

Handling reversals in individual and institutional life

Handling reversals in individual and institutional life

18th May 2022

Iskcon Noida

It is Srimad Bhagavatam class time but it is not a Srimad Bhagavatam class today. Is English okay, yes no? I don't know how many yes's and how many no's. Today's verse or the theme is "Handling reversals in individual and institutional life." Did you hear this? So this is today's slokas. Handling reversals, setbacks in how to overcome stumbling blocks in individual and organisational life. So do you understand the topic? I am ordered to talk on this topic and I was just told this yesterday late in the evening.

So of course this is a very relevant and significant concern and so this is the topic. I think this is the reason that this topic has been picked and amongst the many other topics this is just one. You do experience this right, reversal, no? How many of you? I was expecting everyone to raise their hands but some of them are okay and they are not.. Lucky you if you are.

The day the Lord departed for His own abode, tad dina kali ayat, kali arrived. And what is the business or job description of this kali?

sarva sadhana badhaka

To create the badha in the life of sadhakas. That is what we all are we are sadhakas and this kali business is busy creating problems and stumbling blocks and reversals in our life, in the life of individual's life and the life of

organisation. I must talk about reversals in the life of organisation. While talking about organisation or organising the individual's life in the life of organisation, In the last days of Srila Prabhupada, that was in Vrndavan and Srila Prabhupada was with Giriraj Dasa brahmachari.

He was not swami or sannyasi at that time and Prabhupada asked, 'After I am gone how will this movement go on?' And Giriraj Prabhu quickly reacted, I will say reacted not responded but reacted. That meant that he did not think deeper but just said it, 'oh we will continue Hare Krishna Srila Prabhupada and we will follow the four regulative principles Srila Prabhupada.

And like that, that type of response he was giving and Prabhupada was listening. It seemed that he was not much impressed, so Prabhupada paused and he said 'organisation,' and then 'intelligence.' So this was the answer that Prabhupada was expecting and then he personally gave this answer. 'In order for this organisation to go and, this institution to go on, we have to be organised.'

And he had added this 'intelligence' which meant intelligently organised or intelligent organisation. The GBC's from time to time remember the statement of Prabhupada and then they discussed this further. During Prabhupada's centennial days, the days when you were not even born physically or spiritually, we used to have a lot of discussions on this organisation.

I was appointed as the centennial minister so we also had to come up with organisation for the ministry's work. So when we talk of organisation there are five principles or five steps to take. Or you could call them five phases of organisation. The first thing you work on is the vision for the organisation, vision or the goal. Then right after you have worked out your vision, the next thing you do is list all the

possible or potential stumbling blocks or set backs or reversals you could possibly come across.

You make a list of such items in advance so right there are the reversals or set backs, stumbling blocks. This is an important item to take note of, acknowledge it and then of course work on it. And the third thing is, first the vision, obstacles, list and then the strategy. Strategies to overcome the obstacles or strategies to just push through and spread to achieve your vision, realise the vision and achieve your goal.

You must have a strategy so thats the third thing and the fourth thing is to make a list of resources. Mainly there are two types of resources, one is a human resource and the other is the funds, Lakshmi. As they say, 'money talks then everything walks.' So money power, manpower and money power for the resources. And the fifth is a timeline, time factor.

Prabhupada said 'you better be Krishna conscious within this lifetime.' So if that is the vision, that is the goal to become Krishna conscious within this lifetime, then what is the timeline? Till you die and of course you do not know when that day will come and in this case it may be a little difficult to estimate but in general you have to have a timeline or idea.

'I want to accomplish this within such and such time period of so many years or so many months.' Okay so our focus is on the reversals, the set backs and stumbling blocks which are bound to come. They will come and the reasons why they come is the sins committed in the past and the offences being committed on a daily basis.

Then commencing our coming to Krishna consciousness, we kind of stop sinning – kind of stop sinning but then we get into this offensive mode that becomes our job. We keep committing offences and as a result in due course of time, as these

sinful or offensive activities are performed, they leave impressions upon us. They leave the seeds or behind, bija.

And in due course of time they are just sitting doing nothing, it looks like they're doing nothing and just sitting there. The seeds are just dormant or inert but they take their time and then the time comes and they pop up, they fructify. That is when we get the reaction and that's when we begin getting stumbling blocks or reversals.

So having understood that much, what we should be doing because we have committed sins and we have committed offences, so it's already too late but what we could do is prevent. Prevention is better than cure. Okay there is some disease or some outcome, some fruit, maybe a bitter fruit or sweet fruit we don't know whether it's of happiness and distress.

So if we could prevent this happening before the seed fructifies, if we could prevent from fructification then your job is done. So this is where our sadhana comes into the picture, right? This is where namasraya kori' jatane tumi,?thakaha apana kaje (Arunodaya Kirtana 6)

Translation

This temporary life is full of various miseries. Take shelter of the holy name as your only business Taking shelter of the holy names comes into the picture. This is where doing nityam bhagavata sevaya comes into the picture and in that way we are taking shelter of the lord or taking shelter of bhagavatam or taking shelter of the holy name. And what does Krishna say?

sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja?

aham tvam sarva papebhyo mokshayishyami ma shuchah (BG 18.66)

Translation

Abandon all varieties of dharmas and simply surrender unto Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sinful reactions; do not fear There are little little big and small stumbling blocks within this lifetime but there are so many more lives in which

those obstacles and stumbling blocks are awaiting us beyond this life. What are these? Birth death old age disease, birth death old age disease, birth death old age disease. Janma mṛtyu jara vyadhi and so Krishna says 'surrender unto me and if you do your part then I will take care of my job.

So what will I do? If you surrender unto me then aham tvam sarva papebhyo mokṣayishyami. Pay attention to what Krishna is saying here, each word in each letter should be heard and understood. We are not going to spend time on each letter and each word right now but that is what we should be doing so that Krishna makes us free from the reactions, awaited reactions or the potential fruit of whatever sin that we committed.

nasta prayesv abhadresu
nityam bhagavata sevaya

bhagavatya uttama sloke
bhaktir bhavati naisthiki
(SB 1.2.18)

Translation

By regular attendance in classes of the bhagavatam and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact Naisthiki, you listen to bhagavatam, you listen to bhagavatam, you study bhagavatam.

Srila Prabhupada gave us this program. To be free from or at least minimise these stumbling blocks and these setbacks and reversals, this minimisation could be achieved by our attending morning program. Temples having a strong morning program and everyone participating in a strong morning program from 4.30 to 9.30.

You'll then have a solution to the setback problem or reversal

problem and if one recites bhagavatam everyday then what is the promise? Nityam bhagavata sevaya bhagavaty uttama sloke bhaktir bhavati. You will have bhakti at the lotus feet of the lord.

And what kind of bhakti will you achieve? Bhaktir bhavati naisthiki, you will become naisthiki and brahmachari also (laughter).

Naisthiki bhakta. You will become nisthavan in other words, (faithful devotee). Srila Prabhupada translates this naisthiki or nistha which we are talking about as handling reversals. So bhagavatam says 'read me, study me, contemplate upon. sravanam kirtana? visnoh smaranam and there's also mananam.

Then no more turning back, no more U-turn and no more reverses. So just before nistha is what? How can this reversal become no more reversals and no more stoppages or stumbling blocks where there's nistha? What do you have to do to get there? Well you have to have sadhu sanga, or you may say 'okay we have to become free from anartha's. In order to become nisthavan or achieve the status of no more reversals, prior to that is becoming free from anartha's.

Okay how to become free from anartha's? Bhajana kriya. How to perform bhajan kriya or keep performing bhajana kriya? Sadhu sanga. How to achieve sadhu sanga? Adau shraddha, so like that shraddha, sadhu sanga, bhajana kriya, anartha nivrtti then nistha and no more reverses. Hari Hari. So this is principally the explanation or understanding, how one becomes free from reverses in individual life.

Then Prabhupada used to say about.. 'you are a rat so become a rat again!' Big reverse huh? A U-turn and you are back to square one, as they say. That also we have seen happening and so Prabhupada used to tell this story but we don't have time to tell you the story right now. There was a mouse and he always used to get into trouble so he

went to a sage, a yogi.'

'Yogiji, I am always in trouble because of the cat around me so could you make me a cat?' 'Okay here you go.' So he becomes a cat and now the cat is in trouble because of a dog so he goes back and says 'the dog is troubling me. Could you make me a dog?' 'Yes okay here you go.' So he becomes a dog and as he is a dog now the lion and tigers are chasing and harassing him.

So he goes back and asks 'oh, could you make me a tiger?' 'Okay you're a tiger.' And once he's a tiger oh! Then he's trying to make the sage his first prey or first target. And as the sage noticed that what did the sage say? 'Oh! Become mouse again!' So this is called droha, betrayal. He betrayed that Sage, so that could happen to us if we betray our authority that empowered us.

The vaishnava that empowered us, or the guru that empowered us. Instead of doing guru seva or becoming guru sevi, we become guru bhogi one, guru drohi two, and finally guru tyagi. Here you go. And then comes what? Again become a mouse and so you are disempowered. We know the example, we have a few notes here. There is Saubhari Muni who performed his meditation in kaliya dahan and by practicing he had almost attained perfection.

But then he committed offence at the lotus legs of Garuda, he doesn't have feet so lotus legs. And as a result what happened? He had kind of controlled or subdued his desires but everything aroused again. The whole agitation and especially the sex desire for agitation aroused and then he ended up getting married and change of ashram happened. And he did not just marry one wife but how many?

Fifty of them! So this happened to that Prabhu, that Muni because of the offences, the vaishnava apradha that he committed. As we already said, sins committed in the past and

we may still be continuing on. So if we stop this sinning and offending then it is like you turning off the switch and you are not supplying the current to the fan anymore. So it will still spin round for a minute or two and then stop. So you're winding up but if you switch on when it was about to wind up and stop and then you switch off and switch on again. Then this will go on and on and on beyond this lifetime. So this has to be stopped and tolerance is also there. 'Okay I am getting a reaction so I think I should stop at this point.' Where is the srīmad bhagavatam?

We should just make reference, I was told by the organisers IIYC to make a mention and they wanted me to do a whole presentation and for this purport I said to make a reference only.

tat te 'nukampam su samiksamano, you know that famous verse and statement of lord Brahma in the tenth canto chapter fourteen text number eight. Remember this as it is very, very useful and a very beneficial statement for the sadhaka's. I'm looking at the watch and time and tide waits for not even Lokanath Swami (laughter). I'll just read the translation, Jiveta yo mukti pade sa daya bhak.

Please listen with attention as this purport is in Hindi and so is srīmad Bhagavatam.

Jiveta yo mukti pade sa daya bhak

Translation

SB 10.14.8

My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim.

So this is the translation and I am also not going to say much now. Some adverse reaction or fruit of action has to be

tolerated and wait, just keep living and you will get your share or inheritance. You will get your share so like that keep practicing Krishna consciousness and lead a life of Krishna consciousness. Don't die like when we sleep also or when we leave the Hare Krishna movement and devotee association then we are good as dead.

So don't die like that, don't die. Keep living, keep living till the last breath and remember itna to karna swami jab pran tan se nikle govinda nama leke

Translation

Oh lord just let me remember your name when my life is leaving this body So then what happens? tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti. So no more punar janma which means that you will become free from the setbacks or reversals. No more janma and metyu and jara and vyadhi, and then what happens? 'You will come to me!'

That is your right, it's our birth right to go back to home back to godhead. So will achieve that, there's advise also

matra sparsas tu kaunteya
sitosna sukha duhkha dah
agamapayino 'nityas
tams titikshasva bharata
(Bg 2.14)

Translation

O son of Kunti, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed Just like we say that this world is a place of happiness and distress and so happiness will come and distress will come but you have to tolerate both in fact. You have to tolerate happiness and tolerate distress and then transcend the happiness and also transcend the distress. By tolerating, tam all the happiness

and distress, titiksasva, tolerate.

So try to prevent and whatever you could not prevent, when you get the reactions, tolerate them and don't give up. Become tough, when the going gets tough the tough get going as they say. I think so much more could be said, I am just touching a few drops on the surface. These are our individual meeting reversals in this life and then we have to talk about the organisation.

I have been given this homework and for us organisation is important right?

Organisational is giving us life in fact and organisation also has to be maintained and kept in a healthy state. And we have to be organised in organisation so how to avoid stumbling blocks or reversals within the organisation, the international society. The international society of Krishna consciousness. Okay so Prabhupada gave this job to the GBC, the governing body commission of this organisation and he did not appoint one successor. Or he kind of appointed this GBC body as the successor. One team was the successor and his way or belief was that, he used to say that two heads are better than one and three heads are better than two. In the same way thirty are better than twenty nine or one two three.

So he had more faith in team efforts, a body and an organised effort. So how to overcome these stumbling blocks or reversals? So the GBC is at the top level and the temple level also, the bodies are there even IIYC is an organisation and it also has a head and the legs and belly and arms. So how to avoid setbacks and reversals within IIYC, I'm not going to speak on that (laughter).

In the 80s, this is much before most of you were born or had joined Hare Krishna movement, the movement was facing a bog turbulence. Ups and downs and.. This is because of the zonal acharya business which had cropped up and was being practiced. And in that way the acarya's and guru's, the eleven gurus,

they became powerful in the Hare Krishna movement and they became the centre of powers. They together were even controlling the GBC's.

So as a result the society was about to become just a zonal society for Krishna consciousness. One zone, one acharya and one organisation like that. There is no time also to explain the whole episode and the whole thing that the movement we t through.

Then ISKCON adopted lots of resolutions so that we don't go through the same thing in the future. So then the GBC's again took charge of the movement and we were united again! Haribol!

So this zonal acharya or guru groupism, probably from time to time you hear this. This is a very dangerous cancer and it can cause or rather it had caused a big setback so be aware because and avoid this from happening again. Never again. So GBC is the ultimate authority. Now unity in diversity. So in those days there was also some misunderstanding amongst the leaders and as a result there was competition instead of co operation or complimenting each other.

The leaders were trying to compete and as a result conflicts were there so then Prabhupada did what he had to do while he was with us. He said 'every time you come to Mayapur you should discuss this one agenda,' he said. Unity and diversity where each one has his strength and that should be acknowledged and appreciated and encouraged, not that you try to discourage or create a conflict.

So unity in diversity, this is a very important principle that we should all understand because to keep the movement united, this is a very significant thing that we wish to achieve. Otherwise united we stand and divided? We fall. So we can exhibit our strength if we are united. Unity in diversity should be understood and applied so that we do not experience

setbacks for the organisation.

Boiling down the milk. Even during Prabhupada days the leaders were competing to have more quantity of number of devotees or properties and this and that. But Prabhupada also said that we have to preach to our inmates of the ashram first and make them strong and not try to reach out to more and more. As a result he said 'we will dilute the whole thing.'

He said 'milk should be concentrated by boiling down the milk, boiling down which means get rid of the water content and the what remains is the milk, the substance like rabri (sweet). Otherwise he said it will become a show bottle religion. This Hare Krishna movement will be a show bottle religion. The doctors when they sell the medicines, the bottles are kept there and sometimes they display the bottles and there are different colours also.

But they're not actually medicine they're just different colours or they are different diluted solution. And the label is there. International society for Krishna consciousness or whatever label is there. But the contents are diluted and say Srila Prabhupada said 'the Hare Krishna movement will become a show bottle religion.' Like this show bottle of the doctors where they sell their medical items, the drug stores.

I was told when they go to Tirupati and they have to shave up and surrender their hair unto Balaji. So a lot of people want to get shaved up and they're only limited barbers so what they do is shave a little bit and okay 'next one.' And then they shave him up a little bit also and then okay line him up. 'He is our customer now so he cannot go away.' Instead of shaving one up fully and properly 'next one' then 'next one.'

They just try to get the business and you could make a list of a lot of people now who are their customers. So Prabhupada said that the duty of our leaders is to preach and first preach to those who have joined, those who have moved in or

have become initiated. And of course try to simultaneously reach out more and recruit more. So this is the boiling down milk concept that Prabhupada talked about.

This was his vision for the GBC leaders and he said 'think of the world first and the zone next.' So think globally, act locally. Otherwise you will isolate yourself from the rest of the world or you will not care for the rest of the world and you may end up becoming self-centred or selfish and that could cause conflict. So Prabhupada's vision he shared with the leaders, we are sharing with you so you could also think of you, or you could think of at least zone first and temple next.

Or you could think of the temple first and your department next. This is also big thinking and this is also high thinking, this is high thinking, being broad minded. Thinking that the whole world is our family and Prabhupada built the house wherein the whole world could reside. So we should not try to create these compartments and these divisions, that's the idea.

Of course the one of the famous statement that Prabhupada made and one of the last statement that he made 'your love for me will be seen as you cooperate with each other. To keep this institution together after I am gone.' So love trust cooperation these are not just big, big words but a lot goes with it and a lot depends on these words and these concepts, thoughts.

Especially co-operation. So we want our goal for our international society for Krishna consciousness, thinking about how long this institution is lasting or how long we are expecting it to last. Ten thousand years, we were talking about that timeline earlier, so ten thousand years. And what is the vision?

prthivite ache yata nagaradi grama

sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama
(Chaitanya Charitamrita Madhya 25.264)

In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard. So in order to achieve that lofty goal, a lot of things have to be in place including or especially the spirit of cooperation. Well like that and not just work hard but smart. Don't just work hard but work smart. That is why we could make that connection because Prabhupada said organisation and what else? Intelligence, organisation and intelligence, to know how to intelligently organise.

That also meant not just work hard but work smart, work intelligently to keep This institution together after Prabhupada has, well... But he also sometimes would say that the international society for Krishna consciousness is his body, it's like a universal form of Prabhupada. So Prabhupada is here in the form of the international society for Krishna consciousness.

And he gave the instruction, 'maintain what I have created.' And he created the international society for Krishna consciousness so we have to maintain. So the maintenance job is of Vishnu and the Vaishnava's so we should remain followers of Vishnu and not become followers of Siva. His job is destruction and when we ignore things, that ignorance causes the destruction, disunity and setbacks.

Hari Hari. Gaura prem anande hari haribol. If there is time, I don't know for questions comments?

We did not read the purport of this tenth canto fourteenth chapter text number eight. If you read, Prabhupada explains These so-called reaction, setbacks reversals in the life of devotees, especially devotees like Prabhupada- they are not reactions. They are not the karma phala. Like the Pandavas, Prabhupada explains elsewhere that the kind of reversals the Pandavas met with, it's a big long list.

Is that because of the sinful sin in the past? Do you think that would commit sin? Do you think they would commit sin? Did Yudhishtir Maharaja commit sin ever in that life or a previous life? So when these difficulties come, there's a prayer of Kunti Maharani also. 'Please send, please send some reversals. Then what will happen? We will come to you!

Whenever there are difficulties, well they were difficulties for Draupadi. What did she do? Krishna! Govinda! And Krishna was there so Kunti is very smart. 'Please send us some reversals, some difficulties, stumbling blocks then we will remember you we will run to you. And the result of all this is no more birth, no more death. She's pretty smart, no? Kunti Maharani or the Pandavas.

Or when such difficulties do arise, the lord is trying to show the rest of the world 'look at the pandavas, look at Prabhupada, look at Kunti Maharani, what do they do? They do not run to or rely upon their bodily strength or their relatives or they don't run to the doctor or the lawyer. No, they run to me! They come to my shelter.' So the Lord is also trying to get that point across by using the devotees as an example. 'In difficulty see what they do so the rest of the world, look what the devotees do, so you also call out for Krishna.'

Amogha lila says because of our expirations, this causes frustration. You are making that point, I heard you say we always have these high expectations and when these expectations are not met there is frustration. So we should except what sastra is saying, The Lord is coming to us. Instead of cutting our arm only the finger is cut or instead of cutting our throat only an arm is cut.

So we should take that as the kindness of the lord, we deserve much more, I mean what we deserve is already what we had been getting. 'Hang him!' And that is what happens right? We did this sin, that sin and we were being punished and what was

that punishment? Capital punishment, 'hang him, kill him.' So how many times have we been killed and killed? I mean could there be a worst punishment than being killed?

'Kill him! I don't even want to see him existing, kill him!' That has already happened and that could again happen and that's what we deserve, to be killed. So the lord is kind and I mean the lord is really kind.

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavan jiva
guru kṛṣṇa prasāde paya bhakti lata bija
(Chaitanya Charitamrita Madhya 19.151)

Translation

According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service. This is kindness, when we don't know and that is why we say causeless mercy because maybe we did not even deserve this but put of the causeless mercy of the lord we have been picked up and brought in contact with.. 'Prabhu here is a bhagavad gita for you. Gita for you. Oh there is a Rathayatra in town today.' 'Oh where?' 'At such and such place.' So a lot of people end up meeting these Hare Krishna devotees and these Hare Krishna devotees become the vartma pradaśaka guru's. Your good fortune has descended right there and then more good things happen to you, more good things happen to you. Sikṣa gurus and dikṣa gurus and this and that, they are all like a battalion and they all surround you and it's difficult to get out and leave. So that's also a merciful arrangement where there so many of us, the more the merrier.

Especially in this kali yuga, the sankirtan movement. It's good to be part of congregation and a big number, and then we have so many other relationships also. So many spiritual fathers and spiritual uncles, spiritual god brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews and this and that. We really get bound and then it's difficult to give up this network or jala, Hare Krishna jala, entrapment.

So this is the magnanimity of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, what could we say? We deserve be killed and killed over and over again but god is mercifully glancing upon us.

Hari Hari.

Anything else?

Otherwise, huh?

Something else Devakinandan Prabhu wants to say?

Alright thank you.