

The Spiritual Scientist

An ezine for those who think!

Don't Run Away From Yourself

Question: Why do people fall prey to self-destructive habits like smoking, drinking or drug addiction, even when they know that these are harmful?



Answer: All of us are searching for happiness. And that happiness lies within our own hearts, but unfortunately we search for it everywhere. The ancient scripture, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, gives the example of a musk deer: it emanates a fragrance from within its own body and is captivated by that fragrance, but not knowing its source, searches everywhere for it in vain. Similarly, all of us are running away from ourselves in our quest for happiness.



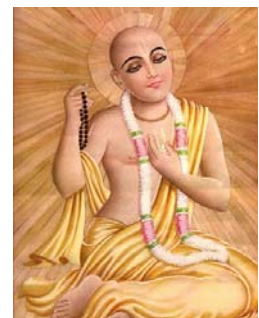
This misdirection, the *Bhagavad-gita* (3.37) describes, results from the illusion created by our internal enemy, lust. Where does this lust come from? We are spiritual beings, souls, with an original, natural love for God, Krishna. When we forget Krishna, that love becomes transmogrified into lust. *Gita* (18.39) describes vividly the nature of all lust-instigated pleasures: they appear at first to be like nectar, but are like poison in the end.



Lust is present in everyone in varying degrees. That is why everyone, no matter how materially successful he may be, has some tendencies toward self-destructive behavior. People generally become concerned about such tendencies only when they exceed socially acceptable limits. But actually lust throttles the ability of everyone to make meaningful contributions to society and even their own future; the difference is only in degree. From the spiritual point of view, lust is inherently self-destructive; it strips the soul of the unlimited spiritual happiness that is his birthright and forces him to labor for paltry material sensations of pleasure.

Lust, being a perversion of our original, essential nature, cannot possibly be annihilated, suppressed, repressed, or even sublimated. But it reverts to its original nature if we direct our loving propensity back to Krishna through the scientific process of devotional service.

The channeling of consciousness from matter back to Krishna is most easily and effectively executed through the medium of divine sound. The Supreme Person, Krishna, being omnipotent, is fully present in His holy names like the Hare Krishna *mahamantra*. Chanting the holy names therefore connects one immediately with Krishna, the supreme pleasure principle. Regular meditation on the holy names enables one to taste happiness streaming down from the spiritual dimension. This spiritual pleasure is so satisfying that it soon frees one from the craving for perverted mundane pleasure like drugs and alcohol.



But to experience that pleasure, we have to stop running away from ourselves in the search of illusory pleasures. Only then can we start realizing ourselves by philosophical contemplation and loving devotion.

