**Honesty is Essential for Progress**

by Narasimha das

**“Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this *Bhagavat Purana* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful *Bhagavatam*, compiled by the great sage Vyasadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of *Bhagavatam*, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.”** (*Srimad-Bagavatam* 1.1.2)

Later in this first chapter of First Canto *Bhagavatam* it is stated, **“Recitation of this Bhagavad Purana is the very means of conquest.”**

“Conquest” means conquest over *maya*, or illusion, which causes the “**threefold miseries”** for every living being. We can't defeat the evils of Kali Yuga through our own efforts but must rely on real hearing and chanting of the holy names and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* in association with *sadhus.*

I just heard again Srila Prabhupada giving a class in Honolulu, June 1975. He was talking about how regular hearing of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and attending classes—*even if done by force, or with no real taste*—cleanses the heart —if one is honest. But what is honesty? Srila Prabhupada further explained that we must first honestly admit we are suffering helplessly in this material world and that we have no real freedom in this life. *Sri Suta Goswami* says that regular attendance in *Bhagavatam* class cleanses the heart of men who are really honest. But what does it mean to be truly honest?

Honesty begins with being honest with oneself regarding our situation in life. We should honestly understand our dangerous condition in material existence and our dependence on God. Next stage is to understand that God is kind and sends His pure devotee to guide us. Honestly understanding our complete dependence on the words and example of Srila Prabhupada is our only hope for quick spiritual progress.

For a spiritual movement, honesty is essential. Posing and politics surely have no place in Krishna consciousness. Our real business, or main business, is humbly hearing and chanting the holy name and the holy scriptures, particularly the spotless and most pure of all scriptures, *Srimad-Bhagavatam.* If we have no taste for it, that’s a clear indication of our “diseased condition” of life. As soon as we are slightly purified, we develop a taste and eagerness to hear *Bhagavatam.*

Srila Prabhupada points out in this class, and many other times, that such eagerness is common among people in India and that unscrupulous men exploit the religious sentiments of the people by making a show of reciting *Bhagavatam*. But the primary motive of such dishonest posers is money collections for personal benefit. Thus the whole “Bhagavata Saptah" show is bogus and essentially useless and misleading —if not highly offensive.

In every field of human endeavor honesty is important. This is true in politics, business, detective work, relationships and especially science and religion. Up until the time of Srila Prabhupada’s extensive worldwide preaching, most recognized scientists and living philosophers were dishonest and seemed to have a deliberately biased agenda to deny the existence of God. That trend is reversing due to the influence, directly or indirectly, of the Krishna consciousness movement.

Recently one famous scholar, **Professor Anthony Flew**, changed his opinion, as described in the book cited below:

“As a professor at Oxford and other prestigious universities, Flew was the most respected atheist in the world and authored more than thirty anti-theistic publications. In fact, his ‘*Theology and Falsification”* is the most reprinted philosophical literature of the 20th Century. Recently, Flew joined the mounting list of scientists and philosophers who recognize that the existence of God can no longer be denied. In *‘There is a God’ he writes:*

***‘My discovery of the Divine has been a pilgrimage of reason. I have followed the argument where it leads—to the existence of an immaterial omnipotent, and omniscient being.”***

*(Cited from “Hidden in Plain Sight” by G.V. Paul)*

In *Bhagavad gita*, Lord Krishna explains that *karma-yoga* (or devotional service) and *sankya-yoga* are one and the same because the goal is the same. Through *sankya-yoga*, the yoga of analysis, an honest man will come to admit, as did Professor Anthony Flew, that there certainly must be a supreme, omnipotent and omniscient supernatural being. Srila Prabhupada explains in this regard that when one is truly convinced of the supremacy of God, he will naturally engage in devotional service.

According to Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad-gita*, such a wise man is the best of the four kinds of pious men who turn to God. The wise man has no ulterior motives; he’s in a safe, steady position—even as a neophyte devotee. *Prakrita-bhaktas,* or materialistic devotees, on the other hand, even though externally clean and cultured, may fall away from pure devotional service if their desires are not quickly fulfilled —*or soon after they are.*

*Sankya-yoga* is truly a **“pilgrimage of reason”**. A reasonable person will naturally accept the existence of God, the divine energy, and the necessity to serve the Supreme Truth, the Complete Whole, the well-wisher and benefactor of all. By careful application of the principles of s*ankya-yoga*, a thoughtful, intelligent person will come to the preliminary right conclusion, even without relying on scripture.

Real transcendental scriptures, like *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, are meant for advanced devotees in the post-graduate study of God. Such devotees accept that God is the supreme, self-evident truth. With the guidance of the bona fide spiritual master, they are able to understand Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, although great pundits and brahmin scholars are unable. With superior guidance from the self-realized *acharya*, sincere devotees easily understand the path of pure devotional service and who is a real sadhu. They further understand that the Pure Devotee, like Krishna, is completely transcendental, even though his body sometimes appears like that of an ordinary man.