

SP on investing money

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Beware of inflation:

As the meeting drew to a close, they discussed establishing a bank in Mayapur. So far only a local cultivators' financial cooperative has shown interest, but Prabhupada doesn't want to deal with them as they want a large deposit from ISKCON. "If you deposit five lakhs now, it will decrease value in five, ten months. The purchasing power of money is decreasing. Now what you can purchase with five lakhs of rupees, after five years you'll require ten lakhs. So your money will decrease. And if you invest that money in land, after five years it will increase to its full extent. So why should we waste our money? What is the benefit?"

Gargamuni pointed out that the farmers don't usually keep their money in the banks, although now the government is trying to force them to do it.

Prabhupada was well aware of what was going on. Because farmers traditionally use their money to buy land, the government has declared a land "ceiling," a limit on what one individual can own. "So they cannot invest money in the land; they give to the bank. And as soon as you keep money in the bank it will decrease the value. Money is decreased, value of, all over the world. Because it is not money actually, it is paper, cheating; real money is gold. But they will not allow to keep the gold. The whole policy is vicious. If I purchase gold with five lakhs of rupees, then it is real money, and after five years I can sell it ten lakhs. That they will not allow.

"Therefore my policy is that whatever money is there, spend; don't keep; in land and produce food. That is the best use. And instead of keeping money and take interest, you print books. That is also good, you can sell. Or you purchase land for producing food."

Gargamuni had a good grasp of the principle. "If we stock money, then there'll be no preaching. But if we print books, then we have to sell the books. So that is preaching."

"Therefore I am insisting all over," Prabhupada said. "Print any book. Never mind either Hindi or English or... Print book and keep it in stock, nicely. That is the purpose of my Bhaktivedanta Trust. Fifty percent must be spent for printing, and fifty percent for building. That's all. No money. Don't keep any account."

"Then the government will never get envious because there's nothing there,"

Gargamuni added.

Prabhupada agreed. "Yes. And we haven't got to keep so many accountant, auditors, and other nonsense, unnecessary things. As soon as there is collection, invest the money in some building or in making some book, book printing. Follow this policy. I am very much eager. I have got money here and there, but I want to spend it in this way. So therefore I am advising take this. We shall invest renovating them and in

developing them. Spend money. Don't keep money." He described how food prices are increasing at a greater rate than the interest paid on a bank deposit. So if we print books and sell them at 100% profit, no bank can give such a return for the investment.

"Your books will be our bank," Gargamuni said.

"Yes. We have got business. Why shall I keep in the bank?" Prabhupada concluded.

"This is the policy: if your money is idle, we can spend it in our books, in our purchasing land in temple, constructing temple, developing."

(Hari Sauri, Transcendental Diary 4-3: Hyderabad, August 20, 1976, 760819rc.hy)

A non-profit economics:

Prabhupada: Well, there was some income tax office pleader. So I have given the idea that "The fifty percent, that is promotion expenditure." So he accept..., "Yes, it can be done." Where is the profit? Whatever is profit is promotion expenditure. We give to ISKCON commission, or some way or other, it is spent. So he admitted, "Yes, it can be done." And last night I was suggesting, "For promotion spend." Even if we open a temple, that is promotion.

Jagadisa: Profit means that people are putting money in their pocket and enjoying. And we don't.

Prabhupada: But we're not. No. If we open a center, that is propaganda center. Why do you say "temple"? But this is the way of propaganda.

Jagadisa: Opening a new branch.

Prabhupada: Do you follow?

Ramesvara: Yes.

Prabhupada: So it is promotion for the books. Whatever we do, it is promotion.

That's all. And the main point is that it is not profitable, er profit concern, because you are not giving any royalty to the author. So where is his profit-making? Nobody's making profit—the author, the worker, everyone.

Trivikrama: That's a fact.

Prabhupada: That's a fact. So all expenditure—promotion, that's all. The cost of paper, cost of printing, cost of promotion—finished everything. Make account like that. The income tax father will not touch it.

Hari-sauri: Everything we're doing is propaganda work, everything.

Prabhupada: That's all. If still there is excess, give some bonus to the grihasthas bhaktas. They're family men. Let them have some expenditure.

Jagadisa: Some wage.

Prabhupada: Yes. Finished all... No account. So they admitted, both of them, "Yes, sir, that is... That can be done."

Trivikrama: You're a genius.

Prabhupada: (laughs) And our Gopala, he is going three times and to—"How to do it?" Do it like that. Everything spend for promotion. Bas. No money. And actually,

that is the fact. Where is the profit, and who is going to take the profit? Nobody is there. (770109dc.bom)

A secure investment is possible but not ideal:

So far your idea to invest money, the first consideration is whether the investment will be insured or not. If it is, then you can establish what is your expenditure for one month and then calculate it for one year and then invest that amount so that the interest received will cover your expenditure. But this is not such a good proposal. Better that you maintain yourself by monthly subscription of cash and kind from so many persons. Then preaching will go on and so many persons will be benefited. (SPL Madhudvisa, Nairobi, 26 September 1971)

Other business is allowed – to a certain extent:

Another motive to disembark at Saint Moritz, however, was gold speculation. A few senior men were thinking of fortifying ISKCON's reserves by investing in gold before the price was deregulated. Zurich was just the place to invest in gold bullion. Srila Prabhupada nipped the idea in the bud. (Srutakirti dasa, SP Uvaca 41: St. Moritz, St. Hellish)

I have recently informed the GBC to allow each temple to keep 25% of the money they collect from direct book and magazine sales for temple maintenance, 75% to be sent to book fund. Supposing you sell 800 dollars a week worth of literature (retail price). Will not 200 dollars weekly be sufficient for food and rent? If not, increase book sales, or, until things are adjusted in this way, supplement in other ways, but try to avoid too much business as this distracts us from our real mission. If Kriṣṇa sees that we are very active to spread information about Him, He is Master of the goddess of fortune, He will give everything." (SPL Lalita Kumara, November 15th, 1971)

But I have no objection if you can develop the Press by making outside profit with commercial work and investing—that is all right. (SPL Rupanuga, Vrindaban, 30 November 1971)

Regarding the collections, the books are increasing, so 50% should go to BBT and 50% to construction, but if needed, then that money can be spent in other ways. (SPL Tejyas dasa, 15th November, 1974)

Book distribution preferred over business:

So far our investing, where is our money to invest? We have no money to invest. Our process is to collect and spend, from left hand to right hand, or from right hand to left hand. (SPL Giriraja, Honolulu, 15 May 1972)

Syamasundara has made a scandal by taking money of the society's and investing it in business. (SPL Madhavananda, Hong Kong, 1 February 1974)

Yes, it is good that you have understood me about not investing any BBT monies in business. (SPL Ramesvara, Vrindaban, 3 September 1974)

A profitable restaurant is ok:

Regarding investing in a new restaurant, it doesn't matter it may be \$100,000. If there is profit there, then you can invest. I want that all of our householders be engaged in managing these restaurants. (SPL Gurukrpa, Dallas, 29 July 1975)

An Indian goods trade is ok:

I have recently thought of a scheme to increase funds in our BBT account. I would like to send Indian goods to you for sales to the devotees and others. In the beginning I can have cloth sent, especially saris. So many others are doing it successfully, we can also be successful. I will have the papers sent through Lloyds bank as I have an account with them in London. So you can find out the Lloyds branch there. You can deposit all monies received from sales of the saris in the Lloyds Bank. You may also keep a percentage of the sales for yourself. Please advise me if you are able to execute. (SPL Bhurijana, 25 February, 1976)

Morning Walk

May 26, 1976, Honolulu

Prabhupada: ...speaking karmi and bhakta.

Devotee (1): The bhakta has no desires to fulfill, whereas the karmi has unlimited desires to fulfill.

Devotee (2): The bhakta desires to carry out the order of Krishna, and the karmi is interested in satisfying himself, gratification of the senses.

Prabhupada: Karmi is also working and bhakta is also working. Then what is the difference?

Hari-sauri: One is working for his own sense satisfaction and the other is working for the sense satisfaction of Krishna.

Devotee (2): Mentality?

Devotee (3): The devotee is peaceful, ever peaceful.

Prabhupada: Karmi.... Just like, I began this Krishna consciousness business with forty rupees, eh, in New York. Now, say within eight or ten years we have got forty crores. What is the karmi who started his business with forty rupees and within ten years, eight years, has got forty crores?

Devotee (3): Therefore the difference is the karmi's not successful.

Prabhupada: A bhakta is never unsuccessful.

Devotee (2): (indistinct)

Prabhupada: Yes. Karmi.... Just like this house you have got. For a karmi to invest so much money, it will takes fifty years. We got this by donation. (laughter)

Hari-sauri: Nobody's going to come up to a karmi and give him six hundred thousand.

Prabhupada: So after \$600,000 for a karmi it will take six hundred years. (laughter)
For a bhakta somebody comes, "Take it." (laughter)

Devotee (1): Just like we all have so many watches. You'll notice everyone in our society has watches.

Prabhupada: They haven't got, karmis?

Devotee (1): Some of them do.

Prabhupada: What is the idea? You are asking question? Without have watches? We can live without watches? What is the idea?

Devotee (1): Well they're..., usually they'll say we're.... If we are supposed to be spiritualists, then why do we have so many cars, why do we have so many watches, why do we have so many different things that they can see are there within the temple?

Prabhupada: Yes. We acquire them without any effort. We are not after these things. But Krishna sends, we take—so many cars, so many watches, so many houses for propagating Krishna consciousness. Why shall I be greedy?

Devotee (1): Simply we are preaching and everything comes.

Prabhupada: Everything necessary. Whatever is necessary will come. Krishna has supplied. For us there is no such distinction as "material" and "spiritual." Because this material, so-called material, that is God's creation. When it is used for God, that is spiritual. Who has created this tree? You have created? Man has created this tree? Who has created?

Hari-sauri: Krishna. (760526mw.hon)

Prabhupada: They don't use aluminium much. If they have got excess money, they invest in metal-gold, silver, copper, bell metal.... Immediate loan—you can mortgage the metal pots, the metal ornaments, you get money immediately. [break] ...in a year, that is a metal purchasing ceremony. Every family will purchase, according to his means, some metal pots once in a year. Dhantraivesi(?) (indistinct) means desire some funds. So if there's some extra money—not big, big men; middle class storeman—they invest in metal purchase. If there is a good business day, (unclear) all the utensils (unclear). You know Diwali, Diwali?

Devotee (2): Yes.

Prabhupada: Just one day before Diwali.

Devotee (2): Yes.

Prabhupada: Huge quantity of metals. Everyone will count (indistinct) (end)
(760531mw.hon)

Prabhupada: Don't keep money unnecessarily. Invest.

(7710006rc.vrn)

The same idea is in the Bible analogy in Luke 19.

Conclusion

Srila Prabhupada gives specific instructions on how to deal with money. He allows secured investments but prefers book distribution as the main source of income. He recommends buying land and growing food, instead of keeping money in bank. In that way the taxing is also minimized and the government doesn't have anything to steal.

According to dharma sastras (Manu samhita 8.398) the lawful amount the government can take is 5% of goods' value (compare with today's 50-70% taxation). The result is very dangerous:

To give protection to the general mass of people who are citizens of the state is the prescribed occupational duty for a king. By acting in that way, the king in his next life shares one sixth of the result of the pious activities of the citizens. But a king or executive head of state who simply collects taxes from the citizens but does not give them proper protection as human beings has the results of his own pious activities taken away by the citizens, and in exchange for his not giving protection he becomes liable to punishment for the impious activities of his subjects.

Lord Visnu continued: My dear King Prthu, if you continue to protect the citizens according to the instructions of the learned brahmana authorities, as they are received by the disciplic succession—by hearing—from master to disciple, and if you follow the religious principles laid down by them, without attachment to ideas manufactured by mental concoction, then every one of your citizens will be happy and will love you, and very soon you will be able to see such already liberated personalities as the four Kumaras [Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanat-kumara]. (SB 4.20.14-15)

Any king who does not teach his citizens about their respective duties in terms of varna and asrama but who simply exacts tolls and taxes from them is liable to suffer for the impious activities which have been performed by the citizens. In addition to such degradation, the king also loses his own fortune. (SB 4.21.24)

In this world, some persons are professional plunderers who set fire to others' houses or administer poison to them. Also, members of the royalty or government officials sometimes plunder mercantile men by forcing them to pay income tax and by other methods. After death such demons are put into the hell known as Sarameyadana. On that planet there are 720 dogs with teeth as strong as

thunderbolts. Under the orders of the agents of Yamaraja, these dogs voraciously devour such sinful people. (SB 5.26.27)

The degraded situation culminates in Kali yuga:

As the earth thus becomes crowded with a corrupt population, whoever among any of the social classes shows himself to be the strongest will gain political power. Losing their wives and properties to such avaricious and merciless rulers, who will behave no better than ordinary thieves, the citizens will flee to the mountains and forests.

Harassed by famine and excessive taxes, people will resort to eating leaves, roots, flesh, wild honey, fruits, flowers and seeds. Struck by drought, they will become completely ruined. (SB 12.2.7-9)

In the age of Kali, people's minds will always be agitated. They will become emaciated by famine and taxation, my dear King, and will always be disturbed by fear of drought. They will lack adequate clothing, food and drink, will be unable to properly rest, have sex or bathe themselves, and will have no ornaments to decorate their bodies. In fact, the people of Kali-yuga will gradually come to appear like ghostly, haunted creatures. (SB 12.3.39-40)