

Teachings and sublime Words of Avatar Rishabhadeva

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Avatar Rishabhadeva is a partial emanation of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is fully immersed in ever-increasing spiritual bliss.

He is the Master of all Vedic knowledge, of liberation, of human beings, celestial beings, and of learned sages, and has performed many marvelous deeds without displaying his supernatural powers.

Addressing his sons, and through them to all of us, Lord Rishabhadeva imparts a teaching of great value for anyone who desires to live peacefully in this world of suffering.

He taught his sons how to follow the path of perfection by practicing austerity, which purifies our existence and leads us to eternal and ever-increasing spiritual happiness.

In reality, the teachings given by the Sovereign Lord Rishabhadeva to his own sons were not specifically intended for them, as they already possessed a good education, a great culture, and a very high level of knowledge.

His teachings were rather addressed to hermits, also called renunciates, who aspire to ascend the path of devotion. The true hermit or renunciate is one who is no longer bound by self-interested actions, who renounces sense pleasures and materialism, and who embraces the devotional service he offers to Krishna, after having triumphed over all material desires.

He benefits from the teachings of Lord Rishabhadeva, as he desires to abide by Rishabhadeva's instructions throughout his progress on this path.

The teachings of Lord Rishabhadeva are addressed to people living in the four ages: the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Copper Age, and especially the Iron Age, the present age, also called the Black Age or the Dark Age, the age of discord, hypocrisy, quarrels, indifference, decadence, and sin.

His instructions are so powerful that, even in the present age, one can attain perfection simply by following in the footsteps of the perfect spiritual masters, or by listening attentively to them. In His inexpressible mercy, Lord Rishabhadeva teaches knowledge of the true identity of being and the purpose of existence.

By his instructions and personal example, Lord Rishabhadeva enlightens the conditioned souls, which we all are, and shows them how to find satisfaction within themselves by assuming their spiritual identity. He has shown how one can engage in various demanding forms of charity, austerity and penance, for He taught by example.

The loving and devoted service we must offer to Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whom Lord Rishabhadeva teaches us to adopt, follow, and practice, is the only pure path through which all our misfortunes and suffering will disappear. But more importantly, it is only through this path that we can enter the kingdom of

Godhead, approach Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, see Him face to face, and remain with Him for eternity.

Lord Rishabhadeva tells us:

My dear children, of all beings who have assumed material bodies in this world, those bestowed with human form should not toil day and night for the sole purpose of sense pleasure, which is accessible even to dogs and pigs that feed on excrement. Rather, they should practice penance and austerity in order to attain the divine level of devotional service.

Through this practice, the heart is purified, and one then discovers an eternal and blissful existence, which transcends material happiness and lasts forever.

One can attain the path of liberation only by serving the spiritually advanced beings, whether they are impersonalists (*those who believe that God has no spiritual body and is only Pure Spiritual Energy*) or devotees (*saintly beings, faithful servants of God*). Whether one desires to merge with the Lord's existence or live in His company, one must serve great souls.

As for those for whom this path holds no interest, who seek the company of men in love with women and carnal pleasures, the path to hell is wide open to them.

Great souls, on the other hand, enjoy perfect balance and make no distinction between one living being and another. They live in the greatest serenity and immerse themselves entirely in devotional service. Anger is foreign to them, and they work for the good of all. Their conduct is in no way reprehensible. Such individuals are called great souls.

People who desire to revive their Krishna consciousness and increase their love for God dislike doing anything unrelated to Krishna. They do not seek to mingle with those who are only concerned with maintaining their bodies, eating, sleeping, sexual intercourse, and defending themselves. Although they are householders, they have no attachment to their homes. Nor do they have any attachment to their wives, children, friends, or material possessions. At the same time, they do not remain indifferent to the fulfillment of their duties, but are content to collect the money necessary for subsistence.

When a person considers sense gratification to be the goal of life, they become so involved in material life that they become insane and indulge in all kinds of sinful activities. He does not know that it is because of his past misdeeds that he has already received a material body, which, despite its transitory nature, is the cause of his suffering.

In truth, the distinct being should never have assumed this fleshly envelope, but it was bestowed upon him for the gratification of his senses. Therefore, I do not believe

it befits an intelligent man to become entangled again in material activities, which would perpetually compel him to assume bodies, life after life.

As long as a living being does not inquire into the spiritual values of existence, he must experience defeat and the evils resulting from ignorance. Whether it is due to virtue or sin, karma (*the law of self-interested action, the law of action-reaction, the law of cause and effect*) bears fruit, and if a person is involved in any form of karma, his mind is said to be “*tainted with the desire to enjoy the fruits of action.*”

As long as the mind remains impure, consciousness remains obscured, and as long as one follows the path of self-interested action, one must assume a material body.

When the influence of ignorance covers the distinct soul, it cannot know the nature of the infinitesimal being, nor that of the Supreme Being. Its mind is then preoccupied with self-interested action. Therefore, unless she develops her love for Lord Vasudeva, who is none other than myself, she is certainly not free from successive reincarnations.

However wise and learned a man may be, he will be said to be suffering from madness if he does not understand that efforts to gratify his senses are merely a waste of time. Forgetting his own interest, he seeks happiness in this world and centers all his attachments on domestic life, which is centered on sexual relations and subjects him to all kinds of material suffering. As such, he is little better than a stupid animal.

The attraction between male and female constitutes the fundamental principle of material existence.

Based on this erroneous concept that binds hearts, the being (*the incarnate spiritual being*) develops an attraction to his body, his home, his land, his children, his loved ones, and his material possessions. He thus increases his illusions, until he thinks only in terms of “*me*” and “*mine.*”

When the strong knot formed in the heart of a being chained to material existence by the consequences of his past actions is loosened, he loses his attachment to his home, his wife, and his children. He thus rejects the fundamental principle of illusion based on the concepts of “*me*” and “*mine,*” and becomes liberated. He then returns to the spiritual world.

My dear sons, you should approach a paramahansa, a being highly advanced in spirituality, and accept him as your spiritual master, thus placing your faith and love in me, the Supreme Lord.

You should hate material enjoyment and tolerate the duality of joys and sorrows, comparable to the seasonal changes between winter and summer.

Try to realize the miserable condition of living beings, who are unhappy even in the higher planetary systems.

Seek truth with a philosophical mind, then accept all kinds of austerities and penances for the sake of devotional service.

Renounce all efforts aimed at sense gratification and devote yourselves to the service of the Lord.

Listen to discussions concerning the Supreme Personality of Godhead and always live in close association with devotees.

Glorify the Supreme Lord and consider all beings as spiritually equal.

Let go of all hostilities and triumph over anger and sorrow.

Cease to identify your being with the body and the home, and make a habit of reading the holy scriptures.

Live in a secluded place and follow the path that leads to perfect mastery of the vital breath, the mind, and the senses.

Have complete faith in the revealed texts, the Vedic scriptures (*the Vedas, the original holy scriptures, also called "the true gospel"*), and always observe the vow of continence.

Discharge the duties prescribed for you and avoid all idle talk.

While constantly meditating on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, seek knowledge from a reliable source. By practicing devotional service in this way, you will be able, through patience and enthusiasm, to elevate yourself in knowledge and free yourself from the false ego (*The false ego is the force that chains the incarnate being to material existence. It is the force that pushes the incarnate being to identify with his body and to want to dominate matter*).

You, my dear sons, should act according to my advice; be very careful.

By the paths I have indicated to you, you will free yourselves from the ignorance bound up in the desire to enjoy your actions, and the knot of attachment that binds your heart will be definitively undone.

To progress even further, you should also abandon the means used, that is, you should avoid becoming attached to the process that leads to liberation.

One who seriously desires to return to God, to His original home, must consider the mercy of the Sovereign Lord as the ultimate good and the primary purpose of existence.

Whether it is a father educating his sons, a spiritual master guiding his disciples, or a king advising his subjects, each one must instruct his own as I have done with you. And even if the disciple, son, or subject sometimes proves unable to follow instructions, one must nevertheless continue to instruct them without becoming angry.

As for the ignorant, who engage in virtuous or impious acts, they must be made to participate in devotional service in one way or another. Furthermore, they must always avoid self-serving actions.

What would be gained by subjecting a disciple, son, or citizen who is deprived of spiritual vision to karmic activities?

One would be acting like someone who leads a blind man to a deep well and causes him to fall into it.

Due to ignorance, materialists know nothing of their true interest or the path to success in life. Their lustful desires chain them to material enjoyment, and all their projects are designed for this purpose. For the fleeting gratification of their senses, these individuals create a society based on envy.

This state of mind causes them to sink into an ocean of suffering, and in their foolishness, they do not even realize it.

How can a truly learned, merciful, and advanced being in spiritual knowledge encourage an ignorant person attached to the path of samsara (*the cycle of repeated reincarnations, or successive deaths and rebirths*) to self-interested action, and thus further entangle them in the traps of material existence?

If a good person sees a blind person taking a dangerous path, how can he allow them to continue on their path?

How can he encourage them in their error? No wise or benevolent person can tolerate this.

He who cannot free those who depend on him from the cycle of death and rebirth should never become a spiritual master, father, husband, mother, or celestial being.

My spiritual and absolute body (*all knowledge, bliss, and eternity*) resembles the human form in every way, but it is not a material body; it is inconceivable.

I am not compelled by nature to accept a particular type of body. I choose the form in which I appear of my own free will.

My heart is also spiritual, and I am always full of benevolence towards my devotees. Thus, the path of devotional service intended for devotees can be discovered in my heart; while I have rejected irreligion and non-devotional activities, they hold no attraction for me. Because of all these divine attributes, prayers are generally

addressed to me under the name of Rishabhadeva, the Supreme Lord, the best of all living beings.

My dear boys, you are all born from my heart, which is the seat of all spiritual qualities. So do not be like the materialistic and envious. Leave your care to your elder brother, Bharata, who is highly accomplished in devotional service. If you serve him, you will also serve me, and you will automatically rule your subjects.

Among the creations produced by the two manifested energies (spirit or soul and inert matter), those possessing vital force (*vegetables, herbs, trees, and plants in general*) dominate over inert matter, stone, earth, etc.

In turn, reptiles, worms, and snakes, which are capable of movement, surpass immobile plants, and animals with developed intelligence are superior to even reptiles.

Human beings prevail over animals, and ghosts over human beings, because they do not have physical bodies. Above the specters are the Gandharvas (*celestial singers and musicians*), and higher still, the Siddhas (*perfect beings, accomplished devotees, celestial beings*), then the Kinnaras (*superhuman beings with supernatural powers*), and finally the asuras (*evil beings, demonic unbelievers, atheist unbelievers*).

Above the asuras come the devas (*celestial beings inhabiting the heavenly, paradise-like planets that make up the upper region of the galaxy*), ruled by Indra, the king of the heavens.

The direct sons of Brahma (*the first created being, demiurge and ruler of our galaxy, placed in this position by Krishna, God, the Supreme Person*), including King Daksa, prevail over Indra, and among Brahma's sons, Siva is the greatest. Since Siva is the son of Brahma, the latter is considered superior to him, but Brahma himself is subordinate to me, the Supreme Lord.

However, since I myself am favorable to the brahmanas (*learned sages*), they are the greatest of all.

For me, O reverent Brahmanas, no one is superior or even equal to the brahmanas in this world. I find no one who can compare to them.

When, after performing sacrifices in accordance with Vedic principles, people perceive the goal I pursue, they offer me food with faith and love through the mouth of a brahmana.

When food is thus offered to me, I eat it with complete satisfaction. Truly, I derive more pleasure from this food than from that offered to me in the sacrificial fire.

The Vedas (*the original holy scriptures also called "the true gospel"*) represent the audible manifestation of my Person, hence their name sabda-brahma.

Here below, the brahmanas carefully study all the Vedas, and because they assimilate their conclusions, they are considered to represent the Vedas personified. They are established in sattva-guna, the supreme spiritual attribute. As such, they possess control over the mind and the senses, as well as truthfulness. They explain the Vedas according to their original meaning and, out of pure compassion, teach their ultimate objective to all conditioned souls. They practice austerity and tolerance, and are aware of the respective positions of the infinitesimal being (*the infinitesimal soul, what each of us really is*) and the Supreme Lord. *These are the eight qualities of the brahmanas.*

Thus, of all living beings, none is superior to the brahmanas (the learned sages).

I am infinitely great and all-powerful, superior to Brahma and Indra, the king of the heavenly planets.

I am also the bestower of the happiness enjoyed in the heavenly realm or that which liberation brings.

Yet, the brahmanas do not seek any material well-being from me. They are of great purity and desire nothing. They are content to serve me with devotion.

What need, then, would they have to ask for material blessings from anyone else?

My dear sons, you should not envy any living being, moving or immobile. Knowing that I am within each of them, you should show respect to all at all times.

In doing so, it is to me that you will be making an offering of respect.

The true activity of the sense organs, whether the mind, the eye, the tongue, or any other organ of perception or action, is to serve Me fully. Unless the senses are used in this way, the conditioned soul cannot even think of escaping the terrible spiral of material existence, which is as powerful as the rigid rope of Yamaraja (*the lord of death and judge of the guilty, appointed by Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*).

The Supreme Lord, Krishna, teaches us the science of God, or devotional science, which is nothing other than the manifestation of love for His Divine Personality.

Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, tells us: *“Only through devotional service, and thus alone, can one know Me as I am. And the being who, through such devotion, becomes fully aware of Me, can then enter My absolute kingdom.*

Only by serving Me with undivided love and devotion can one know Me as I am, standing before you, and likewise, truly see Me. Thus, and only thus, can the mystery of My Person be pierced.

When purely spiritual experience is stimulated by cognition and service [loving and devoted service to the Supreme Lord, characterized by the commitment, once the

senses have been purified, to serve the senses of God], then the supreme and unalloyed devotion, marked by love for God, is awakened toward Krishna, the beloved of all souls.

The highest devotion is gradually attained through constant striving for self-realization, with the aid of scriptural evidence, theistic conduct, and perseverance in practice.

These preliminary devotional practices lead to the realization of loving devotion. No well-being surpasses such devotion, which accompanies access to the exclusive state of supreme bliss, which leads to Me.

Abandoning all meritorious works, serve Me with faith. Realization will correspond to the nature of each one's faith. The citizens of the world are constantly working towards some ideal. By meditating on Me through one's actions, one will acquire devotion marked by love in the form of supreme service.

I am the seed, that is, the fundamental principle of this world of mobile and immobile entities. I am the substance of matter, the material cause and the efficient cause."

Devotional service offered to Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a manifestation of the love one feels for the Supreme Lord, and an expression of the feelings one feels for Him, through which we take pleasure in fully satisfying Him, hence its importance.

To learn much more about devotional service, open the book "***Chaitanya, the Golden Avatar***" and click on the chapters "***What does this service consist of and what are its manifestations?***" or on **page 12**

And "***Devotional service is the manifestation of love for God, and the expression of feelings for Krishna,***" or on **page 13**

You can also open the book "***The Pure Spiritual Science***" and click on the chapter "***Features of Pure Devotional Service,***" or on **page 69**