

# Self-denial

Extracts from letters by Svami Sadananda Dasa  
to Vamandas etc. September 16–27, 1957

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Dear Vamandas, Hella, friends,

“The young people” etc. – It appears to me that You make one mistake – to *renounce* enjoyment and the wish to enjoy is a side effect, a concomitant of the serving, cognizant love of God. This I have pointed out so many times in the Bhagavatam, especially in skandha XI. – Consequently, the young people must be given the *new*, completely new metaphysics, so that they gain an insight into the nature of the different worlds, what man consists of – mentally and physically – and what is the nature of [the atma], Brahma, Paramatma-Vishnu, i.e. Bhagavan, indirectly connected to the world, and *Bhagavan*, Who has nothing to do with the world, ”shuddha”<sup>1</sup> Bhagavan.

The interest for Bhagavan and His seva will be aroused to the extent that people hear about Bhagavan (the *words* themselves convey the power of bhakti, service and knowledge) and according to the degree of bhakti, “vairagya” or the state of mind where the *colours* (raga;  $\sqrt{\text{ranj}}$ , colour) of the sense objects fade, lose their interest. – In the same way as a *temple* is maintained for the sake of the Divinity who is served in the temple, the bhakta *eats* in order to preserve his body, because the Inner Guide, Antaryami, dwells in his atma and the meaning of his life is to serve, and because he wants to serve God physically, mentally and with words.

You should by no means put forward *negative* methods. They are completely *alien* to bhakti and *repellent*, only leading to mere repression of the libido. This involves considerable risks. *First of all*, as a survey, one should present all the different paths and goals: dharma, artha, kama, moksha, bhakti; from the beginning to the highest goal (Vraja), and *then* clearly describe how and where to *begin*, so that the person does not begin at the goal!! It is pointless to replace the Christian piety of self-denial with the same piety directed to Bhagavan!!

Bhakti is rare, as You have read in the Gita etc. First of all, most people must learn quite intellectually, academically, that there is a completely different conception and knowledge of the world, God and the atma, than they thought.

[17.9] When young people listen in a fairly *servicing*, and not challenging attitude, and You then tell them about God etc., the interest in God etc. will be aroused within them, and bhakti seize their heart, and to the extent that they listen and remember what has been said etc., bhakti, understanding and knowledge of who God is etc. will grow, and disinterest in everything else but God, service etc., disinterest in the senses etc. will come of its own accord. But

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<sup>1</sup> The ”pure” Bhagavan, Bhagavan in Himself.

this “viryasamvidah katha”<sup>2</sup> must *be given clearly* and unadulterated, and this depends on You both.

[27.9] No, the audience, the readers etc. have not understood what one calls the “intellectual”, the foundation (sambandha-jnanam<sup>3</sup>). They cannot grasp that the atma is fundamentally different from the “I”, from everything one knows oneself to be – and that the atma intrinsically belongs to His realm, and when enjoying the world finds himself in a foreign land, alien to his nature. *When* he has thoroughly grasped this, the rules regarding the avoidance of the sense objects and everything that stirs up or awakens lust, apply to him. First one must be “samyak-vyavasitah” in one’s inner nature, be convinced, have the right inner attitude.

From all my heart

Always Your Sada

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<sup>2</sup> Powerful, clear, and correct statement.

<sup>3</sup> The knowledge of the connection between the different tattvas, the principles; between the world, the atma and God.