

In search of happiness

By His Holiness Sri Srimad Murali Mohan Maharaj



A series of brochures "In Search of Happiness" tells the reader how a person, striving to find happiness in this world, becomes even less happy than before he wished to be happy. Faced with insurmountable difficulties, he slips into depression and, in order to get out of it, he starts committing grave sins, such as alcoholism and/or drug addiction.

As a rehabilitation measure, the author suggests a remedy against all kinds of illusion and delusion, which is described in the oldest and most sacred sources of Vedic wisdom - chanting the holy name: **"Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare"**. Any person without any preparation can try it himself, since the name of God is as powerful as the Lord Himself. The only thing you'll need in order to use this remedy is your faith, which results from communicating with those who have it.

The author offers a "real life", working solution to atheists and demons who have no faith in God; it is called "SANKIRTANA" - congregational chanting of the holy name.

The sankirtana movement was started by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the most merciful incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna. It is not something new, invented by people. This method is *yuga-dharma*, a religion for everyone who wants to get rid of the malicious influence of the modern age of hostility and hypocrisy - KALI-yuga.



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Introduction

In the material world, happiness and unhappiness arise from sense perception. Like the seasons of the year, winter and summer, they come and go. Because of the duality of material existence, without knowing misery, it is impossible to know happiness. Everything is relative here. Happiness and unhappiness, joy and sorrow are closely intertwined. Essentially, material happiness is the continuation of many misfortunes. So, for example, in order to enjoy in this world, the soul is forced to incarnate again and again, experiencing threefold suffering from body and mind, from other living beings and from climatic conditions. If it were not for the eternal need of the soul to become happy, then one could easily agree that there is no happiness at all. But the need for happiness lies in the very nature of a living being. Spiritual in nature, it is already happy. As part and parcel of Krsna, it is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. Therefore, to become happy, no external preparation or additional effort is required. Happiness is spontaneous, it is in the nature of the soul. The only problem is that, falsely identifying ourselves, the soul, with the material body and mind, we are trying to find it in sense gratification, in the needs of the material body and mind. We are spiritual, but the happiness we seek here is material. Being in a polluted consciousness, perceiving life through the prism of a false ego, i.e., considering ourselves as a material body, we are trying in vain to become happy. It is clearly stated in the Srimad Bhagavatam: "All the activities of the materialistic inhabitants of this world are aimed at achieving happiness and getting rid of suffering. However, in fact, a person is happy only as long as he does not try to become happy: as soon as he embarks on the pursuit of happiness, he becomes unhappy." (Sh.B. 7.7.42).

In this regard, I will tell a story that I have heard from the devotees of Krishna. One day Srila Prabhupada and his disciples, passing by a garbage container in the courtyard, heard a noise. "What is it?" He asked the student. He walked over to the container and looked in. At the bottom of it there was a rat, which rushed from side to side, trying to get out and thus making noise. Srila Prabhupada said, "This rat got here to enjoy, but it got caught. It has doomed itself to death." And indeed, at that time, a truck appeared from around the corner, a special vehicle for collecting garbage. Prabhupada said, "This is Yamaraja. Now the rat is finished." And yes, the approaching car lifted the container with garbage and threw it into the back. The cover slammed shut. The driver turned on the engine and, under pressure, neatly packed the contents along with the rat. No comments necessary. In this way, like this rat, forgetting about his relationship with Krsna, an eternal living entity, seeking happiness, doomed himself to cycles of birth and death. This is how this world is designed. We came here of our own free will and, while here, we fell into dependency on the laws of material nature.

Part One

Life on a tip of a sharp needle

In this part of our publication, we will talk about drug addiction, which is spreading like a plague all over the world, paralyzing the creative activity of modern society.

Drug addiction is a disease that manifests itself in the physical and mental dependence of a person on drugs, in an irresistible attraction to them and in the exhaustion of the whole body

Drug addiction can be of several fairly common types: morphine (morphinism), cocaine and hashish. Scientists have classified hundreds of different drugs by their effects on our nervous system as follows:

- 1) **Depressants** - substances that block and slow down the normal activity of the nervous system. These include alcohol and various chemicals that can be inhaled (opium and its derivatives), as well as chemicals that are obtained in the laboratory for medical purposes.
- 2) **Stimulants** - substances that excite the nervous system, bringing it out of normal operation. These include cocaine, nicotine, caffeine, amphetamine and its derivatives.
- 3) **Psychedelics** - substances that affect human thinking. They create hallucinations in the minds of people that reproduce events that do not really exist in nature, with bizarre interpretations. This includes marijuana and its derivatives, LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, and more.

Drugs, depending on the dose of use, on the characteristics of the individual, his physical and mental capabilities, as well as on social factors (upbringing and social circle) produce a very different effect. So, for example, when taking drugs from the group of euphoric drugs, a person develops a state of bliss, which is compared to "being in paradise." These drugs create an illusion, as if freeing from everyday difficulties and problems. For example, *indole* acts on nerve cells and induces a feeling of ephemeral bliss. But in fact, *the source of bliss is the living entity itself, the soul. It is covered by the gross physical and subtle, psychic or astral body (mind, intelligence and false ego). As a general rule, drugs act on this subtle body, reproducing the illusion of happiness.*

Morphine and morphine-like substances in their structure are close to natural biochemical compounds, opioid peptides of the brain - endorphins and enkephalins. These substances dull the feeling of pain, as does the initial intake of morphine. But with repeated administration, they require an increase in the dose, because some of these substances remain in the body, activating enzymes that destroy morphine. Having passed the first and second stages of euphoria, the addict falls into an irreversible state of almost continuous abstinence. Those who are addicted to opium have impaired brain function and changes in the blood, lungs, liver and heart. The person becomes like a "living corpse". The face takes on an earthy color that resembles a mask. It is during this period that the addict becomes especially socially dangerous. In order to get a drug, he is ready to commit any crime.

Another equally insidious drug is tetrahydrocannabinol, which is found in flower hemp. Cannabinol, unlike opium and morphine, is used exclusively as an intoxicating drug. It is contained in the composition of hemp pollen (marijuana) and in its resin (hashish, anasha). The latter are used in a mixture with tobacco for smoking.

Marijuana is the most common and less harmful drug. 64.8% of drug addicts start with it. However, psychological changes occur rapidly as a result of its use. Under the influence of hallucinogens, sensations of a fantastic character arise. Some hear music, others see imaginary pictures. The ability to "walk on water", "fly through the air" appears, and those who try to apply their "mystical" abilities in practice, as a rule, become a victim of accidents. Taking LSD, a person achieves mild and acute forms of insanity, which are sometimes temporary, and sometimes permanent, irreversible. For psychostimulants (amphetamine, ephedrine, cation, cocaine), a characteristic feature is the removal of fatigue, drowsiness, suppression of hunger, etc. These drugs are often used in sports. Euphoria is accompanied by motor activity, increased heart rate. In the absence of such a drug, a person develops depression and suicidal tendencies.

History of drug addiction

The history of drug addiction goes back to antiquity. From the historical documents that have come down to us, it is known that the tribes of the Sumerians, Chinese, Indians, ancient Greeks, Aztecs and the inhabitants of Siberia were familiar with drugs. In some ancient cults there was a ritual use of drugs, smoking ganja and marijuana while worshiping a deity. So, for example, the followers of Shiva, imitating Bhutanatha (bhutanatha - "bhuta" means spirit) this is a deity worshiped by spiritually immature people). They smoke marijuana, imitating Shiva, while forgetting that Lord Shiva (Bhutanatha) is the Great devotee of Sri Krishna. He possesses almost equal power of his Master. He is able to drain the ocean of poison without feeling even a slight dizziness. But his imitators face a shameful end, inevitable death.

In Europe, drugs have become known relatively recently, since the time of Charlemagne (y.768-814). They were used exclusively for medical purposes. Their mass use began somewhere in the 19th century, when a group of "intellectual adventurers" began to conduct experiments on their consciousness. Basically, drugs were brought from Egypt and India. And since they spread unhindered, societies and drug addicts' clubs began to form. Famous people often became their members. The members of such a literary club called the "Hashish Lovers Club" were Charles Baudleer, Théophile Gautier and others. Their headquarters were at the Pimoda Hotel in Paris. Baudelaire's poetic genius immortalized his intimate realizations with hashish in the book "Artificial Paradise" and "The Poem of Hashish". Gautier described his hallucinations in his diaries: "My hearing expanded its limits; I began to hear the sound of colors: green, blue and yellow tones. Mingling with each other, they ran at me in waves." Among the English elite, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas de Queensay gained fame for their literary opuses. The latter wrote the book "The Revelation of the English Opiumist." In it, he writes that "a drink with opium is a remedy for torture. Opium can be bought for a penny. Carry it in your vest pocket and mail it ... "

As the demand for drugs increased, the drug business began to attract politicians and statesmen. In 1839, in the sphere of international relations, the first Opium War broke out on this issue. Britain, using its military superiority, began to trade opium in China, contrary to the law prohibiting its distribution. In 1856, as a result of the Second Opium War, Britain, with the support of France and the United States, achieved the legalization of the drug trade. China became the center of the attack of the great powers. Thanks to the development of international relations with the West, millions of Chinese fell into a sweet narcotic dream. Then, migrating from the yellow continent to the New World and other countries of the world, the great nation brought with it its bad habits. So, gradually, the opium plague began to conquer the globe. In the 1870s, Great Britain's monopoly on the sale of opium was challenged by Persia and China itself. Not losing its priority and reins of government, the world colonial power increased the export of opium to America, especially for the Chinese settlements, "opium smokers". To prevent the corruption of citizens' morals, the US government passed a law prohibiting the entry of Chinese into the US, but it was too late. By that time, a new type of drug addict had already appeared - the "white drug addict." Mostly they were representatives of the underworld.

Working with the minds of innocent people for enrichment, the pharmaceutical industry gradually began to supplant the smoking of opium. Some scientists, including William James, an outstanding psychologist of his time, having tried the effects of drugs on himself, began to work in this direction. And very soon James recognized nitric oxide (laughing gas) as the best of them. He published an essay about his discovery that brought him fame. Subsequent experiments with mescaline, however, significantly undermined his physical health and forced him to abandon the idea of spiritual development with the help of drugs. The illusion of spiritual rebirth with the use of drugs led the scientist himself to premature death. In parallel with the development of opium addiction, cocaine began to spread in Europe, America and Asia at the beginning of the

19th century. When and who first discovered this drug has not been established. However, it is known that the tribes of the ancient Incas from time immemorial chewed coca leaves to invigorate and eliminate the feeling of hunger. Since the coca bush grows in Central, South America and Southeast Asia, the spread of this drug has been localized for a long time.

In Europe, cocaine was used in his practice by Z. Freud. As a young neuropathologist, he used it in moderate doses, but after one of his patients fell into a state of acute psychosis, he abandoned its further use. He recognized that the "libido" that drives the world of the senses is deeply rooted in the sacred realm outside of psychedelic drugs.

The latest advance in science is heroin. Pure heroin was obtained by Heinrich Desser, who was looking for a form of analgesic that could replace morphine and did not form a habit like any narcotic. The very name "heroin", which means "big, powerful", has become a strong impetus in the spread of this drug of complacency and arousal, self-mortification and rebirth.

Why does a person become a drug addict?

In his book "Narcotism (addiction to a narcotic drug) as a social problem," Academician V. T. Lisovsky writes that "the use of drugs can be differentiated as follows:

- 1) Drugs used for relaxation purposes.
- 2) Drugs that are a means of changing the emotional state (anxiety, depression, apathy).
- 3) They can be a means of getting pleasure. Hedonic motivation is the most common type of motivation. For many, the drug turns out to be a "lucky find" that gives them the opportunity to experience a strong sense of pleasure.
- 4) The drug is used as a means of increasing self-esteem and self-importance.
- 5) The drug acts as a means of compensating for needs and correcting the disharmonious structure of the personality in general.
- 6) Drugs as a means of communication and sense of belonging to a group.
- 7) And drugs as a means of imitating and maintaining a pleasant ritual". All these reasons, which we briefly cited here, referring to scientific, sociological research, find their expression in a holistic, absolute striving for self-affirmation as an object and subject of the enjoyer. Denying God is trying to take His place. Imitation of the Supreme enjoyer and controller inevitably leads to confusion. In the struggle for sense gratification, which is a reflection of real, true spiritual happiness, not attainable by any materialistic methods, people go crazy.

Antinarcotic and Preventive Activities

Considering the enormous danger posed by the rapid growth of drug addiction, as well as the production and sale of drugs, society in all periods of history tried to protect itself from the spread of this evil. At the beginning of the 20th century, the government of a number of countries took some measures to control the production management and distribution of narcotic drugs. In 1909, the Shanghai Opium Commission was created, and in 1912 a treaty was adopted - the Hague Convention. This was followed by the adoption of a number of legal acts: the Geneva Agreement in 1925; The Bangkok Agreement and the Geneva Conference in 1931 were all preserved in the 1946, 1948, 1953 Narcotic Drugs Protocols and other documents. The legal position of states in the fight against drug addiction was preserved in the Single Convention in 1961, which was ratified by the

Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in the USSR on December 14, 1963. The convention established international control over the manufacture, storage and trafficking of drugs. Taking into account the ever-increasing danger of the spread of psychotropic substances, in 1971 an international conference was held in Vienna with the participation of 90 world countries. In December 1988, the UN Convention on the Suppression of the Illegal Production and Uncontrolled Sale of Drugs and Other Psychotropic Drugs was adopted. On June 22, 1987, the USSR adopted a Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council "on making additions to a number of legislative acts". In this regard, the 1989 Criminal Code played an important role, according to which it was legal to possess only half a kilogram of marijuana. Although this could be enough for thousands of people. Strengthening the fight against drug addiction, in 1997 a law of the Russian Federation came into force, which generally prohibited the storage of intoxicating drugs. But over 30 years of minimal intervention, the number of drug addicts in the country has increased 30 times, and administrative measures have become ineffective. The drug mafia was inevitably associated with violence, murder, rape and other crimes, representing a particularly dangerous population of the underworld. So, from one legislation to another there was a tightening of the fight against drugs and, at the same time, measures were taken to prevent and treat drug addicts. Until 1917, drug addiction in Russia developed in its own way, like everything else. Here there were their own, domestic drug addicts, since the cost of morphine was significantly lower than the cost of alcohol. It could be purchased at any pharmacy. Moreover, even then, "morphine addicts' clubs" functioned on warships. This helped to successfully recruit inexperienced new recruits. Cocaine was mainly distributed to officers. However, later, as you know, the "white movement" headed by Denikin adopted him as a stimulant in their regular units. One of the most ancient means of gaining "happiness" was poppy and hallucinogenic mushrooms. They were known to both the ancient Greeks and the indigenous people of Siberia. So, for example, to perform rituals and to enter a trance, shamans used a fly amanita decoction. So that the poison contained in the fly amanita does not have a strong effect on the body, the Samoyeds drank the urine of people who eat that poisonous mushroom. In itself, it also caused some buzz. Without stopping at any difficulties, in search of happiness, humanity has come a long way of trial and error from amanita to opium and morphine, from smoking hashish to psychedelic experiences with LSD. The chemical industry is now capable of producing innumerable surrogates under laboratory conditions, substituting natural raw materials.

They are not born as drug-addicts - they BECOME drug addicts.

There is no use in quoting numbers, facts and calling for the fight against this social evil without recognizing a simple and obvious fact: "If you do not produce drugs, there will be no drug addicts!" The logic is simple. If there are no drugs, there is no precedent, there is nothing to fight against - there are no drug addicts, and there is no question of the distribution of drugs. Why fight and spend time, effort and money against evil that does not exist! "No, and that's it!" It is enough to close down the production of narcotic drugs, and the situation in society will normalize by itself. It is obvious. The drug is not a vital necessity for a normal human existence. Before it appeared, people did fine without it. A person is not born a drug addict, he becomes one. Hence, the problem arose out of nothing. Most likely, it was created artificially.

When a person is promised heavenly happiness, the fullest satisfaction of material needs, forgetting about the needs of the soul, can he be happy? NO. The mind and body are material, and the soul, which represents our true self, is spiritual. When a person, disoriented by the propaganda of hedonistic ideas of eating, drinking and sex – pleasure without limits, tries to find happiness in the material world, that's when the problems arise. These problems exist because of the passionate desires of the inhabitants of this world. They are created by MATERIALISM. It gives birth to them, feeds them and lives off of them. It is MATERIALISM that is the dominant philosophy in modern society. I AM THE MATERIAL BODY AND THE SATISFACTION OF ITS SENSES IS THE

HIGHEST AND FINAL PURPOSE OF LIFE. This is the main reason. For the materialist, with the death of the material body, everything comes to an end, but for the transcendentalist, who knows himself as an eternal soul, everything just begins. For a narrow-minded person who has focused all attention on the needs of the body and mind, giving up sense gratification is similar to death, but for a Krsna conscious person with pure, unclouded God consciousness, it is an eternal life. For a devotee of Krsna, there is no duality, because be it material or spiritual - he uses everything to serve Krsna. This means that the main cause of all our troubles is our materialistic consciousness. This is the root of all evil. By changing consciousness, one can get rid of problems as well, since they are all created by the lustful mind of a person who identifies himself with a material body and has forgotten about his relationship with Krishna, the Absolute source of eternal pleasure!

WHO NEEDS AND BENEFITS FROM DRUG ADDICTION?

Let's look at this issue with an open mind and rationale. Let's see who is interested in drug addiction: 1) those who produce drugs, 2) those who consume them, 3) those who patronize, 4) ... and those who persecute and fight drug addiction.

How is this possible? Here is the explanation: all these four categories of people live off the distribution of drugs. Some produce, others consume, others directly or indirectly propagandize and invest their money in the drug business, and the fourth, who are fighting with it, earning their living. Thus, it looks like the absolute majority of modern society is interested in drug addiction in one way or another. With one hand, the government collects taxes on the production of drugs, with the other hand it tightens sanctions, charging fines from drug addicts and everyone who turns up. Once on inpatient, compulsory or voluntary treatment, a drug addict has to pay a lot of money for treatment, and if not himself, then the state, family, relatives or a "good uncle" who "launders money" in the same field pays. Doctors live at the expense of the sick, law enforcement agencies - at the expense of violators. Only consumers are losers. They pay to both. The material world is created in such a way that everyone who comes here is forced to pay for their made-up pleasures. Thus, an intelligent person consciously limits his sense gratification by developing Krsna consciousness.

To free the soul from the shackles of material existence, one needs a radical remedy, great shock and pleasure, surpassing all forms of so-called material happiness, which arises from the combination of the various modes of material nature. That remedy is love for Krsna, which can cut the tight knot of karma and liberate the soul. The famous Beatles singer George Harrison, who became the idol of Western youth during the hippie movement, said: "Hare Krishna is better than LSD! All You need is LOVE (Krishna) Hari Bol".

Give up hope everyone who enters here!

The material world is created from the impure desires of living entities, who become hostages of lust, greed and anger. When one purifies his desires and attains Krsna consciousness, this world of violence and exploitation will cease to exist for him. Those who are spiritually developed, who are full in themselves, like the ocean, and who do not depend on the course of affairs, they don't need any dope. The ocean remains calm, it does not overflow, although all rivers flow into it. The ocean does not grow shallow, although millions of tons of water evaporate from its surface to form clouds. Similarly, the bona fide devotees of Sri Krsna, the transcendentalists, are spiritually fulfilled and do not seek material sense gratification. Human life is meant for simple living and high thinking. This is our ideal! This is a spiritual ideal. It guides us on the path of knowing the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna!

Get to the root of the problem

A person engaged in devotional service to the Absolute loses his taste for sense gratification. He does not even entertain such a desire to engage in absurd activities. Both happiness and unhappiness in this world do not affect the one who knows himself as a soul and who has restored his relationship with the Supreme Soul, with Krishna. Thus, it is impossible to free a person from material attachments without developing Krishna consciousness. Discontent of the soul and spiritual poverty make us seek pleasure in this world.

Just like an animal, bewildered by the mirage of a lake in the desert, seeks to quench its thirst and, without quenching it, dies, in the same way the materialist is headed towards false goals and ideals, seeks happiness where there is none. **There is no happiness in this world**, just as there is no water in the illusion. **But this does not mean that there is no happiness anywhere. There is happiness, but it is spiritual, and you need spiritual senses to enjoy it.** We perceive happiness as material only because we identify ourselves with the material body. The true self, the soul, is an integral part of Krishna - the Supreme Soul, the Soul of all souls! It has consciousness, feelings and intelligence. When someone realizes this, having freed himself from false understanding of life, then he becomes able to enjoy the spiritual life. **Life is spiritual in nature.** Matter is death, the ending of life.

Speaking about drug addiction and the innumerable troubles faced by those who have a drug addict in their families, we will list few cases.

"My acquaintances, I won't mention their last name," began V. Lisovsky, "are highly educated people, having a respectable position in society, financially secure, endowed with the trust and respect of people around them. What can be considered unfortunate for such people? They have an only son, apple of their eye so to say, and he is a drug addict. Is this not a tragedy? The boy is not a fool, he graduated from the Institute of International Relations. He was exemplary in everything, girls, classmates were all in love with him. Like many young people, he was fond of sports, swimming in particular. He participated in competitions for the national team of the city. And who would imagine, misfortune happened, he became a drug addict. "How did it happen? We missed it ... The parents did not notice. Once, the mother found a disposable syringe ... But soon the presumptions were confirmed. He came to them to borrow money, one time, then another. Both parents are in high positions, they cannot tell or complain to anyone. Such a disaster. Once they both were at the summer house. The son came with his friends and began asking for money. Trying to reason with the son, the parents quarreled, refused, said: "We will not give money, for the life of me ...". And what? He killed his parents, took everything there was of value in the house, and went on the run. When neighbors found the father and mother dead, they called the police. Well, they soon found him and took their son into custody. But while they were transporting him to the station, he died of an overdose." This is a real story, an episode from life.

I heard another similar case from the mother of a drug addict. She, an elderly woman, works day and night just to buy drugs for her son ... "I'm afraid if he doesn't have enough money, or something else, he will finish me up and commit suicide himself. I am on my last bit of strength. With my own hands I buy and bring this garbage, knowing that this is the end for him. There is no way out. Medical help is useless, I took him to the most famous doctors, they treated him – but no result. There is no way to rehabilitate here. Sometimes they take a

lot of money, but the result is zero - he remains a drug addict. So, I'm spending my life in constant fear of imminent danger."

The third case. In two-three hours' drive from New York, there is a beautiful place in the Catskill Mountains, called Lake Washington. We have devotees there. In summer, many Russians spend their time there. Families rent cottages for the whole season. I was invited to preach to them.

And once I lived with them for a whole month, conducted programs and lectures on the philosophy of Krishna consciousness. In the evenings, many vacationers came to listen. Once after a lecture, an elderly man came up to me and said: "I have been visiting you all this time while you are here. I don't know how to say, I have business to discuss with you." He took me aside and with the air of a conspirator asked: "Could you help my son? He's a drug addict. I am not a poor man and I am willing to pay you if you pray for him. We have already tried everything, but no one really helped us. Now all our hope is only in God. Please pray."

After listening to the man, I said, "Let's pray together. This is your son; you are the most interested person. You need to pray yourself! Let your son not go anywhere while I am here, and come to my programs. Let him stop eating meat and take only prasadam. The hosts, devotees of Krsna, they cook well, and I think it will cost you nothing."

In fact, the solution was obvious. But the young man was brought up as an atheist and, despite a completely hopeless situation, refused. The father was shocked: "Pray for him, he is stupid, he does not know what he is doing. Pray, in Christ the Lord I ask. Krishna will listen to you." "Okay!" - I said. After he paid the required amount for the *yajya*, I performed a fire sacrifice. In this world, all ritual and purification ceremonies are performed by pouring ghee into the fire and chanting the appropriate mantras.

The result was overwhelming, according to eyewitnesses. The next day after the *yajna*, the boy began to "turn inside out". They thought that the end of him had come. But no, he survived. After that, he slept for several days like a dead man. In the end he came to his senses. And the first words that he said: "Give me the beads. I will chant Hare Krsna. " The father brought his son to me by the hand, and I gave him beads.

While I stayed in this place, he and his father came to my programs every day. A year and a half have passed since then. And then, one day, the phone rang. It was Igor, that was the name of my patient. Since we parted, he gave up drugs, got off the register and changed jobs. He used to be a musician and worked in a restaurant. Now he went to the construction site. He stopped eating meat, chants the mantra and regularly attends the Hare Krishna temple in Brooklyn on Sundays. "Well done," I told him. - Keep it up!"

And one more case. Another young man's name was also Igor. He was already familiar with Hare Krishna and lived in the temple for some time. The story of how he became a drug addict is not known. But then it happened that he wound up in prison. After serving a couple of years, he returned and again took up the old habits. For several years he smoked some kind of rubbish and was completely crazy, began to talk nonsense. Where this would have led and how it could have ended is unknown. But a radical change took place when he got initiation from me. Before that, he constantly attended my programs, chanted the Hare Krishna mantra and actively participated in all preaching activities. He donated money to me and arranged public appearances for me several times, negotiating the premises. He regularly read Bhagavad-gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, and

now, thanks to the mercy of his guru and devotees, his previous karma was cleared and he was cured from drug addiction, a deadly disease that kills 70,000 young people every day in Russia.

HOW DOES THE SOUL COME INTO THIS WORLD?

An eternal, conscious and blissful soul, a partial manifestation of the *svarupa-shakti*, the internal spiritual energy of the Lord. It is transcendental to all the names and designations of this world.

QUESTION: How did a naturally perfect soul come to this world of deception and illusion?

ANSWER: Like a drug addict - out of curiosity. It came from the position of *tatastha-shakti*, marginal energy, attracted by the glitter and tinsel of the material world. A person can do without drugs, because there is no need for them. But, once, having tried, he became addicted and under their control.

Similarly, the soul can do without material pleasures, but after trying them, due to the influence of material energy, which acts on the soul like a drug, it became addicted, became conditioned. Until one attains true knowledge of the all-blissful nature of the soul through communication with the transcendental, until then materialistic hysteria will continue. All the divine qualities of the soul are manifested in the one who, in contact with the Greatest, attained Krishna consciousness - this is the path that many transcendentalists have followed in the past. This is not something new, invented by the human mind. Krishna consciousness is the eternal activity of the soul. It is different from religion, which is more or less materialistic. Just as opium can act as a medicine to relieve suffering, but the same opium is a potent drug, so too is religion. When used to develop love of God, it is a medicine for a tormented soul. Otherwise, if it pursues selfish goals, it becomes a drug. The expression "OPIUM FOR THE PEOPLE" very clearly shows this. It can be interpreted both as a remedy against suffering and as a drug. In Kali-yuga, people use religion for material purposes, so in the Bhagavad-gita Krishna says unequivocally: "*sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja ... Give up all religions and surrender to Me!*"

Part Two

Is the sea only knee-deep to a drunk?

It is impossible to prove that alcohol is needed for a healthy lifestyle, peace of mind and happiness. Similarly, it is impossible to prove that the sea is only knee-deep to a drunk. When people are losing their minds from suffering and pain, they might use intoxication to "forget everything." But there is no salvation in illusion. Only by "boarding the ship of transcendental knowledge" can one cross the ocean of disasters.

Alcoholism is the worst enemy of health!

The first major, truly scientific, work on the dangers of alcohol in tsarist Russia, which was published in 1860, was IM Sechenov's doctoral dissertation "Materials for the future physiology of alcoholic intoxication." Carrying out experiments on animals, humans and himself, he proved the detrimental effect of ethyl alcohol on blood circulation, muscle, nervous activity and its effect on the respiratory functions of the blood. Sechenov was the first scientist who openly entered the battle with the "green serpent". Like Saint George the Victorious, he aimed his spear at the very heart of the tempter of the human race. It is difficult to imagine the destructive power of alcoholism on the mental, moral, ethical and spiritual state of health of human society. This destruction cannot be expressed in numbers of statistical data, or in summaries of criminal chronicles.

Many scientists opposed the domination of alcoholism on Russian soil. The next outstanding champion of sobriety was V.M.Bekhterev, who in May 1912, at the opening of the Experimental Clinical Institute for the

Study of Alcoholism, delivered his truly historic speech. In it, he resolutely rejected the established formula of the fatality of the alcohol factor for the Russian people. Empirically, he also refuted the prevailing concept of the nutritional, more precisely, the energetic quality of alcohol. In his article "Alcohol Policy and Alcohol Recovery" (1912), Bekhterev wrote: "The development of preventive measures to combat alcoholism should go forward under the pressure of an adamant logic that does not allow reconciliation so that the state's budgetary well-being is at the expense of the health of the people." This his thesis could become fundamental for many other forms that justify the spread of intoxication, prostitution and drug trafficking - everything that contributes to degradation, corruption and corruption of the masses in a civilized society. Indeed, no government would ever dream of generating income from the potassium cyanide trade for food purposes, but alcohol is the best deal. Starting from the time of Catherine II, who in 1795 introduced a ransom for the sale of alcohol, bringing in 24 million rubles, which at that time amounted to 1/3 of the annual income, and then at the end of the 19th century Count Witte's monopolization of the alcohol trade, vodka in Russia was the main a means of enriching the state treasury. At the beginning of the First World War, the Ministry of Finance earned more than 500 million rubles from the sale of spirits. Only in 1914, as a last resort, the government introduced a dry law. How is our time different from the one that was under the "king of the peas"? In the article "Alcoholism and Epilepsy" written by V.M. Bekhterev together with Dr. V. Ya. Anfimov, provides a deep analysis of the relationship between epilepsy and alcoholism. There is no doubt that alcohol, even in small doses, is a potent poison on the central nervous system. The same can be found in the final work, Alcoholism and the Struggle with It, written in 1927. It can be equally useful to doctors, sociologists, and the common reader. In it, Bekhterev gives practical recommendations for dealing with an entrenched ailment.

About the effects of alcohol

Another active figure in the Society for the Protection of Public Health, a convinced and staunch opponent of the drug mafia was N.Ye. Vvedensky. He was a biologist, and it seemed that he had no direct relation to medicine, but his contribution to the improvement of the physical and mental society can hardly be overestimated. He was the founder of the physiological school and the author of many works on lability (functional immobility) and parabiosis in the nervous system. He wrote about the effect of alcohol on a person:

- 1) The effect of alcohol (in all drinks containing it: vodka, liqueurs, wine, beer, etc.) on the body, in general, is similar to the effect of drugs and typical poisons, such as chloroform, ether, opium, etc. ...
- 2) Like these latter, alcohol in weak doses at first acts as if in an exciting way, but later, in stronger doses, it paralyzes, both on individual living cells and on the whole body.
- 3) It is absolutely impossible to indicate the amount of alcohol at which it could act only in the first sense, since its effect varies greatly from one person to another, and even on the same person, alcohol acts under different conditions far from the same.
- 4) It should be strictly distinguished according to the effect on the body: rare, accidental use of alcohol vs regular, everyday use.

Accidental or infrequent intoxication

- 5) Being absorbed quickly from the digestive tract and entering the bloodstream, alcohol causes a number of self-deceptions of well-being.
- 6) First of all, it paralyzes the nerve center responsible for self-control and a strict critical attitude towards the environment ("inhibitory centers"). While the consciousness and will of a person are not yet paralyzed, he can

mainly control his actions. But, having lost his highest mental regulator, developed under the influence of life experience, he ceases to evaluate them normally. Having lost the usual restraint and accuracy, his fantasy takes on a large scale and influence over the mind. This is expressed in the fact that tipsy people have a carefree, high spirits. Their tongues are untied, and flat puns are considered witty by them; there is a tendency to outpouring feelings, and stingy people begin to throw money, and modest people become cocky and arrogant. "A drunk mind speaks a sober heart". A higher degree of intoxication makes the "sea only knee-deep to a drunk". In science, the entire process of influence of alcohol on a person is accurately described; alcohol influence gradually leads to violation of mental coordination.

7) Eventually drinking might lead to a disorder of physiological coordination. A drunken person's tongue begins to twist, and his gait becomes unstable. He starts to sway from side to side. At this time, a person is unable to control either his speech or his movements, his working capacity is greatly reduced and fatigue appears.

8) There is a characteristic feature, self-deception, to feel the body temperature correctly. The skin vessels are paralyzed. Thanks to the flow of blood, it seems to a person that he is completely warmed up. At the same time, his body temperature did not rise at all. The body loses its normal sensitivity to cold. Therefore, tipsy people have an increased sensitivity to colds.

9) Under the influence of alcohol, the body's regulator to the perception of hunger changes. An increased sense of appetite appears. But an increased dose of alcohol also dulls appetite, and a person loses taste and feels aversion to food. This is another perversion in the normal functioning of the body.

10) At large doses, consciousness is completely paralyzed. And then the nerve centers of involuntary activity, namely the medulla oblongata. A person, like an animal, begins to respond reflexively to all kinds of external factors of irritation.

11) Alcohol is a poison for all kinds of living cells. This is absolutely firmly and definitely established by science. Even for a microscopic fungus that produces alcohol during the fermentation of sugar, death occurs, having reached a certain percentage of the fermenting liquid. Since a person is a more complex biological being, then in him all these processes are neutralized as a result of the work of the immune system. However, mental breakdowns and nervous disorders also arise from a single intake of alcohol.

12) During the conception, even if one of the parents is drunk, this adversely affects their offspring.

Habitual, long-term consumption of alcohol

14) It is not possible to establish a standard for the harmless consumption of alcohol. Like the habitual opium user, a temporary "mood uplift" is followed by depression. The outcome of this is a new intake of an ever-increasing dose.

15) So habitual alcohol consumers become irretrievably victims of alcoholism. This applies not only to poorly educated, but also to the same doctors who have developed such an addiction.

16) Drinking alcohol affects the central nervous system, as well as the digestive organs, liver, heart, circulatory system. There is a change in the composition of the blood, followed by a change in the tissues of the respiratory organs, gonads and the skeletal system.

17) Mental instability gradually leads a person to a violation of generally accepted norms of behavior and to crimes. Many of them end their lives in insane asylums or commit suicide. In general, this becomes a heavy burden for the entire society.

18) For those who have reached such a degree, death is, in their opinion, salvation from indescribable torment. However, with the death of the gross physical body, life continues in different conditions, but with the same consequences, gradually leading a living being to complete degradation and hellish existence.

19) Each living being reaps the consequences of his own karma. Therefore, there is no point in looking for those responsible. *You reap what you sow.*

20) The opinion that alcohol can be, to a certain extent, a food substance is false and vicious, in fact. Just as a meat-eater or sex addict will always justify killing animals and his attachment to sex, although this is an obvious evil, so an alcoholic, even if he is educated and writes scientific works on a healthy lifestyle, will always justify his vicious attachment to a bottle of vodka.

21) It should be noted that alcohol is especially harmful for children and women, especially during their pregnancy.

22) The justification that alcohol is widely used in medicine for the preparation of drugs is not proof of its harmlessness to a living organism. Like morphine, arsenic, strychnine, etc., alcohol is a potent poison. Decreasing its percentage in drinks only increases an unhealthy attachment to them. Its use in the preparation of medicines is a necessary measure. And now it's not a secret that the same drugs, that are known to have a healing effect, simultaneously have many contraindications and side effects.

The next most prominent authority in the fight against alcoholism was the neuropathologist A.Ya. Kozhevnikov and his student S.S. Korsakov, who defended his doctoral dissertation on a well-known topic ("On alcohol paralysis"). Their names and other famous scientists, such as Academician I.P. Pavlov, L.O. Dashkevich and hygienist F.F. Erisman, were included in the book "Classics of Russian medicine on the effects of alcohol and alcoholism", which was published in 1988 by the publishing house "Medicine". This book is of particular interest to narcologists, neuropathologists and physiologists. It presents a number of aspects: first, the effect of alcohol, falsely stimulating metabolic processes, "spurring on" and changing life cycles at the molecular, cellular level. Secondly, the violation of the psychological mechanisms of time control, i.e. selective influence of alcohol on short-term memory: "Korsakov's psychosis" and, as a consequence of acute poisoning, retrograde amnesia. Killing time, erasing memory is the unconscious goal of an alcoholic and domestic drunkenness. Third, the latent degradation of the population, for the most part abusing alcohol. Like a "time bomb", alcoholism is the cause of defective offspring, injury, death, encephalopathy and psychosis. The decline of spirituality, the stereotype of banal thinking, idle talk, resonance, and so on - this is some list of the consequences of alcoholism. According to V.M. Bekhtereva: "Alcoholization not only destroys the strength of the current population, but also puts its entire burden on future generations."

DO NOT LET THE DEVIL IN

*The effect of alcohol on a person in the form of wine has been known since ancient times, since the time of the biblical Ham, who observed his father's intoxication. Since then, rudeness and drunkenness have gone hand in hand, followed by godlessness and atheism. **Drunkenness is one of the deadly sins!** By defeating it, we will conquer death.*

Once upon a time there was a monk, he was a righteous man and was celibate. He never ate animal-derived food (meat, fish and eggs). He prayed fervently to the Lord and led the life of a recluse. He was far from

temptation, but then, one day, the devil approached him and began to tempt him. "If you let me into the cell," said the devil, "then you will have to fulfill any of my wishes. One who leads a pure lifestyle is under the protection of the spiritual energy of the Lord and therefore is fearless and never afraid of anything. The monk was righteous and strong in his faith in the Lord. "Okay!" - he agreed. The devil's challenge was accepted, and the bet was made.

And so, one day, when a monk was praying in his monastic cell, there was a knock on the door. Stopping for a moment, he opened the door. On the threshold, outside the door, he saw a crow. Its wing was injured. The bird groaned piteously. Being a compassionate person, the monk let it into his cell. Imagine the monk's surprise when it was discovered that it was the incarnate devil, who took the form of a raven.

When the devil entered the cell, then by agreement he offered the monk a choice to commit one of the deadly sins: 1) commit adultery, 2) eat meat, 3) get drunk with vodka, 4) or kill a person. Those to whom God has given intelligence - always have a choice. Of the four evils, the monk chose the least and decided to get drunk. "If I get drunk, I will not harm anyone, only myself," he thought. Reasoning in this way, he went to the village, to the tavern and got drunk there. So, he kept his word to the devil.

Of course, a true devotee of God never makes a bet with the devil ... How can one give one's word to him? This is what the proud do, out of a desire to be considered honest. There are a few exceptions in the Vedas that even brahmanas who never break promises and are distinguished by their honesty, even they can cheat if they are dealing with a swindler, a woman and an enemy who threatens with deadly weapons. A brahmana may resort to cunningness in order to bring a deceitful wife back to her senses, to cheat a fool who desires something that might harm his spiritual life.

But our monk was too simple. After getting drunk, he lost control of his senses and mind, He ate meat, and when a passionate desire arose (intoxication, like meat-eating, increases the mode of passion and ignorance), he went to his parishioner and had sex with her. Her husband found them when they were having sex. Trying to protect himself and the woman, the monk killed her husband. So, unwittingly, he became involved in all mortal sins, including adultery, drunkenness and murder.

In summary, we must admit the fact that drunkenness is the cause of much suffering and misery. It leads the conditioned soul to sinful life and opens wide the gates of hell. Anger, greed, and lust automatically manifest in someone who is intoxicated, who uses alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee and/or narcotics.

Alcohol and alcoholics

The discovery of alcohol in wine dates back to the 12th century. It was discovered by Albukazis. Of course, people have been drinking wine since time immemorial. Historically, the discovery of alcohol in wine is the first step towards its scientific research. The first experiment was carried out in 1664 by I.D. Mayer. He injected a dose of alcohol into the dog's vein, and it became drunk, but recovered after a while.

In 1912, at the opening ceremony of an experimental clinic for the study of alcoholism and the fight against it at the Psycho-Neurological Institute, VM Bekhterev in his historic speech said: "Alcoholics, as patients, should be subject to individual treatment by all recognized modern medical institutions, resorting to hypnosis, physiotherapy and pharmaceuticals, on an outpatient basis and in a hospital." Alcohol is a narcotic substance, and this is what led to its distribution. In persons who regularly consume alcoholic beverages, the lack of alcohol itself causes a poor physical, mental and emotional state. It can only be eliminated with a new intake of alcohol. Like any anesthesia, it critically depresses, paralyzes the nervous system, bringing apparent calming,

but then leads to aggravating consequences, similar to food poisoning. Its symptoms are depression, melancholy and mental anguish.

Rehabilitation (real life episode)

After another preaching tour, as soon as I returned and crossed the threshold of my apartment, the phone rang. I picked up the phone. A woman's voice called for help: "My husband is binge drinking, please pray for him!" I knew her husband and decided to take some part in his fate. On the same day I came to their house. Yes, my "patient" was difficult to recognize. With a swollen face, wandering eyes, shaking hands, unstable, rushing from one thing to another, slow and at the same time expansive, Pavel did not look like himself.

Without further ado, I took the *karatalas* and started chanting the **Hare Krishna** mantra. Transcendental sound entered his ear. Rehabilitation started. Something trembled in his heart, the living being fluttered like a captured bird. After that Pavel got up and went out. Ignoring this, I continued singing non-stop. I sang for an hour. During the kirtan, he would jump up, run out, and then come back again. When, having calmed down a bit, he sat down on the sofa, I took Srimad Bhagavatam and began to read page by page. I was not expecting a cheap effect by exploiting Sri Krishna. I am his eternal servant. But to everyone's surprise, at the end Paul came to his senses. For a while we talked about what we read in the Bhagwatam. He asked, I answered his questions.

Finally, his heart softened, he remembered our good relationship and went to accompany me home. The devotees of Krsna are very compassionate and merciful. Therefore, they are very dear to Krsna. Everyone who communicates with them gains true spiritual benefit. This is the spiritual solution to all material problems!

A week has passed since then, another one. The phone rang again, and the same voice, choking with tears, said: "Pavel was taken to the hospital! They found pathological changes in his brain, the necrosis of some part of it. Do something, I am begging you!"

-All right, come to us, we have Deities, you will receive Lord's darshan, and ask for your husband. The Lord is merciful, - I said.

At the program we chanted Hare Krishna and then we took prasadam. "Try to chant the Hare Krishna mantra yourself and give up meat," I advised the wife of the unfortunate man. As the people say, "husband and wife are one and the same." If they serve Krsna, their married life will help them return home to Krsna. But if they come together for sense gratification, then both of them will go to hell. Someone might argue: oh, fairy tales. There is no hell. ... But isn't the life of a drug addict, alcoholic and his loved ones a living hell?

After that, some time passed, and Pavel was again in the hospital. And the phone call again.

- Why doesn't Krishna help? He's back in the hospital.

- What are you expecting? By the mercy of Krishna and His devotees, your husband was admitted to the hospital ... Let's hope that this time he will be cured.

After some time, I called Paul myself and found out that he stopped drinking and went to college to study the language and get a profession. Krishna changed his destiny. Through the prayers of the devotees and the good deeds that this person had performed earlier, Krishna changed the fate of this person. The Lord shows His mercy even to the most fallen beings when they meet devotees of Krishna on their life path. Their glance alone is enough to change the fate of the unrestrained drunk. This is the blessing of the Lord.

Krsna helps the one who helps himself! What does it mean? This means one should take shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Krsna. In the Bhagavad-gita, Krishna says, "All of them—as they surrender unto Me—I reward accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects." (Bh.g., 4.11).

But here's the problem: "How can a modern atheist surrender if he denies the existence of God itself?" The atheist doesn't have to surrender. God gave him that right. But let him try to understand that God is the cause of all causes. He is the cause of our illness and the cause of our healing. Let him, guided by common sense, avoid wishing others what he would not wish for himself. Let him not cause other people's suffering. Let him give up meat-eating, which is associated with the killing of animals, Let him give up any intoxication that harms his own health and leads to anxiety of people close to him. What objections can there be? Let him repeat the maha-mantra for his own sake: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare! – this is our caring instruction.

"The sea is knee-deep" = reckless

When we talk about intoxication, we mean the ingestion of drugs in the form of tea, coffee, drugs, cigarettes, tobacco and alcohol that have a narcotic effect. All these substances are so-called "stimulants" that have a certain physical and mental effect on the body and mind and are not vital for our body. They, in fact, are poisons that have an extremely unfavorable, destructive effect on human health. Naturally, when a person experiences suffering and pain, he wants the pain to stop, so he takes medicine. But before you take anything in, you need to get a diagnosis. What is the diagnosis? The nature of any disease is a person's sinful activities, his past karma. According to it, the Lord gives us a material body that is like a temple of illnesses.

Question: How does it function?

Answer: The material body consists of the modes of material nature, which manifest themselves in what we eat, what activities we are predisposed to, what level of knowledge we seek, what happiness we seek, etc. All this is determined by the influence of the combination of the modes of passion, goodness and ignorance. These *gunas* determine our physical and mental state. Thus, for example, the *raja-guna* (mode of passion) promises some sense gratification, but what is taken as nectar in the beginning becomes poison in the end. *Tama-guna* (mode of ignorance) puts one into hibernation. As under anesthesia, a person may not feel pain for a while, because he becomes dull, like an animal. In the *sattva-guna* (mode of goodness), one can experience happiness, because this *guna* purifies human existence. Under the influence of the mode of *goodness*, a person does not commit sinful activities, therefore he does not experience suffering. In this state, he can realize his spiritual nature and thus free himself from the **cycle** of birth and death. **Suffering is a sign of ignorance.** Out of ignorance, a person leads a sinful life, and as a result, he commits wrong actions, for which one has to pay. Thus, more or less optimal existence in the material world is existence in the mode of *goodness*. *Raja-guna* is the most painful because it attaches to sense gratification, for which one pays. Suffering can be eliminated in several ways: by developing the mode of goodness and realizing one's spiritual nature, or by immersion in even greater ignorance, like an animal, not realizing its state at all. Most of those who are intoxicated are victims of this *guna*. **The use of intoxication plunges a person into ignorance and entangles him in the net of his own karma. This is the path leading to degradation, to hellish living conditions.** Those who give up the body in the mode of goodness are born on the planets of the demigods, those who are in the mode of passion - in human society, and those who are in the mode of darkness and ignorance - receive animal bodies. Due to their undeveloped consciousness, animals are not aware of their torment as keenly as human beings. Knowing all these details, a person should develop the mode of goodness, following the regulative principles (refusal from meat-eating, intoxication and illegal sex).

Remedy for binge drinking

I remember the story of the Russian classic "The remedy for binge drinking." His hero was one artist, an old drunkard. He was always late for rehearsals and often did not come to the performance at all. No matter how much he was reprimanded, there was no use. And then one day, the entrepreneur decided to do something about it. When this rascal got drunk again, they, together with the theater director, beat him half to death. And what was the effect? Oddly enough, it helped. This would-be artist stopped drinking and was never late again. From my father, who had worked at a defense enterprise all his life, I heard that during the war years, a person who was late for work was put on trial. Of course, this was an extreme measure dictated by the time, however, if necessary, this measure of punishment can be applied for drug addicts and drunkards, provided that the government itself does not condone and does not encourage the drug business as a means of enrichment. Academician V.T. Lisovsky in his book offers several methods of combating drug addiction and alcoholism, one of which, like this one, is compulsory. Of course, alcoholism is a disease, like drug addiction. But encouraging the sale and distribution of alcohol, tobacco and drugs cannot be an indulgence and justification for crimes. When the soul receives a human body, this form of life involves *austerity* and *tapasya*. This is *the path to true liberation from suffering*. Human life is meant to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death through devotional loving service to Krsna. Violation of the laws of nature is severely punished by nature itself, by the demigods, responsible representatives of God. Is this not the manifestation of the Lord's mercy, which is the ultimate benefit of the conditioned soul? A person should be respectful of the **rare gift of human life**, having a **responsibility before the Lord for its correct use**.

Our common enemy

The problem is obvious. And if someone comforts himself with the fact that Russia is far from being the first country in the world in terms of the amount of vodka and other alcoholic drinks consumed, then he is making a serious mistake. He forgets and loses sight of the fact that Western neighbors drink weaker alcoholic beverages, beer and grape wine, to a greater extent imitating the presence of narcotic substances: *caffeine*, *tonin* or *ethyl alcohol* in drinks, replacing them with tonic substances that do not pose any harm to health.

There are other problems, of course. For example, in America, there are 10 million drunks. Dr. Andre Ivy, who headed the University of Illinois Science Department Clinic, wrote in his report that the number is growing steadily, increasing the army of alcoholics by at least 450,000 every year. Alcohol is a poison for the nervous system. And a source of suffering for others. Alcoholism is the cause of impotence and many types of cancer, schizophrenia, car accidents, conflict in society, at home and in the family. But this is nothing compared to the ever-increasing drug addiction.

How does intoxication affect the body?

Everyone knows that a person's mood, his thinking, perception of the world around him and the processes occurring in it, completely depends on the work of the brain and central nervous system. In turn, the brain and its nervous system are in direct connection with the biochemical processes in the body. Millions and millions of brain cells interacting with each other make up a whole system, a network of nerve endings that are distributed throughout the body. They maintain and establish connections between our material body and the outside world. An invisible network of communication organizes the activities of the whole body, senses and mind. Therefore, it is natural that a violation of the brain and the functions of the central nervous system automatically affects the activity of the whole body, its well-being and perception. Psychedelic drugs (including alcohol) that people use to artificially induce this or that condition, affect the nervous system, making a person vulnerable and unprotected from the influence of the external environment. They destroy the protective

functions of the body, undermine its immunity. Imbalance of the immune system makes a person vulnerable and dependent on unnatural conditions of existence. A person loses memory, becomes nervous, weak-willed, experiencing deep depression. These types of changes cannot be eliminated by good wishes alone: compulsory treatment is required, which itself has many negative aspects. The argument that alcohol, for example, increases the feeling of warmth and increases the calories and nutritional value of a product is another misconception. An illusion like the one that sea is knee-deep for a drunkard.

Ananda against pharmacogenic* orgasm

(*pharmacogenum; from *greek* pharmakon "medicine/drugs" + -genes *greek* "caused by")

Z. Freud viewed alcoholism and drug addiction as a substitute for sexual impulses and a kind of masturbation, and Freud's follower S. Rado equated pleasure from psychoactive substances with orgasm.

V. Lisovski in his book "Narcotism as a social problem" writes about the program of medical and spiritual rehabilitation of drug addicts, which was proposed by members of the society for Krishna consciousness. In a number of CIS cities, they have created a sort of "Clubs of anonymous drug addicts", where former drug addicts help each other to break free from drug addiction. Devotees of Krishna visit hospitals, bring food (*prasadam*), chant mantras, and many patients come literally come back to life. In combination with traditional medical methods, the experience of Hare Krishnas is recognized as very effective, because it eliminates the cause of fatal addiction - a kind of "mental discomfort". Gradually, a higher, but long-forgotten taste of spiritual communication returns to the patient. What is this communication and this taste? This is the revival of your relationship with Krsna, the cause of all causes, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. While the soul is in ignorance, i.e., in the conditioned state, under the law of material nature, it cannot be freed from its evil tendencies, but *as soon as it regains its eternal relationship with Krsna, attains its pure Krsna consciousness, it is immediately freed from any kind of intoxication.*

The soul is spiritual; thus, it needs a spiritual drug. Drunk with spiritual happiness, it gets sober from any material intoxication. What is a spiritual drug for the soul? This is the chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra, the names of the Lord, which are nondifferent from the Lord Himself. In the presence of Krsna, the soul becomes happy, forever breaking the bondage of material slavery. In conditioned life, it is kept in the darkness of ignorance of the existence of the real source of happiness, Krsna. In the material world, nobody likes to talk about God. This is because people are sinful. They deny God because of sinfulness. The awareness of his real existence instills horror in them, fear of suffering for the committed sins. But the true God is full of love for every being, taking them into the bosom of his eternal abode of Goloka Vrindavan, where every word is a song, every step is a dance. Desire trees grow there with precious stones under their roots, and thousands of goddesses of fortune, Lakshmi, serve the Lord. Krishna scrapes the cows and captivates with His beauty Cupid himself, the god of love. By playing the flute, He bewitches all beings, and especially the *gopis*, who know nothing but Krsna. After extinguishing the flame of material lust and gaining love for Krsna, a person born in His image becomes *able to see God. He plays with Him, loves Him and shares his happiness.* There is not a shadow of material suffering in that world. There is true *ananda*, bliss, eternal life and knowledge.

Big business

Each year, the US drug industry produces and illegally distributes \$ 100 billion worth of drugs. No business can compete with this. Isn't this the root cause of drug addiction and intoxication in the world? In 1998, the government allocated 16 billion dollars to fight this evil, which also directly or indirectly fall into the pocket of the drug mafia. Thus, the economy thrives on the production of drugs and on the fight against the problem.

Only drug addicts suffer. All the rest count money, transferring it from one account to another, from one pocket to another. The material world is arranged in such a way that, trying to solve one problem, we create many others. The increase in the number of drug addicts is in direct proportion to the production of drugs. They go hand in hand, and the fight against this strengthens their cooperation.

TOBACCO KILLS!

"Tobacco kills!" - this is a common expression that doctors have come up with. When, after taking a deep puff, the doctor blows a puff of smoke into his patient's face, the situation at least becomes comical, and the expression "tobacco kills" takes on a sometimes humorous and sometimes sarcastic connotation of mockery of a person's dignity. What a deceit - to talk about the dangers of smoking and the use of intoxication, at the same time, violating the principles of morality and elementary ethics. Tobacco, tea and coffee are soft drugs but they harm others. I remember that as a child in the clinic where my mother took me, I saw a poster with a picture of a dead horse on a pack of Kazbek cigarettes. The inscription on the poster read: "Five cigarettes can kill a horse!" It amazed me, I thought: "Why isn't my dad dying, who smokes not five cigarettes a day, but all five packs?" Since childhood, I have no tolerance for tobacco smoke and drunkards. I thought that when I become an adult, I will lay down my life to fight this evil, not with the drunkards and drug addicts themselves, but with drunkenness and drug addiction. When I smelled tobacco or booze, a beast woke up in me. I was ready to tear apart a man with a cigarette in his teeth. They are poisoning themselves - that is their right, but they are poisoning me too. They poison the air that everyone breathes. Isn't this violence? Make people breathe smoke. This is torture. The Nazis invented a gas chamber to kill people. But living in a house with a smoker is not a gas chamber?

MINISTRY OF HEALTH WARNING: SMOKING IS HARMFUL TO YOUR HEALTH!

If the Ministry of Health knows about the dangers of tobacco smoking and cares about people's health, then why does it not take care that tobacco production is banned at the state, government level? Are the people who produce tobacco products normal in their minds? What about those who, when opening the next pack of cigarettes, read: "THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH WARNINGS: SMOKING IS HARMFUL TO YOUR HEALTH? Are they even human? Not only do they smoke themselves, destroying their own health, but they create intolerable living conditions for those people who have to breathe their tobacco smoke and who do not smoke themselves. Isn't it time to consider tobacco smoking through the prism of the criminal code, i.e. convicting hard-core smokers for endangering others through "second-hand smoking", for harming human health, for the detrimental effects of environmental tobacco smoke and for exposing minors to the harmful health effects associated with tobacco smoking.

In America, for example, if the gas exhaust exceeds the established norm, a penalty and a fine are imposed on the driver of an unrepaid vehicle. The administrative measure as a whole, helps to combat the ever-increasing environmental problem. Isn't it time to bring hard smokers to justice? I think that if the government were pious and truly religious, it would quickly find justice for drug addicts, alcoholics, and tobacco smokers. But since they are themselves subject to all mortal sins, there is nobody to rely on. The government creates hellish living conditions for the citizens. When a worthless majority chooses a worthless leader of their own kind, even one true believer of God, who is fully conscious of Krishna, would be enough to bring the situation in the country to normal. Such devoted people should be invited to take part in government, as they are guided by their divine nature and are true devotees of God, and not criminals killing their own souls.

On the ashes ...

This material world is burning like a big fire. And we're not going to put it out. Sooner or later, it will be destroyed anyway. It is not worth spending energy on maintaining what in itself is doomed to destruction by the course of inexorable time. Krishna says: "I am time, destroyer of worlds." If Krishna wants to kill someone, no one can save him. And if Krishna wants to save someone, no one can kill him.

Therefore, the purpose of our publication is not to save this world. It is doomed to perish. It has a beginning and it'll have an end. God, He is the God of the living, not of the dead. We are preaching Krishna consciousness not to the dead men, but to those innocent souls who are burning in this flame. We are trying to get them out of the mouth of "fiery hell." Life is eternal. It has never begun and will never end.

Life – is the soul in the body. Having wound up in this temporary material world, the soul is suffering. That is why we need to save the soul. By chanting the holy name Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare, we appeal: "Wake up, sleeping souls, enough sleeping on the lap of the witch Maya (illusion). Chant the glories of Lord Krishna. In doing so, you will be doing a dear service to yourself and your family. The Lord is merciful! His merciful glance is sufficient to greatly improve our life. We live in the kingdom of God; we need to understand that. In the kingdom of God everything is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss! In order to be able to see this, we need to get rid of ignorance in ourselves, we need to wake up, and attain God's consciousness. Only a person whose eyes are smeared with the ointment of love can see the beautiful form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he always sees Krishna in his heart. The kingdom of God is in your hearts. It is spiritual. It is not an ordinary kingdom. Here Love reigns, and everyone desires it. One drop of love from the infinite ocean of His mercy is enough to flood the whole world.

In Conclusion

Class on Srimad Bhagavatam (7.7.42)

In this material world, every materialist desires to achieve happiness and diminish his distress, and therefore he acts accordingly. Actually, however, one is happy as long as one does not endeavor for happiness; as soon as one begins his activities for happiness, his conditions of distress begin.

COMMENT:

Every conditioned soul is bound by the laws of material nature, as described in Bhagavad-gita (prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ). Everyone has achieved a certain type of body given by material nature according to the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
 hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
 bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni
 yantrārūḍhāni māyayā

"The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy." (Bg. [18.61](#))

Our body is similar to an instrument by which the soul wanders around the material world in search of happiness. The soul, driven by false desires for happiness, is forced to be born again and again in different

bodies, to get sick, grow old and die. Everyone begins his activities with some plan and ambition, but actually, from the beginning of one's plan to the end, one does not derive any happiness. On the contrary, as soon as one begins acting according to his plan, his life of distress immediately begins. Therefore, there is no need to try to improve your position in the material world: we will not succeed in this anyway.

Ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate. Although one is acting according to false ambitions, he thinks he can improve his material conditions by his activities. The Vedas teach that one should not try to increase happiness or decrease distress, for this is futile. *Tasyaiva hetoh prayateta kovidah.* One should work for self-realization, not for economic development, which is impossible to improve. Without endeavor, one can get the amount of happiness and distress for which he is destined, and one cannot change this. Therefore, it is better to use one's life for advancement in the spiritual life of Krishna consciousness. One should not waste his valuable life as a human being. It is better to utilize this life for developing Krishna consciousness, without ambitions for so-called happiness.

In Srimad Bhagavatam it is clearly stated that chasing after happiness is illusory. Instead of happiness, one is creating distress for himself and increases the time he'll have to spend in this material world of illusion, where "there is no true happiness, no eternal beauty, there are only crimes, punishment, and cheap passions". Obviously, the very realization of this can bring great disappointments to the materialist. If we say that there is no happiness, then everything that he does is useless. Depression happens when there is no alternative. The realization that everything ceases with the death of a material body baffles the materialist. But for a person who recognizes himself as an eternal soul, this is a completely different matter. There is no place for depression and stress. Krsna consciousness itself is the alternative to material existence. This is its value.

Krishna consciousness does not need props. But there can be obstacles on the way to attaining it that confuse neophytes. Therefore, initially a person must have faith. For beginners, bhakti is based on their faith, and for advanced devotees it is based on their love for Krishna. Love is the ultimate goal of bhakti yoga practice. This is the true medicine for the suffering soul. But love for Krsna is spiritual, so it should not be confused with lust and worldly attachment to relatives, friends, husbands, wives or children of the material world.

Love for Krishna exists initially. It is in the very nature of the soul. But when the soul comes in contact with the material nature and interacts with the gunas of passion and ignorance, this love transforms into lust, which is the worst enemy of the conditioned soul. And Krishna Consciousness – is the method for transformation of material lust into love.

That's why we say that love for Krsna - is the only remedy for materialistic disease. A materialist is like a drug addict, and sensual pleasures are like drugs. If the materialist cannot satisfy his senses, he won't survive abstinence syndrome and can hang himself. Therefore, it is recommended for him to engage his senses in devotional service to Krishna. It means hearing about Krishna, chanting His holy names, meditating on Krishna, on His name, form, His pastimes, and His qualities, taking prasadam, serving Krishna utilizing one's body, mind and speech. All these activities will allow for clearing one's senses and elevating us to Krishna consciousness level. It is called bhakti-yoga, yoga of love and devotion to the Lord.

In fact, pure devotional service – is the only method for the materialists, as well as drug addicts. Guru, a bona fide *Vaisnava*, is like a doctor, and chanting Krishna's name together, sankirtana, is the medicine.

It is a panacea for all materialistic diseases, rooted in concept: "I am the material body and everything related to it – belongs to me." Liberation from a false ego - is the way to solve all social, political and psychological ailments of humanity.

The time has come!

There are 8,400,000 different types and forms of life. Of these: 900,000 fish and those who live in water; 2,000,000 - plants and trees; 1,100,000 - insects and reptiles; 1,000,000 - birds; 3,000,000 - animals; and only 400,000 are human beings. Not all of them are civilized. Civilized people are considered to be those who aspire to comprehend the Absolute Truth and achieve liberation from the circle of birth and death. In fact, every living being strives for this. Nobody wants to die, grow old or get sick. But only those great souls who have received human incarnation, only they can achieve liberation.

Evolving from lower forms of life that live in water to more advanced ones, we go through many millions of incarnations. And now, by the grace of the Lord, we were born as human beings. The Vedic scriptures remind them: *Athato brahma jijnasa* – it's time to ask, "What is the Absolute Truth? What is the Supreme Brahman? Who is God? Who is Krsna? This is what human life is meant for. We can have sense gratification - food, sex, sleep and defense - in any form of life: like animals or birds, like demigods, Gandharvas or Kinnaras. But only in human form we can get to know ourselves as eternal souls and know God. So, we see that there are many religions for different types of people, even for savages living in the jungle, and they have the goal of raising the soul to pure consciousness, God consciousness.

Human life is not meant for sense gratification. That is why, there are so many restrictions. We are limited by the laws of ethics, morality and religion. The very nature of the material body forces us to follow certain principles, limiting ourselves in food, sleep, sex ... We should only eat vegetarian food, giving up meat, fish and eggs. We must refrain from intoxication: alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee and drugs. Our body requires restrictions on sex (sex is only for the conception of offspring), and we are encouraged to refuse to participate in gambling. The physical body of a person and his psyche do not withstand much stress. Working hard for material enjoyment is nonsense. A simple living and high thinking is the ideal of a truly human life. If we do not follow any principles or restrictions established by the law of religion or society, then we will have to suffer from 1. the body and mind, 2. other living beings and 3. climatic conditions. For example, diseases, social cataclysms, or natural disasters. In the human form of life, we create karma, and in other forms we realize it. Committing pious deeds, we enjoy in paradise as demigods, and committing sinful acts, we suffer and go to hell. We can enjoy only when we are born as an animal or a demigod. That is why, it is necessary to give up the very idea of sense gratification.

Human life is sheer torment for one who leads a sinful life. It is good only for spiritual development. In one shot, it can solve all kinds of material problems if we develop Krishna consciousness, which helps us to free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. This rare gift of nature should be used for its intended purpose, in no way violating the strict laws of nature. It is said that man was created in the image and likeness of God. This means that he can restore and revive his relationship with God and get to know God. Who am I and who is God?

In the Bhagavad-gita (Bh.g. 7.7) Krishna says: " There is no Truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread." That is, everything rests on the energies of Krsna. He is the source of everything. Let's give an example. If you take the beads, then, strung on a thread, the beads do not scatter. Although we may not see the thread on which they are strung, however, it is obvious that it supports and holds the beads together. Similarly, we may not see the energies of Krishna, but thanks to them, the entire cosmic creation is incomprehensibly supported, like a pinch of dust, in the palm of Lord's Universal form. The planets move along certain trajectories, without colliding or scattering in different directions, and the living beings

inhabiting them are also in perfect order, interconnected by the law of karma. The energies of Krishna invisibly pervade the entire creation.

The material cosmic manifestation is the manifestation of the external energy of Krsna, and the spiritual world is the manifestation of His internal energy. Krishna says, "All created beings have their origin in these two natures. Know with all certainty that I am the beginning and end of everything that is material, and everything that is spiritual in this world" (Bh.g., 7.6). The living entity himself, the soul, is also the energy of Krsna. "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise, who perfectly know this, surrender themselves to devotional service to Me and worship Me with all their hearts" (Bh.g. 10.8).

To know Krishna, the Vedic scriptures recommend engaging in pure devotional service to Krishna, *bhakti yoga*, which begins with hearing about Krishna (Srimad Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita), chanting His holy name and thinking, or meditating on His pastimes, form, name, qualities and His abode Goloka Vrndavana, the supreme spiritual planet, where Krishna enjoys loving relationships with His devotees. He can be loved as a friend, as a son and as a lover.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the most merciful incarnation of Krsna, recommends that we chant the holy name together.

DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE!

Having received such a rare gift from nature, a human body, we are equipped with enough intelligence to surrender to Krishna. In Kali Yuga, the age of enmity and hypocrisy, people will worship the Lord, who has assumed a golden complexion (*gaura*), by congregational chanting of His holy name: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. This is called SANKIRTANA!

Don't miss your chance. Chant the holy name and be happy!

The art of meditation – a class on "Bhagavad-gita"

"As a lamp in a windless place does not waver, so the transcendentalist, whose mind is controlled, remains always steady in his meditation on the transcendent Self." (Bh.g., 6.19)

The word "meditation" usually means concentration of the mind on the Supreme. But what is SUPREME? Vedic literature designates the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, as the Supreme Meditation Object. Meditation is focusing the mind on Krishna.

Several million years ago, during the Satya Yuga period, the average human life span on planet Earth was 100,000 years. People were much more intelligent than they are now and, in order to achieve final liberation from the circle of birth and death, they practiced meditation. Yoga practice and meditation were common for everyone.

In the state of meditation, the mind of a person becomes clear, like the mirror surface of a lake in calm weather. When mental activity is completely stopped, and the waves of material energy and feelings do not excite the mind, a person is able to contemplate the nature of the Absolute. In his heart he sees himself, the soul, and Krishna, the Supersoul. As two friendly birds, they sit in this body as on the branches of one tree. Restoring their connection is called yoga, and the method by which it can be restored is meditation.

In the modern age of struggle and hypocrisy (Kali-yuga), such a method is available to only a few.

In Kali Yuga people's lives are short; and conditioned souls are too absorbed in the struggle for survival. For most people, spiritual life, not to mention meditation, has become a mythology. People lost their minds and completely forgot about the purpose and designation of human life. The only thing they do is satisfy their animal needs for food, sleep, sex and self-preservation.

Of course, a select few, secluded in a holy place in the Himalayas or in the jungle on the banks of the sacred rivers Ganges, Yamuna or Saraswati, are still meditating, but everyone else, especially the people of the West, living in the urban atmosphere of such monstrous cities as New York, London or Paris cannot do this. If the perfect yogi, concentrating the life air between his eyebrows and the gaze at the tip of his nose, sees Krsna as Paramatma in his heart with his inner eye and enjoys unlimited transcendental happiness, the miserable imitator sees only his own nose, putting on a show to make money. That's why, for a serious person who is searching for truth, the Vedic scriptures strongly recommend a different method - *mantra meditation* or *sankirtana yoga*, congregational chanting of the holy names of Lord Krishna. This is what will be discussed further.

There are many mantras in the Vedic literature. The most important among them is the Hare Krishna mahamantra. The Sanskrit word mantra in translation means: "man" - mind, "tara" - purification. "Maha" means great.

The "Kali-santarana Upanishad" says that the 16 words of *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare* are specifically designed to achieve liberation.

The mind of a person is the center of all senses. Depending on where it is directed, it can be both a friend and an enemy of the conditioned soul. If the mind is focused on material objects, it is the worst enemy. If the mind is fixed on Krsna, it is the best friend.

Thus, in the Bhagavad-gita it is said: "And whoever, at the time of death, quits his body, remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt. Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail." (8. 5-6).

A person's life is meant to prepare for the next. That which we remember at the time of death is where we go. Thus, at the time of his death, Bharata Maharaja thought of a deer, therefore in his next life he received the body of a deer. The consciousness that a person forms during his life determines his next birth. If his consciousness is similar to that of an animal, then he will receive the body of an animal. If his consciousness is pure, in Krsna consciousness, he will attain Krsna. He will certainly receive a body like Krishna's, spiritual, not material - eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. The art of meditation is constantly contemplating on Krsna and attaining Krsna consciousness.

Unlike material words, the Lord's name is identical with the Lord Himself. There is no duality in the Absolute, which is inherent in material existence. For example, saying: "water, water ..." - we do not quench our thirst, because the word "water" and the substance water are two different things. But by chanting "Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna ..." we attain Krsna. The name of God and God Himself are one and the same. By His causeless mercy, Krishna assumes the form of His name in order to become perceivable to modern people. This is the inconceivable spiritual phenomenon of the holy name. Anyone who, having cast aside all prejudice, and full of fervent faith, chants the name of Krsna, goes back home to Krsna.

The individual practice of maha-mantra, which is performed on beads, is called *japa meditation*. Chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra together, accompanied by musical instruments (*mrdanga* and *karatala*) is called *sankirtana*. These methods can alternate, not excluding, but complementing each other.

Thus, having gathered together, people can perform sankirtana not only indoors, but also outdoors, in the open air, or in a park. First, one person chants the mantra, everyone listens, then everyone repeats. Since there are no strict rules, anyone, even a child, can take part in this kind of meditation. Singing and dancing in ecstasy is natural to the spirit soul. In the spiritual world, every word is a song, every step is a dance. Being gloomy is a sign of a person's sinfulness. Forgetting about God, a person immediately becomes morose, and, remembering Him, finds joy again. This can be easily verified in practice. As soon as a person starts chanting *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*, he immediately becomes cheerful, joyful and enlightened - his feet start dancing on their own.

The word "Hare" - means spiritual energy. Krishna and Rama are the names of the Lord. Krishna means all-attractive, and Rama means all-pleasing! There is not even a shadow of doubt that when we loudly chant Hare Krishna maha-mantra, Krishna and His energy dance with us on our tongues.

Practical guidance: how to make your own japa mala and how to use it.

1. Buy **109** large round wooden beads (if not available, plastic will do), 1-1.5 cm in diameter with a hole to put the thread through.
2. Take a strong nylon thread/cord, make a knot 15 cm from the beginning of the thread. Then, thread the first bead, add a knot, thread the rest of the beads adding a knot in-between.
3. Having threaded 108 beads this way, put both ends of the thread through the last 109th bead.
4. This bead – is **Krishna's** bead. It should be bigger in size than the rest. String BOTH ends of the cord through Krishna's bead. Make a knot and cut excess cord. Your mala is ready.

Start mantra-meditation, holding the first bead (next to Krishna's bead) between your thumb and the middle finger of your right hand. On each bead you should chant all the 16 words of maha-mantra, as loudly or as softly as you like, but it's important to pronounce the words clearly and loudly enough to hear yourself: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. When you have chanted maha-mantra 108 times, you have completed "one round" of chanting. Do not chant on the Krishna bead, but turn the beads around and chant on them in the opposite direction, one after another, round after round. How many rounds one should chant per day can be determined by your guru. If you don't have a guru, then determine the number of rounds that you can chant daily yourself, then increase it gradually as you go. In order to receive initiation from the guru, one should chant on mala beads (108 beads) at least 16 rounds (minimum) daily and follow four regulative principles: no meat-eating, no intoxication, no gambling and no illicit sex.

Material life is based on these four degrading activities: animal slaughter and eating of meat, taking intoxicating substances, illicit sexual pleasures, and gambling. When a person has a serious intention to progress spiritually, he naturally quits these bad habits, thus gaining eternal life, transcendental knowledge and all-increasing bliss. Material life and spiritual perfection are two opposites, they are in direct contradiction to each other, and, thus, they are mutually exclusive. A beginner might be confused which will pass quickly when he meets a pure devotee of Krishna. Such a devotee is always a strict guardian of morality, a sentinel and

most reliable keeper of Vedic wisdom and knowledge, and a spiritual teacher to everyone in need. In spiritual life there is no place for fanaticism and sentimentalism. Spiritual life is scientific. It starts with accepting a spiritual teacher. With guru's help, one learns the spiritual science, enriches his knowledge with his guru's experience and knowledge, while starting to become aware that there is NO bigger prize in life than this. Krishna consciousness is a priceless gift. In this modern world of deceit and hypocrisy there is nothing that can even come close in comparison to Krishna's conscience. That is why, one is truly lucky if he has rock-hard faith in the words of his guru (spiritual teacher), in the instructions given in Vedic literatures and sadhu (saints). With their help, one can board the ship of transcendental knowledge and safely cross the ocean of miseries. Having obtained a taste for chanting holy names of Krishna and for a real spiritual life, a person will easily leave all his material attachments behind, since they are in fact the reason for his suffering.

"In the stage of perfection called trance, or samādhi, one's mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This perfection is characterized by one's ability to see the Self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the Self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, realized through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact." (Bh.g.6-20-23)

Chant "*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*" and be happy!!!

Your well-wisher Murali Mohan Das

About the author

Murali Mohan das (Mamu Thakur das) is a legendary Russian preacher of Krishna Consciousness, one of the very few people who started the Hare Krishna movement in the former USSR. His preaching activity started in 1980. Having passed through the regular process of spiritual initiation and having received *brahmana* qualification, Murali Mohan das spent several years in the ISKCON temples in India and America. Murali Mohan das is known for numerous publications on philosophy and religion. He is the author of the following books: "Hare Krishna yesterday and today" (four editions), "The art of meditation.", "Transcendental mosaic" (five editions), "Psychoanalysis of unfathomable", "Temple in every home", "In search of happiness", "Nectar of the Sankirtana-lila", "Anatomy of Love", "A Tree Bearing No Fruit", "The Hand of the Giver Will Not Be Scanty", "Krishna's Cuisine", "The culture and religion of demons", "Hinduism and Bhagavata-dharma" and several practical guidance manuals on devotional service. He is accepting new disciples in Russia and America.