



*... A blazing fire is visible by its exhibition of heat and light; similarly, when the living entity within the heart becomes enlightened with full spiritual knowledge and detached from the material world, he burns up his material covering of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and sky—and becomes free from the five kinds of material attachments, namely ignorance, false egoism, attachment to the material world, envy and absorption in material consciousness....*

Material existence is something like a blazing fire in the forest, which can be extinguished by the mercy of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The spiritual master is the mercy representative of the Lord. Therefore, a person burning in the flames of material existence may receive the rains of mercy of the Lord through the transparent medium of the self-realized spiritual master. The spiritual master, by his words, can penetrate into the heart of the suffering person and inject knowledge transcendental, which alone can extinguish the fire of material existence. (SB 1.7.22, Purport)

Life in this material world is exactly like a blazing forest fire. No one goes to set fire to the forest, yet the fire takes place. Similarly, everyone wants to be happy in the material world, but the miserable conditions of material life simply increase. Sometimes a person caught in the blazing fire of material existence condemns himself, but due to his bodily conception he cannot get out of the entanglement, and thus he suffers more and more. (SB 5.14.15)

Materialistic life is therefore compared to *saṁsāra-dāvānala\**, a blazing forest fire that automatically takes place. Lord Śiva and his followers in the *paramparā* system try to save people from this dangerous condition of materialistic life. This is the duty of devotees following the principles of Lord Śiva and belonging to the Rudra-sampradāya. There are four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*, and the Rudra-sampradāya is one of them because Lord Śiva (Rudra) is the best of the Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇavānām*

*yathā sambhuḥ*). Indeed, as we shall see, Lord Śiva drank all the poison for the benefit of humanity.

Everyone has blazing fire within the heart. That is the proof of material existence. Nobody is without anxieties. That blazing fire means anxieties, always. Everyone has got anxieties. Even the small bird, he has got anxiety. You give the small bird some grains to eat, he'll eat it. But he's not very peacefully eating. He'll see this way, that way, "If somebody's coming to kill me?" Yes. This is material existence. Everyone... Even President Nixon, he's also full of anxieties, what to speak of others. Even Gandhi, in our country, he was full of anxieties. All politicians, they're full of anxiety; although they hold very exalted post, still the material disease, anxiety, is there. So if you want to be anxiety-less, without any anxiety, then you must take shelter of the guru, or the spiritual master, and the test is that by the instruction of guru, by following the instruction of guru, you will be anxiety-less. This is the test. (Lecture Stockholm, September 9, 1973)

The miserable conditions of material life have been pointed out by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa says that the problem of life is *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī* (BG 13.9), meaning that birth, death, old age and disease, these are miserable conditions. So long we are materially attached, we have to accept a type of body according to our resultant action of activities. There are 8,400,000 species of bodies. And after death, we have to accept one of these bodies. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ* (BG 2.13). We have to accept another body. We do not know what kind of body we are going to accept again.

At the present moment, there is no education of the understanding of spiritual life. Every-one is interested with this material body only. Nobody is educated, neither interested in spiritual life. But unless we take interest in spiritual life, our miserable condition of life will continue.

“Whatever his condition may be, one who is engaged fully with his body, mind and speech in the service of the Lord is liberated, even within this body.” ([SB/4/22/26](#))