

\*Based on the training sessions with Sacinandana Swami on February 16–18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, London

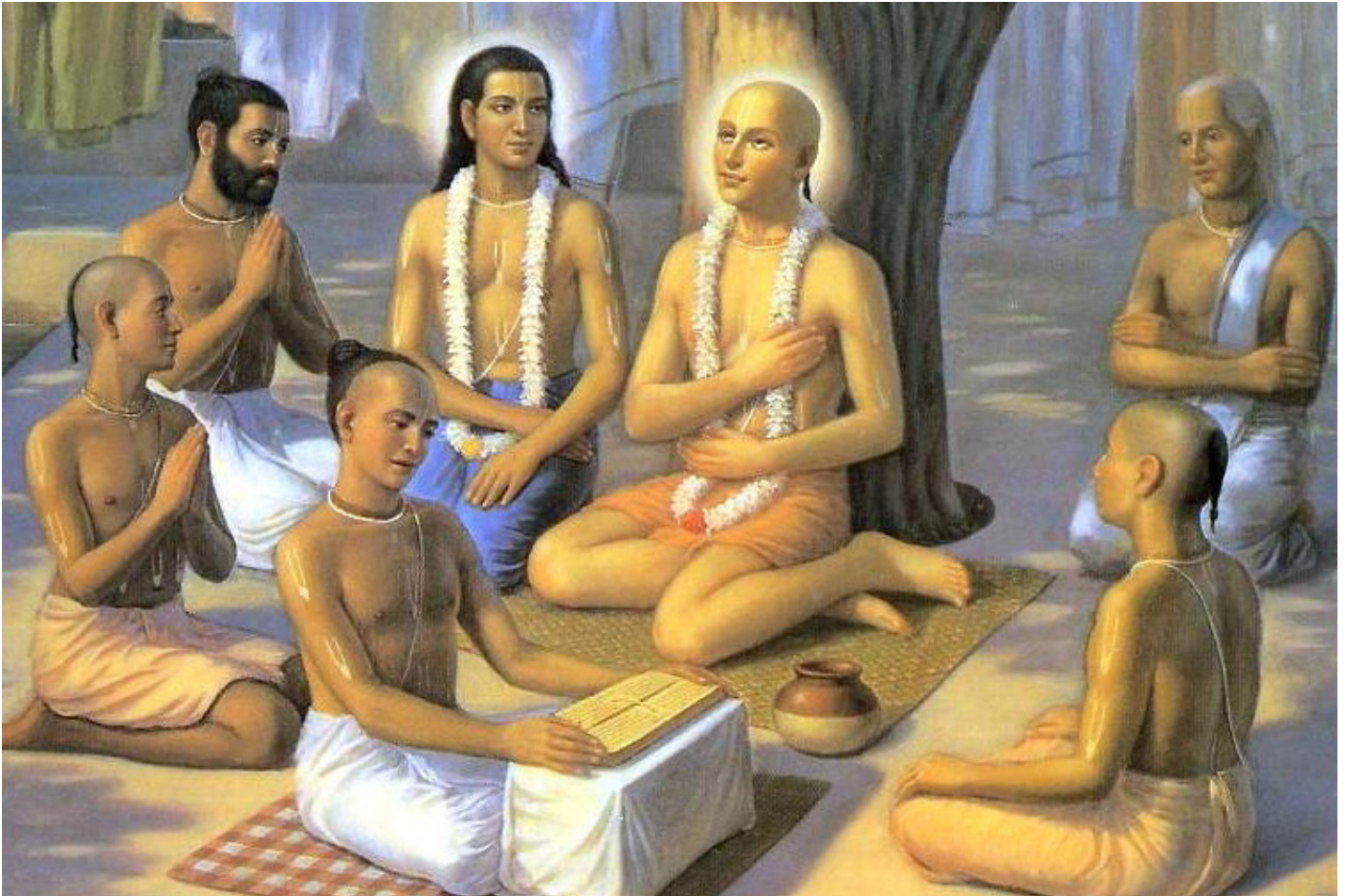
## 4) SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING

Spiritual counselling means helping people connect with the source of all solutions, that is God. Spiritual counselling goes deeper than psychological counselling which mainly focuses on the acute problem.

By breaking out of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, problems are bound to come because one enters the dualistic world of change. Here happiness and distress come and go – it is bound to happen to everyone. Problems come like waves to the beach of the ocean. The deepest solution to our problems is reconnecting with Kṛṣṇa and getting out of this world. As spiritual counsellors we should try to find a solution that includes God. The reason people come to seek advice from devotees is because they want to find their authentic spiritual life.

If you want to help others re-establish their relationship with God, you need to be God conscious yourself. Strengthen your Kṛṣṇa-consciousness by:

- Getting to know Kṛṣṇa better by regularly reading about him. Especially, study the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
- Cleanse the mirror of your heart more by attentive and affectionate chanting so that the Lord can reveal himself in the looking glass of the heart.
- Open your mind in confidence to a trusted devotee of the Lord and obtain yourself good counsel.
- Study the inspiring lives and examples of the saintly and try to follow in their footsteps.



## FIVE ELEMENTS OF SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING



- 1) Be conscious that the person in front of you is an eternal spiritual soul on its way in its spiritual journey. Everything that happens in that person's life is meant to help them progress in that journey. You are there to help them see things from the spiritual perspective.
- 2) Take on the observer role – do not become lost in the apparent or external perspective. In short: you have to look from a neutral position – like an unmoved witness. Listen well.
- 3) Pray for insight and permission to be able to inspire and help. Pray to become an instrument through which divine blessings flow.
- 4) Try to recognize the specific, unfulfilled needs of the other person. Empathy is required here – see and feel things from the other perspective.
- 5) Encourage the person to understand the story behind the story. Everything and everyone moves under the sweet will of Kṛṣṇa. Help the other find the specific lesson to be learnt here. Do not work from your perspective – rather encourage them to find their own way.

## CONCLUSION

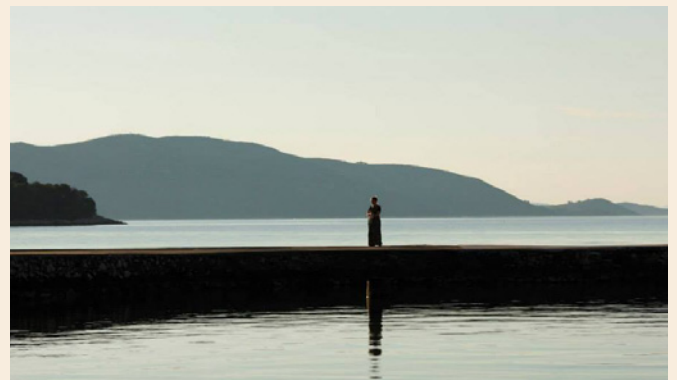
In order to help others, you must first be in a position to do so. How can a drowning man help others who are drowning?

To keep strong we suggest you apply the wisdom of the Tree of Life.

**Every day have a checkup:**

- 1) Have I nourished my spiritual roots with a satisfying spiritual practice?
- 2) Have I done something for my physical and mental wellbeing?
- 3) Have I contributed to the welfare of others in a spirit of compassion?

It is natural in this world that one cannot live every day in full balance and harmony – but by simply keeping an eye on these three areas – roots, trunk and crown of the Tree of Life – one will come close enough to having a well-balanced life and avoid unnecessary disturbances to the physical, emotional, social and ultimately spiritual levels.



Spiritual counseling – the outcome of a good personal life is based on compassion. Basically, it means to help others find and live their “Tree of Life”. It is helpful when you know how to identify needs and work with the counseled on suggestions on how to fulfill them. Also, you can practice applying the five elements of spiritual counseling (see above).

We wish you all the best and look forward to our next time together.

Hare Kṛṣṇa