

From: **Sri Mayapur Candrodaya Mandir**
Date: **Wednesday February 8th, 2012**
Topic: **Maharaj Prthu's Going Back Home**
Verse: **SB 4.23.23-25**
Speaker: **HH Vedavyasapriya Swami**



SB 4.23.23

vilokyānugatām sādhvīm
prthuṁ vīra-varam patim
tuṣṭuvur varadā devair
deva-patnyaḥ sahasraśaḥ

TRANSLATION: After observing this brave act performed by the chaste wife Arci, the wife of the great King Prthu, many thousands of the wives of the demigods, along with their husbands, offered prayers to the Queen, for they were very much satisfied.

SB 4.23.24

kurvatyaḥ kusumāsāram
tasmin mandara-sānuni
nadatsv amara-tūryeṣu
gṛṇanti sma parasparam

TRANSLATION: At that time the demigods were situated on the top of Mandara Hill, and all their wives began to shower flowers on the funeral pyre and began to talk amongst themselves as follows.

SB 4.23.25

devya ūcuḥ
aho iyaṁ vadhūr dhanyā
yā caivam bhū-bhujām patim
sarvātmanā patiṁ bheje
yajñeśam śrīr vadhūr iva

TRANSLATION: The wives of the demigods said: All glories to Queen Arci! We can see that this queen of the great King Prthu, the emperor of all the kings of the world, has served her husband with mind, speech and body exactly as the goddess of fortune serves the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Yajnesha, or Vishnu.

PURPORT: In this verse the words yajnesham shriir vadhuur iva indicate that Queen Arci served her husband just as the goddess of fortune serves the Supreme Personality of Godhead Vishnu. We can observe that even in the history of this world, when Lord Krishna, the supreme Vishnu, was ruling over Dvaarakaa, Queen Rukminii, who was the chief of all Krishna's queens, used to serve Lord Krishna personally in spite of having many hundreds of maidservants to assist her. Similarly, the goddess of fortune in the Vaikuntha planets also serves Naaraayana personally, although there are many thousands of devotees prepared to serve the Lord. This practice is also followed by the wives of the demigods, and in days past the wives of men also followed this same principle. In Vedic civilization the husband and wife were not separated by such man-made laws as divorce. We should understand the necessity for maintaining family life in human society and should thus abolish this artificial law known as divorce. The husband and wife should live in Krishna consciousness and follow in the footsteps of Lakshmi-Naaraayana or Krishna-Rukminii. In this way peace and harmony can be possible within this world. [End of Srila Prabhupada's purport to SB 4.23.25]

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: So we are reading Maharaja Prthu's passing away and going home, back to Godhead. Srila Prabhupada says in the purport of the last verse that I read that the principle of wife following the husband has been descended from the serving attitude of Laxmi Narayana or with respect to Rukmini serving Lord Krishna. This is an important principle. This principle cannot be violated as a service. But in Kali-yuga, artificial law of separation has been very prevalent - even in ISKCON. We hear that these things are going on. But I was saying that Srila Prabhupada [had] said that we must institute this divine arrangement between husband and wife for serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead; successive service from the lower to the upper should continue. It means the husband serves guru. The guru serves the Supreme Lord in parampara but at the same time in householder life a wife should serve the husband who serves the guru (SB 6.18.33 – 34). So the principle will be maintained. If there is no service attitude, the asritas - asritas means one who are dependent upon -

mam hi partha vyapasritya
ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah
striyo vaisyas tatha sudras
te 'pi yanti param gatim [Bg 9.32]

The ultimate aim is the supreme destination - to go home back to Godhead (BG 6.14, SB 1.15.51, CC Madhya 20.124). This principle or the order has been already established. It cannot be violated. So if we have this particular aim of going back home, back to Godhead - it is possible in the human form of life - then nobody can change the rules.

Srila Prabhupada is saying that the artificial arrangement of divorce system is not approved in the Vedic sastras. It is not a flat outright saying but I think it is very serious and very important as far as serving the Absolute Truth is concerned this principle which is enunciating the Absolute Truth cannot be violated. So it has to be understood in proper perspective. Many times we say that time, place and circumstances - change the rule. Rule cannot be changed. Application can be changed. The rule cannot be violated.

The established order of the Supreme Lord is the ultimate aim and this order has to be taken. It is the order that everybody has to take and serve. ... It should be the supreme goal of life. Why? Because the the principle of the energetic and the energy. Energy supposed to serve, by its own nature, in nature to the energetic (Bg 10.8, SB 1.1.1). So it is through the energy that one progresses going back home, back to Godhead. All proper serving attitudes can be cultivated in Krishna consciousness. Without that we cannot go home back to Godhead.

We pray to Radharani for the same purpose of allowing us or to teach us how to serve the Supreme Absolute Truth, Lord Sri Krishna. So whether our actions are, our lifestyle, our village system whether it serves the purpose or not should be the main concern. It cannot be violated. If it is violated then repercussions are there and we get away from the main goal of life. We get away!

So Prthu Maharaja, the empowered personality who is an empowered incarnation of Lord Sri Krishna Himself, is the ideal pati - means the protector or maintainer. Pati has a function to maintain. No wonder Krishna in the form of Vishnu is in charge of the mode of goodness for maintaining the material world. [SB 3.13.47, CC Adi 1.11] He is considered to be the

preserver [of] world or the maintainer - because of that function. This function is only applied to those who really give shelter. Who protects and who provides.

In Saranagati also we see that we should cultivate firm faith in the Supreme Lord that He will maintain us. He will maintain us! Maintenance is there and it is His function because He is the protector. So the word itself is very important. The husband gets the title of pati in reference to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the function has to be carried out.

So in Krishna consciousness this principle should be firmly embraced and we have to try to develop that in daivi-varnasrama system, emphasise this rule and make it an ideal without that perpetual justifying the causes of separation. That will not lead us anyway. The verse, the passage here is in Bhagavad-Gita by Lord Krishna that they are practically taking shelter - practically. It is not that I am under the shelter - Om Sri Krsna saranam mamma - means that Lord Krishna is my shelter but if I do not perform the service how can shelter be established? Belief system is one thing even though it is a ... but performing the service - and how the service has to be performed? In a very chaste way![SB 7.11.25]

The chastity is in the service. The service requires sincerity and seriousness. These are the two particular factors that make one chaste. The chastity is also descending along with the principle. It is not an isolated thing. One is simply by moral codes of conduct is chaste but here it is said that by mind, words and activities (SB 7.9.10). All three faculties of our expression have to be in line otherwise one can be hypocritical [CC Adi 9.43]. So our chastity depends upon how we take the order of the Lord in complete seriousness and sincerity.

Srila Prabhupada also gave us the facility that you can be sincere by following the parampara. Sincerity means following the parampara. If we are out of parampara then we are no[t] sincere, however serious we may be. So many a times' devotees leave the movement. They think, "Oh I am not getting enough association of serious people like me." But he contradicts himself by not being sincere and he gives up and goes away. So that is not chaste. So in every activity which has been allotted as sva-dharma, one's own original occupational and the status applied this order has to be continued as it is. So Prabhupada said in this way peace and harmony can be possible within this world [Purport of this verse SB 4.23.25]. We should also have peace and harmony in our ISKCON through this principle. The projection is very important. Creation can be there, dissolution can be there but the main aspect is maintenance. Srila Prabhupada created and we are supposed to maintain. Maintenance means becoming the real protector and providing all the opportunities, all the facilities so the chastity can be maintained.

In this way we understand that the wives of the demigods praising because Arci became a very important example in front of them. It is approved. It is nothing of the sort of eulogising but it is a very brave act. The real bravery is in following in the footsteps. It is not that one is brave by taking a kind of very adventurous death. That is not bravery. Bravery means with all cautions and protections we follow the parampara. That is really bravery.

Arci, being a wife, has her own bravery to execute. Her bravery was in following in the footsteps of a very, very exalted, chaste wife. The purport of the process of becoming sati is not a so called traditional belief system. It is to serve the Supreme Absolute Truth. In the previous verse, 22 this is also explained very nicely how Arci is concentrating her consciousness on the lotus feet of her husband and entering the funeral pyre. How she is entering? It is completely free of the bodily conception when such meditation on the lotus feet of her husband even though dead but giving us a great concise idea of one minded

devotion. Devotion without service is useless. So we see the service and service in chastity. Then shelter of the Supreme Lord is all and expanding aspect of our practical application. How the principle can be maintained and how we can be ideal for making it practical application.

So practical application is that in Krishna consciousness for the purpose of serving guru and Krishna, husband and wife have a main goal, main attitude towards the ... livelihood. In ideal grhastha asrama Narada Muni explains to Yudhisthira Maharaja saying that an ideal grhastha is obligated to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and he must dedicate his life for His cause through the instructions of spiritual master and work very expertly from external point of view to maintain all under his shelter including so many living entities but he should be internally withdrawn or detached from the reactions of his work. [SB Chapter 7.14]

Detachment or becoming indifferent even though in the case of good and bad reasons such a detached attitude is bringing a very serious absence ... In this way they make ... sincere. This is the prime principle that has been carried forward in ideal grhastha asrama. So these instructions are given very vividly in the seventh canto - Ideal grhastha asrama (SB 7.14). So those who are in favour of service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead accept and glorify such activity which is pleasing the Lord. One's life is successful if we satisfy the Supreme Lord.

atah pumbhir dvija-srestha varnasrama-vibhagasah svanusthitasya dharmasya samsiddhir hari-tosanam [SB 1.2.13]

Hari-tosanam. Many a times our devotees ask, "How do I know whether the Lord is pleased by my service?" Who would know? Is your guru pleased? Then Krishna is pleased. So in carrying forward the same principle this idealism has come. It is not a tradition but it is a serious effort to go back home, back to Godhead. This chastity is also applied to the medium of the body.

Uma, the wife of Lord Siva gave up her body. She felt it is contaminated, "I am such an offender."- Because it was obtained from Daksa. She felt that her chastity is broken by the contamination of her father's sins, insulting Siva. He is an offender. So she considered that this body is also an offender, therefore, "I don't want this."

So the fire of devotional service can burn even the body. It can burn the karma.[BG 2.51] It can burn even the body. But one has to come to the point of realisation just like Sati. She paved the way for going home, going back to Godhead. So the idea is that this principle should not be taken very lightly and try to make some adjustments for the time being. But we have to improve on making it more efficient and productive in ideal varnasrama system. It is a serious matter.

One has to be so tolerant (BG 2.14) and generally in a common household where I grew up my mother had to tolerate so many pranks of my father - especially feeding him. And she had to fulfil his ways. But I thought that it is something healthy. It was not what we call a deliberate attempt to arrest someone. My mother used to cry. He did not like it but what can I do? But she was the best cook. It so happens that we have to learn the process. She tolerated - that is for sure. She became a very ideal example. I am remembering her especially in this connection - chastity - because I got a call today that I had to go to her bedside. She is in her final days. She is initiated so I would like to perform my function as her spiritual care-giver. I humbly pray and request all of you that please chant Hare Krishna for her. Are there any questions or comments?

Question from a devotee: Is there a simple rule of thumb to know what is the difference between a... is adjustable?

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: Well the great thinkers in our movement are using their brain but the principle should remain intact. The details can be changed provided the principle is maintained. But Srila Prabhupada condemns the legal system. So that is a very big fact that we should not encourage anybody to divorce. Neither can the evils be justified if we want to remain chaste to the order of Lord Sri Krishna.

Question from a devotee: Sometimes it is hard to know until you have a result and judge by the results. For me that is the ultimate test.

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: I think Srila Prabhupada was bold enough to send one Mataji married whose husband was beating her because of heavy drinking - but Prabhupada sent her back twice, "Go to your husband and serve." So there are some calculated risks. Prabhupada was confident and somehow or the other it worked. We did not hear anything afterwards but it is mentioned.

Question from a devotee: That was in India but in America we have... [Laughter]

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: Well this is Vedic principle. In America also Vedic culture is prevailing. That is why everybody is here.

Question from a devotee: We have to discuss that. You are reading the verse here. In America the case was - without mentioning names - Prabhupada gave permission for somebody to divorce and then two days later a few devotees asked why and Prabhupada said, "Because if I didn't he would have committed double offence of divorcing and disobeying my order."

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: This subject matter is not of that relish. It is a serious thing. So more and more understanding should be developed and Krishna will give the result if we depend upon Him after we have taken shelter (BG 18.57). And... But the results are not answer (BG 2.47, 2.48). It is not the final conclusion. There is one important thing even in America law there is separation and extended separation. If it is mutually agreeable then why not? Separation can be there but divorce is not necessary.

Question from another devotee: Sensitive subject but I want to ask the question. Maharaja Prthu was the ideal king and also described as the ideal husband. So his nature was loving and maintaining and caring. And I suggest that that is the ideal for the husband not to become cruel and the wife is left to tolerate for the rest of her life. With that in mind I would like to ask if you could elaborate slightly loving and caring husbands and also to be withdrawn and indifferent. How is that?

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: Yes. That is internal. One can work externally but one who is not attached to the results - that is the teachings of Bhagavad-Gita [BG 2.47] right from the very beginning that how can we become detached. If we offer it to Krishna. So Krishna consciousness is a very important medium to execute ... Detachment is necessary. And detachment comes as it is required or ingrained within the process of Krishna consciousness. *vasudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogah prayojitah janayaty asu vairagyam jnanam ca yad ahaitukam* [SB 1.2.7]

This is causeless detachment. It comes as a result of performing devotional service because it is of a superior higher taste activity and it will give us the Lord (BG 2.59). It may take some time. That is all.

Question from a devotee: You said it will take time. Kali-yuga we are short lived.

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: So principle should remain intact. When we have faith and taken shelter. The Lord is all caring and all merciful. If we have a lot of attachment then shelter will not be there then chastity will also not be there. One has to be chaste to one's own self because the soul is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. Otherwise it is same as he is denying himself also. If we are not chaste to ourselves and our original occupation, vyavasaayaatmikaa buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana bahu-shaakhaa hy anantaash ca buddhayo 'vyavasaayinaam [Bg 2.41] if we are not chaste to execute the soul's occupation which is devotional service to Krishna.

Question from a devotee: So by your experience to suggest to our young grhasta that are married or getting married would we ask them to focus on becoming loving, caring husbands or would we get them to focus on being with God and indifferent?

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: No. Give them the whole chapter in the seventh canto to read prior to getting married or even after getting married. There is no problem. It is the strength of the teachings of Srimad-Bhagavatam. It gives them an opportunity to make a practical experience.

You as the minister of grhasta asrama.

Question from a devotee: Just if I may - often in spiritual life we make a mistake of thinking either or instead of thinking it has to be black or white or one or the other but it may be possible that one can be a loving and caring husband and also develop the indifference.

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: Yes that expression is there but it is an external expression. It does not deny the internal realisation like detachment. It does not. Unless and until a person is detached how is he going to be? Where is the real affection and where is the real compassion? Otherwise this is a sentimental affair.

Question from a devotee: So what is it that we have to become detached from?

HH Vedavyasapriya Swami: Detached not from your duties but the results that are going to entangle. Therefore try you best with the consciousness directed towards Krishna. So you have to take the help of guru (BG 2.7, 4.34). In every aspect if you think you are going to get entangled then take the help. Therefore guru is required - not onetime only during initiation but all the time. That is the indication in the chapter. Instructions are all there. Our gurus may not be around but the instructions are around and there is no difference (SB 4.28.47 purport). It applies to the wife also - not only the husband. But because the importance of wife being chaste so she aids all the positive aspects of service to the husband and she gets equal result.

Jagadguru Srila Prabhupada Ki! Jai![Applause]