

Regulation Brings Freedom

The Regulative Principles of Freedom

TRUTHFULNESS	NO GAMBLING
MERCY	NO MEAT EATING
CLEANLINESS	NO ILLICIT SEX
AUSTERITY	NO INTOXICATION

You have probably already heard that devotees of Lord Krishna follow four basic regulative principles- No gambling, no meat-eating, no illicit sex, and no intoxication. Many people say that those principles are not for them. However, these are regulative principles of freedom. To accept some regulation is the difference between animal life and human life. Without regulative principles, there is simply animal life, even if we have a human body. Then it is called *dvi-pāda-paśu*, or two-legged animal. The basis of human society, especially one centered on spiritual principles, lies in its morality. If there is no morality, there can be no discernment, either material or spiritual, what is best for oneself, one's family, and one's community. Without morality, there can be no progress. Human life is meant for spiritual progress. Following some basic moral principles frees us up to achieve spiritual happiness and success. It allows us to disconnect from the heavy anchor of material existence and move forward in spiritual victory.

Where there is illicit sex, meat eating, intoxication, and gambling, there can be no cleanliness, mercy, austerity, or truthfulness.

We are eternal spirit souls, but in the material world, we have passed through millions of lives in the plant, insect, and animal species. After much time, we get the chance to take a human body and engage in the system of yoga practice. Yoga means to unite with the Supreme. Yoga means strict regulative principles and sense control. That is the

real yoga system. Today, most people who claim that they are practicing yoga are really not because they are not practicing sense control. Humans have higher intelligence than the animals, and they must use it to learn how to control the senses. This is the special ability afforded to humans. Animals have no regulative principles, but human society must follow regulative principles, or it is no better than animal society. For a human to behave like an animal and not take advantage of the opportunity for spiritual progress is a great misfortune.

Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us in the Nectar of Instruction in his explanation to verse 3-

“... one should not be idle but should be very enthusiastic about executing the regulative principles – *tat-tat-karma-pravartana*. Neglect of the regulative principles will destroy devotional service. In this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement there are four basic regulative principles, forbidding illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling and intoxication. A devotee must be very enthusiastic about following these principles. If he becomes slack in following any of them, his progress will certainly be checked. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore recommends, *tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt*: “One must strictly follow the regulative principles of *vaidhī bhakti*.” In addition to these four prohibitions (*yama*), there are positive regulative principles (*niyama*), such as the daily chanting of sixteen rounds on *japa-mālā* beads. These regulative activities must be faithfully performed with enthusiasm. This is called *tat-tat-karma-pravartana*, or varied engagement in devotional service.”

There has to be some endeavor. Chanting the holy name is so powerful that it can immediately liberate the chanter. But because we are prone to fall down again, there are regulative principles. ... It all works hand in hand. There is a process.

In December of 1970, during a class on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrīla Prabhupāda was discussing the case of Ajāmila, who was born into a brahminical family but who fell away from the proper standard of behavior. He said, “So here also, although Ajāmila was born of a brāhmaṇa father and he was strictly following the regulative principles of a brāhmaṇa—that will be stated—but he fell. He fell in love with a prostitute, and therefore his characters were lost. Naṣṭa-sadācāraḥ. The reason is, why? Dāsyāḥ saṁsarga-dūṣitaḥ. Because he associated with a prostitute, therefore his all regulative principles became lost. And as soon as you are lost of regulative principles, then you take to all kinds of sinful activities. The regulative principles will keep you on the standard of life. If you give it up, then immediately you fall down, māyā.”

In a lecture given in 1970, Śrīla Prabhupāda was discussing the four basic regulative principles at an initiation lecture. He mentioned no illicit sex, and described the proper use of the genitals. He mentioned no meat eating, and went on to describe how nice it is to take Krishna prasadam, or foodstuffs first offered to Krishna. He discussed not taking intoxication, and then referred back to the glories of prasadam, spiritual food. And then he mentioned the regulative principle, no gambling, which also includes speculative approaches and too much involvement in mundane sports. And he said, but this Krishna Consciousness is also gambling, because you take to it, you do not know what will happen.

Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 6, “How to Discharge Devotional Service,” gives extensive further instruction on the practice and principles of executing devotional service. There are positive practices, like accepting spiritual authority and residing in a sacred place. There are also things to avoid, like the company of worldly minded people, and causing trouble to any living entity. Nectar of Devotion is just what it is called. Wonderful reading that leads to the most positive outcomes if we accept the teachings. Highly recommended. If one is sincere on the spiritual path and also

has difficulty following the regulations, one must chant the Hare Krishna mahāmantra with great sincerity and always remember Krishna. Krishna will give the strength to be able to follow the regulative principles and He will protect us on the spiritual path. He is very kind. He sees our efforts and desires and reciprocates with them. But the process of becoming Krishna Conscious, including the following of basic regulative principles, must not be neglected in order to achieve the highest success in spiritual life.

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