualities and when those qualities are seen in a man and magnified then he is called a paramahamsa. One of the qualities of a swan is that it can separate milk from water. You give the swan milk diluted in water and it will take the milk only and leave the water because the swan has the ability to do that. Similarly when a man can separate spiritual from a mixture of spiritual and material he is called a paramahamsa. He accepts the spiritual and rejects the material. In this material nature everything is a mixture of spiritual and material. Your body is made of matter but there is a spirit soul in the body. It's a combination of spirit and matter. Paramahamsa takes the spiritual aspect and rejects the material. He has a very special ability to do that.

3) Question inaudible
The root cause of developing a lot of faith is spiritual advancement and the root cause of spiritual advancement is faith. The more faith the more advancement and the more advancement the more faith you have. This is also connected to humbleness. To be respectful one must be humble. A person who is not humble cannot be respectful to his superiors.

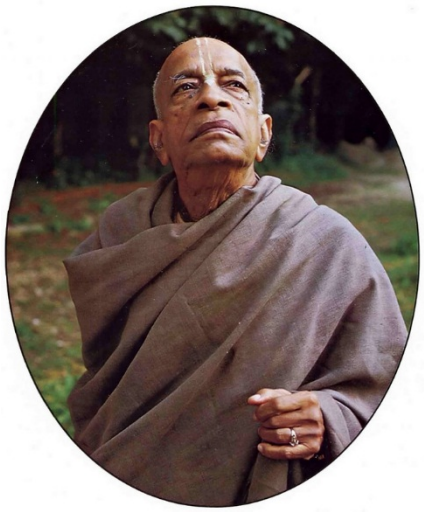
4) Question inaudible
It is not that Bhisma was a mahajana right from the beginning. Mahajana is a pure devotee and Bhisma was not a pure devotee at the beginning he was a jnana misra bhakta. His devotion was affected by jnana and he was concerned about morality but a pure devotee is not concerned about morality but he is only concerned about Krishna. We have to understand at first Bhisma was a jnana misra bhakta but then he became a sudha bhakta so much so that Krishna came Himself at the time of Bhisma's departure from this planet.

5) Question inaudible
To draw the line would be: Is it the instruction of the guru? Did Srila Prabhupada say or have they concocted? I have seen myself. Srila Prabhupada questioned somebody who was making a lot of money. One sanyasi was in Japan with his team of devotees and he was making a lot of money and when Srila Prabhupada found out that he was using unfair means then Srila Prabhupada was annoyed with him. The consideration was whether Krishna did it not that I decided because I am serving Krishna. An example to illustrate this point, when I was in Montreal around the time they had the Olympics wither in 1980 or 1982 we used to go for japa walk in the Olympic village because it was not far from our temple. One devotee picked flowers from the garden and you know in the west how it is no one touches anyone else's things. I told him not to and he said he is doing it for Krishna. One day while picking the flowers the guard saw and this had brought so much disgrace to our society that Hare Krishnas are stealing flowers. We have to have a little more foresight and see what will be beneficial for our movement and what will be harmful for our movement. Don't do anything that is harmful to our movement or harmful to our own spiritual advancement. Because we are devotees it doesn't give us a license to do anything we want to do. We have to maintain a sense of morality because that's what everybody follows. If

Krishna says to do something then that is different. Krishna told Arjuna to fight against his grandfather and guru but that shouldn't be the standard for everyone. We shouldn't say, "Well we will kill our grandfathers." That should not become the standard.

6) Question inaudible
   If it is vegetarian food and bought with a price some karma goes away but that should not become the standard that everybody go and buy samosa outside and eat it then what about eating meat? If you buy meat with a price can you eat meat? The main consideration should be we should offer it to Krishna and it should be eligible to offer to Krishna. Sometimes Srila Prabhupada was quite liberal because Srila Prabhupada was dealing with western devotees. It was a big step for them to give up meat eating and become vegetarian so if once in a while they took a vegetarian samosa that could have been accepted.
7) Question inaudible
   Time, place and circumstances is the consideration like when the situation is as such you cannot completely disregard the offering then you can accept it but obviously you do not bring that food and offer it in the altar, you can in your mind or with a picture make that offering to Krishna but generally we have to maintain a proper Krishna Conscious standard.
8) Question inaudible
   This material nature is devi dham no expansion. Mahesh dham is the abode of Lord Shiva, Kailash so expansion on this earth is Varanasi, Maha Kalesvar the 12 jyoti lingas are expansions of Mahesh dham.

3. SRILA PRABHUPADA APPRECIATION



Srila Prabhupada made the arrangement to get pure food. It is difficult to get pure food but we must try as much as possible and it's not that we should eat indiscriminately. The point Srila Prabhupada was making was even though we may try to maintain absolute purity of food it is not possible in this age that is why Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave the holy name. Sometimes Srila Prabhupada was quite liberal because Srila Prabhupada was dealing with western devotees.

4. GURU MAHARAJA'S INSTRUCTIONS

⇓ Should we go for bad association or should we remain in bad association? What should we do? We should be in good association, give up bad association and remain in good association. You may not get money in good association but what will you get? You will get peace of mind;

⇓ So what do we really want happiness or suffering? We all want joy and the way to become joyful is by being Krishna Conscious; and

⇓ Don't do anything that is harmful to our movement or harmful to our own spiritual advancement. Because we are devotees it doesn't give us a license to do anything we want to do.

(The content of this E-magazine was based on a lecture given by His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami in ISKCON Ujjain on 26 March 2008)

(Compilation & editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)