

ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪ GURU AND GAURĀṄGA

The Search For Śrī Krishna Reality The Beautiful

līlā premṇā priyādhikyaṁ
mādhuryaṁ veṇu-rūpayoh
ity asādhāraṇaṁ proktaṁ
govindasya catuṣṭayaṁ

Krishna has four superexcellent qualities: His wonderful pastimes, His wonderful associates like the *gopīs*, who are very dear to Him, His sweet beauty, and the sweet vibration of His flute.

(*Chaitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā* 23.84)



The Search For Śrī Krishna

Reality The Beautiful

Through His holy name, transcendental sound
preached and practiced by Śrī Chaitanyadeva,
who is none other than Rādhā and Govinda
combined — and propagated by
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura

HIS DIVINE GRACE
**SRILA BHAKTI RAKSAK
SRIDHAR DEV-GOSWAMI
MAHARAJ**



Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

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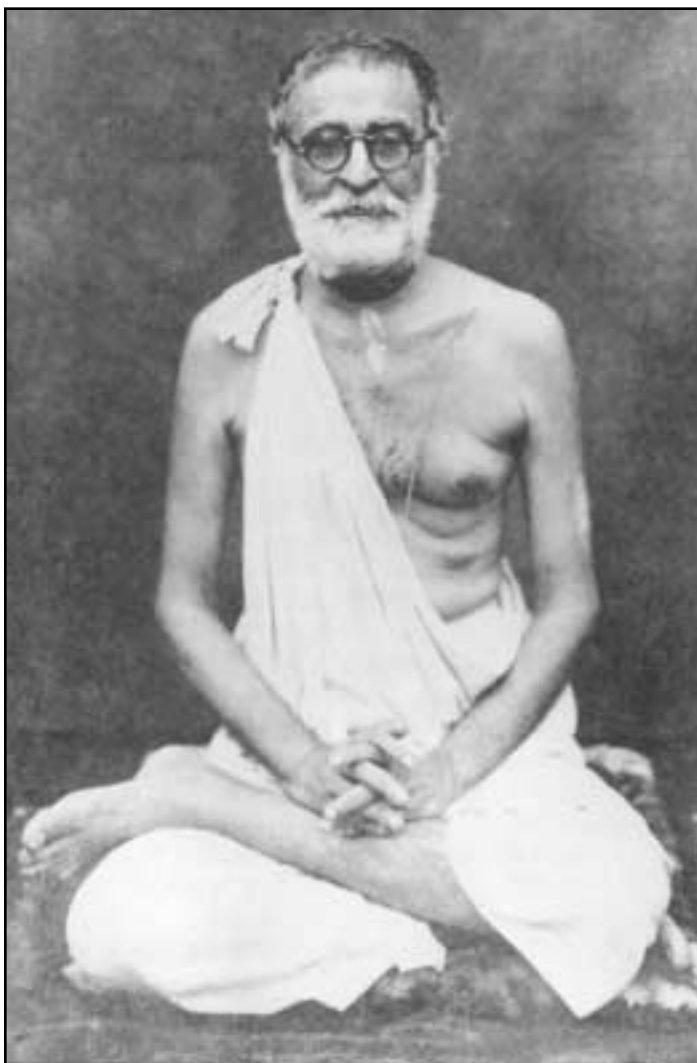
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Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāj



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

FOREWORD

by

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Nineteenth Century Founder of the Krishna
Consciousness Movement

We love to read a book which we have never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it, and with such acquirement our curiosity stops. This mode of study prevails amongst



“Party spirit—that great enemy of truth—will always baffle the attempt of the inquirer who tries to gather truth from the religious works of his nation and will make him believe that the Absolute Truth is nowhere except in his old religious book.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

a great number of readers who are great men in their own estimation as well as in the estimation of those who are of their own stamp. In fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and statements made by other people. But this is not study. The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention. Students, like satellites, should reflect whatever light they receive from authors, and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the magistrates imprison the convicts in the jail!

Thought is progressive. The author's thought must have progress in the reader in the shape of correction or development. He is the best critic who can show the further development of an old thought; but a mere denouncer is the enemy of progress, and consequently of nature. Progress certainly is the law of nature, and there must be corrections and developments with the progress of time. But progress means going further or rising higher. The shallow critic and the fruitless reader are the two great enemies of progress. We must shun them.

The true critic, on the other hand, advises us to preserve what we have already obtained, and to adjust our race from that point where we have arrived in the heat of our progress. He will never advise us to go back to the point whence we started, as he fully knows that in that case there will be a fruitless loss of our valuable time and labor. He will direct the adjustment of the angle of our race at the point where we are.

This is also the characteristic of the useful student. He will read an old author and will find out his exact position in the progress of thought. He will never propose to burn a book on the ground that it contains thoughts which are useless. No thought is useless. Thoughts are means by which we attain our objects. The reader who denounces a bad thought does not know that a bad road is even capable of improvement and conversion into a good one. One thought is a road leading to another. Thus, the reader will find that one thought, which is the object today, will be the means of a further object tomorrow. Thoughts will necessarily continue to be an endless series of means and objects in the progress of humanity.

The great reformers will always assert that they have come out not to *destroy* the old law, but to *fulfill* it. Valmiki, Vyāsa, Plato, Jesus, Mohammed, Confucius, and Chaitanya Mahāprabhu assert the fact either expressly or by their conduct.

Our critic, however, may nobly tell us that a reformer like Vyāsa, unless purely explained, may lead thousands of men into great trouble in time to come. But dear critic! Study the history of ages and countries! Where have you found the philosopher and reformer fully understood by the people? The popular religion is fear of God, and not the pure spiritual love which Plato, Vyāsa, Jesus, and Chaitanya taught to their respective peoples! Whether you give the absolute religion

in figures or simple expressions, or teach them by means of books or oral speeches, the ignorant and the thoughtless must degrade it.

It is indeed very easy to tell, and swift to hear, that Absolute Truth has such an affinity with the human soul that it comes through as if intuitively, and that no exertion is necessary to teach the precepts of true religion, but this is a deceptive idea. It may be true of ethics and of the alphabet of religion, but not of the highest form of faith, which requires an exalted soul to understand. All higher truths, though intuitive, require previous education in the simpler ones. That religion is the purest which gives us the purest idea of God. How then is it possible that the ignorant will ever obtain the absolute religion, as long as they are ignorant?

So we are not to scandalize the Savior of Jerusalem or the Savior of Nadia for these subsequent evils. Luthers, instead of critics, are what we want for the correction of those evils by the true interpretation of the original precepts.

God gives us truth as He gave it to Vyāsa, when we earnestly seek for it. Truth is eternal and inexhaustable. The soul receives a revelation when it is anxious for it. The souls of the great thinkers of the bygone ages, who now live spiritually, often approach our inquiring spirit and assist it in its development. Thus, Vyāsa was assisted by Nārada and Brahmā. Our

śāstras, or in other words, books of thought, do not contain all that we could get from the infinite Father. No book is without its errors. God's revelation is Absolute Truth, but it is scarcely received and preserved in its natural purity. We have been advised in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.3) to believe that truth when revealed is absolute, but it gets the tincture of the nature of the receiver in course of time, and is converted into error by continual exchange of hands from age to age. New revelations, therefore, are continually necessary in order to keep truth in its original purity. We are thus warned to be careful in our studies of old authors, however wise they are reputed to be. Here, we have full liberty to reject the wrong idea, which is not sanctioned by the peace of conscience.

Vyāsa was not satisfied with what he collected in the *Vedas*, arranged in the *Purāṇas*, and composed in the *Mahābhārata*. The peace of his conscience did not sanction his labors. It told him from inside, "No, Vyāsa! You can't rest contented with the erroneous picture of truth which was necessarily presented to you by the sages of bygone days! You must yourself knock at the door of the inexhaustible store of truth from which the former sages drew their wealth. Go! Go up to the fountainhead of truth, where no pilgrim meets with disappointment of any kind. Vyāsa did it and obtained what he wanted. We have all been advised to do so.

Liberty then, is the principle which we must consider as the most valuable gift of God. We must not allow ourselves to be led by those who lived and thought before us. We must think for ourselves and try to get further truths, which are still undiscovered. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.21.23) we have been advised to take the spirit of the *śāstras*, and not the words. The *Bhāgavata* is therefore a religion of liberty, unmixed truth, and absolute love.

The other characteristic is progress. Liberty certainly is the father of all progress. Holy liberty is the cause of progress upwards and upwards in eternity and endless activity of love. Liberty misused causes degradation, and the *Vaiṣṇava* must always carefully use this high and beautiful gift of God.

The spirit of this text goes far to honor all great reformers and teachers who lived and will live in other countries. The *Vaiṣṇava* is ready to honor all men without distinction of caste, because they are filled with the energy of God. See how universal is the religion of the *Bhāgavata*. It is not intended for a certain class of Hindus alone, but it is a gift to man at large, in whatever country he is born, and in whatever society he is bred. In short, *Vaiṣṇavism* is the Absolute Love binding all men together into the infinite unconditioned and absolute God. May peace reign forever in the whole universe in the continual development of its purity by

the exertion of the future heroes, who will be blessed according to the promise of the *Bhāgavata* with powers from the Almighty Father, the Creator, Preserver, and the Annihilator of all things in Heaven and Earth.

—*From an English lecture delivered in 1869, at Dinajpur, West Bengal.*



Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Prabhupād and Śrīla Sṛīdhar Mahārāj sharing the vyāsāsana, the seat of Vyāsa offered to the *bona fide* spiritual master. [Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj (near the microphone) is speaking.]

PREFACE

by

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupād

Founder-Āchārya of the International Society for
Krishna Consciousness

We are very fortunate to hear His Divine Grace, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrajak Āchārya Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Mahārāj. By age and by experience, in both ways, he is senior to me. I was fortunate to have his association since a long time, since perhaps 1930. At that time he had not accepted *sannyās*, but had just left home. He went to preach in Allahabad, and on that auspicious occasion we were connected.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj lived in my house for many years, so naturally we had very intimate talks. He has such high realizations of Krishna that one would faint to hear them. He was always my good advisor, and I took his advice very seriously because from the very beginning I knew that he was a pure devotee of Krishna. So, I wanted to associate with him. Krishna and Prabhupād, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, liked him to prepare me. Our relationship is very intimate.

After the breakdown of our spiritual master's institution I wanted to organize another institution making

Śrīdhara Mahārāja the head. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told me that Śrīdhara Mahārāja is one of the finest preachers of Krishna consciousness in the world, so I wanted to take him everywhere. This was my earnest desire. But since he could not go around the world and preach, at least the people of the world should come to hear from him.

For spiritual advancement of life we must go to someone who is actually practicing spiritual life. So if one is actually serious to take instructions from a *śikṣa guru*, or instructing spiritual master, I can refer him to one who is the most competent of all my Godbrothers. This is B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja. I consider Śrīdhara Mahārāja to be even my *śikṣa guru*, so what to speak of the benefit that others can have from his association.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone is searching for *rasa*, pleasure. The status of *rasa* is the highest. As persons we have our subjective existence, but *rasa*, pleasure, has His supersubjective existence. He is a person. He is *akhila rasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ*: the reservoir of all pleasure. He is Krishna. *Rasa* is Krishna. There cannot be *rasa* in any other place but Krishna. He is the fountainhead of all different types of *rasa*. So, by the nature of our constitution we have to search after Krishna.

In the *Brahma-sūtra* it is said, “Inquire after the supreme cause of this world. Search!” From where has everything come? How is everything maintaining its existence? By whom? And ultimately, where does everything enter after death? That is *brahma*, spirit, the most fundamental plane from where everything springs up, remains, and ultimately enters.

Where is *brahma*? The *Brahma-sūtra* advises us to inquire after the prime cause, the biggest, the all-accommodating. But Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu replaced that, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* replaced that with *Kṛṣṇānusan-dhāna*: the search for Śrī Krishna.

Brahmā-jijñāsā, the search for spirit, is a dry thing. That is only the exercise of your thinking faculty, a jugglery of reason. Leave that behind. Begin the search

for Śrī Krishna and quench the thirst of your heart. *Rasa jijñāsā*, *raso vai saḥ*. The things acquired by your reason won't satisfy you. *Jñāna*, knowledge, cannot really quench your thirst, so instead of *brahma-jijñāsā* accept *Kṛṣṇānususandhāna* and begin the search for Śrī Krishna.

Where is Krishna? Our real want will be satisfied only by getting the service of Krishna; not by anything else. We want to satisfy the innermost demands of our hearts. We don't care to know where we are or what is controlling everything, but we really want to quench our thirst for *rasa*, for *mādhurya*, for sweetness. We must search neither for knowledge nor for the controller of this world; we must search after *rasa*, *ānandam*, after beauty and charm.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* have taught us what to beg for, what to pray for, what to want. They have taught us, "If you beg, beg for Krishna, not for anything else." So, the fate of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, the students of the *Bhāgavata* and the followers of Mahāprabhu, is sealed in the search for Śrī Krishna. We want nothing else but Krishna.

The *Vedas* say, *ṣṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ*: "O, you sons of nectar, sons of the nectarine ocean sea: please listen to me. You were born in nectar; you were born to taste nectar, and you must not allow yourselves to be satisfied by anything but nectar. So, however misguided you may be for the time being, awake! Arise! Search for that nectar, that satisfaction." The *Vedas* tell

us, “Om!” Om means a big “Yes!” “What you are searching for, that is! Don’t be disappointed.” The *Vedas* say that the object of our inner search exists. The common search of all your hearts is existing, and your thirst *will* be quenched. By your constitution you are meant for that and you deserve that, so don’t be afraid; don’t be cowed down. It is already given in your being. And you can never be satisfied with anything else. So prepare yourself, after your long search, to receive that long missing nectar in its full form and quality. Awake! Arise! Search for your fortune and you cannot but have that. It is your birthright. It is the wealth of your own soul. It cannot but be within you. You have no other business, no other engagement but *Kṛṣṇānusandhāna*, the Search for Śrī Krishna: Reality the Beautiful.

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS: LOVE AND BEAUTY

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bengali poet Hemachandra wrote, “There are so many countries rising in prominence: this land, that land. Japan is a very small country, but it is rising like the sun. Only India is under eternal slumber.” When he mentioned the other part of the world, he said, “America is rising forcefully, as if he is coming to swallow the whole world. Sometimes he is shouting as if with a war cry, and the whole world is shivering. His enthusiasm is so intense and great that he wants to snatch the world from the solar system, and give it a new shape, a new molding.” America has been mentioned in this way by Hemachandra. In the same way, Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj came to give the world a new shape through Krishna consciousness. He once said, “We must go there and build it in a new way—with Krishna consciousness.”

What is Krishna consciousness? Krishna consciousness means real love and beauty. Real love and beauty must predominate; not selfishness, or exploitation. Generally, whenever we see beauty, we think that beauty is to be

exploited, but actually, beauty is the exploiter, beauty is the master, and beauty is the controlling principle.

And what is love? Love means sacrifice for others. We should not think that sacrifice is to be exploited by us. Who is to be the recipient of sacrifice? Is it our party? No. We are in the group of those who sacrifice themselves: the predominated negative party, Mahābhāva's party. The underlying principle of love is sacrifice, but sacrifice for whom? And who is the beneficiary? Love is the beneficiary. Everyone should contribute to the center, but no one should draw energy from there. "Die to live." With this spirit we should combine and work for real love and beauty.

BANNER OF LOVE

And beauty will be victorious in the world. Love will be victorious in the world. We will sacrifice everything to see that the banner of divine love will flutter all over the world, for a particle of that divine love will be able to keep peace and distribute peace in all directions. Just as fighting soldiers dedicate everything, and give their lives so their countrymen will benefit in the future, we should sacrifice our lives and work to bring real peace for everyone.

In Vṛndāvana, the land of Krishna, the standard of sacrifice is unlimited. Devotees there are willing to risk everything for Krishna. If that principle of sacrifice is enthroned, then peace will automatically follow.

Krishna consciousness should be enthroned above all other conceptions. All other conceptions are meant to be subservient to Krishna consciousness. The ideal of Vṛndāvana, Krishna's abode, is above all other ideals. In theistic comparison, the conception of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's *līlā* is above all other conceptions. There, theism reaches its zenith. That is our highest goal, and step by step, that should be explained, thought out, accepted, and preached.

ATOMIC DEATH

Without this, what sort of benefit are you expecting from your present engagement? Only death is awaiting you. You are so proud of this scientific civilization and are boasting so much, but death is awaiting you whether it is atomic death or natural death. You can't cross death. One English poet has written:

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave

—Thomas Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*

You do not care to solve the greatest danger. You say that you are big thinkers, that you are great men, and that you should command the respect of society, but the general inevitable problem for every atom here is death. What is your contribution for solving the greatest danger which is waiting to devour everyone—scientist,

insect, or virus? What is your solution to death? Have you taken any steps to solve that universal danger? What you are doing at present is exploitation, and you are encouraging a lower life as a reaction. You are exploiting nature, and everyone who is deriving the benefits will have to pay to the farthing with interest.

“For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.” This is your statement, but what have you done to solve that? You are endangering the fate of the world by your fascinating proposals of apparent comfort. What is this? You are avoiding the greatest inevitable danger, so your life is a useless malengagement. In one sense, you are traitors to society. Come with courage to face and solve the real problem, the common problem, and the most dangerous problem; otherwise you should leave the field and go away. Leave it to us. We shall prove that the world is an abode of perfect happiness: (*viśvaṁ pūrṇa sukhāyate*).

DIVE DEEP INTO REALITY

But to understand this, you will have to dive deep, not into the plane of body and mind, but into the plane of soul. You will have to dive deep into the reality that is within us. It is not a foreign thing to be acquired by loan, but the soul is within everyone, even the insects and the trees. So, we have to rise to the plane of soul. Eliminate both your physical and mental encasements and find out your own self. There you



A sixteenth century painting of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates discussing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

will find the key, the clue to the proper world where life is worth living.

The solution is there; a hint is given by many *mahā-janas*, by great saints in every religious sect to some extent, but our claim is that India has given the highest conception of the spiritual world in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So, we challenge all of you: we are not imaginationists; we are most practical thinkers. We don't avoid any great problem by saying, "Oh, it can't be solved." We do not belong to the party that wants to easily take prestige and fame. We don't want to classify ourselves with those hoaxing people. Come and see whether the plane of reality can be

found. You are not required to spend any less energy in your campaign, so take our program; try it and see.

Where are you? Who are you? What is the real nature of the world? In the *Koran*, in the *Bible*, and in the *Vedas*, and in every other scripture, a hope and hint has been given about the life of reality. Is this all a hoax? What charm have the materialists given? That charm is only for the self-deceivers, and that is dragging them into the country of loan and debt, the land where "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." So, a divine civilization should be drawn out into this plane. We have to try the path that has been suggested by the great saints and scriptures. It is not unreasonable. It is not madness. Come, reason can also be applied there.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu gave a solution to all our problems with an allegorical example. He said, "We see that you are poor, but there is a happy solution. Your wealth is underground in your own room: just try to unearth it. Don't approach it from the southern side, the give-and-take method of *karma*, for then whatever you do will bring some reaction that will capture and disturb you, and you will have no time to reach the proper solution. If you approach that hidden wealth from the western side, through the *yoga* system, by manipulating the subtle forces of nature to attain supernatural mystic power, that will enchant you and take your attention away from the desired goal. Your own

activity in the wrong direction will create obstacles to your achievement.

THE SAMĀDHI PHANTOM

“If you approach the treasure from the north, the side of that grand *brahmāsmi*, the impersonal conception, with the help of misinterpreted Vedantic logic, then you will enter into eternal *samādhi*, that great phantom will swallow you up, your existence will be nowhere, and who will come to enjoy the peace of getting the wealth? Only if you approach from the eastern side, with the help of devotion, will you get the wealth easily. That is the direction of the sunrise, the light giving direction. And that light is not prepared by our own hand; that light is from the source of all light: the revealed truth. It is extended from the quarter which is unknown to us. That light is revealed knowledge, *bhakti*, the path of devotion.

Adopt that path in your search for the real wealth within you, and easily you will find your own self, which is most wonderful (*āścaryavat paśyati kaścid enam*). Discovering that your own self is so wonderful, you will be ashamed, thinking, “How could I have been carried away by the charm of this mundane world? I am the soul. How was it possible for *māyā* to have such enchanting power over me that my own self, which is so wonderful and so valuable, was drawn into illusion? The peace which is within me has been greatly admired

by the spiritual stalwarts, but I have come in connection with mortal and nasty, rotten things. How? It is most wonderful, but I was deceived.”

Then from *ātmā* to Paramātmā, from soul to Supersoul, then from Vāsudeva to Nārāyaṇa, and then from Nārāyaṇa to Krishna, the progressive understanding in God realization is not unscientific; it is really scientific. This is *vijñāna*, scientific knowledge:

jñānaṁ te 'haṁ sa-vijñānam
idaṁ vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ
yaj jñātvā neha bhūyo 'nyaj
jñātavyam avaśiṣyate

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.2) Krishna says, “Arjuna, now I shall explain to you scientific knowledge not only about the soul, but also about its potency. The mind, the senses, and the modes of nature are all *non-ātmā*, or material. There is a direct and indirect approach towards reality which I shall now explain to you. Please listen attentively to Me: *jñānaṁ te' haṁ sa-vijñānam*. What is this? There is Myself and My potency, and the *jīva*, the living entity, is the marginal potency which is filling up all these material worlds.” If the *jīva-śakti*, the spiritual potency, were withdrawn, then everything would be stone, and who would care for exploitation? All this fighting tendency, this tendency for exploitation would stop if the marginal potency, the *jīva*, were withdrawn from matter. Everything would

be dead. The soul has entered into this material consciousness and has made it a moving thing. You should understand this properly, in a scientific way. We are not lacking in our ability to give you a scientific explanation.

PLANE OF SELF-DECEPTION

A higher conception of the finer world is here. It is real, and where you are trying your utmost to make a stand, the place that you consider real is unreal.

yā niśā sarva-bhūtānāṁ
 tasyāṁ jāgarti saṁyamī
 yasyāṁ jāgrati bhūtāni
 sā niśā paśyato muneh

—*Bhagavad-gītā* (2.69)

“You are asleep to your real self-interest and the real truth, while you are awake in the plane of self-deception.” We must establish ourselves in the plane of reality, and try our best to extend it to others.

And to preach means this: “I sincerely have faith in Krishna consciousness and relish it to the utmost. I find that my future prospect is also here. Because I feel that it is very tasteful, useful, and wholesome, I have come to distribute it to you, my friends. We should guide our lives according to the principles of Krishna consciousness as taught by the spiritual master. Take it, and you will be successful in fulfilling the goal of your life.”

RASA, HAPPINESS, ECSTASY

In this way, we have to approach everyone with God consciousness, Krishna consciousness. We must show how God consciousness ultimately merges in Krishna consciousness. We have to prove dexterously, step by step, that Krishna is the reservoir of all pleasure (*akhila rasāmṛta mūrtiḥ*). What is Krishna consciousness? Rūpa Goswāmī has given a scientific definition. *Rasa*, pleasure, cannot be avoided. We are all after *rasa*. Everyone, every unit, even the smallest unit of the world is always hankering after *rasa*, happiness, ecstasy, and all possible phases of *rasa* are personified in Krishna. Try to understand how it is. What is *rasa*? What is its nature? How can a comparison in *rasa* be drawn? In this way, step by step, you will have to come to the Krishna conception of Godhead. It is not a tale from the ancient Indian scriptures. Krishna is not the object of a tale, but fact. You have to come out and face that living fact, that reality. We shall try our best to show you how it can be a fact. Krishna is a fact. He is a reality, and reality is for itself.

You have to pay for the goal. You must “Die to live,” and in this way you will feel that it is not a hoax. When you progress on the path, you will feel it (*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra ca*). With every step forward, you will feel these three things: satisfaction, nourishment, and the eradication of your hunger. Your hankering in general will be diminished.

Generally, we feel, “I want this, I want that, I want everything; still I have not satisfied my hunger.” But you will feel that your hunger is being appeased as you progress in Krishna consciousness, and what you previously thought would give you relief will take leave from you automatically. Their trade won’t continue; they will all withdraw, your natural inclination for spiritual advancement will automatically increase, and you will find acceleration in your progress. “You will practically feel these three things, so come and take what we say.” In this way, you have to approach one and all, leaving the result to the Lord.

FRUITS OF ENERGY

We are only agents, and we are working because He has ordered us, so we must remember what is *bhakti*, what is devotion proper. Whatever I do, the wage I earn must not come to me; I am only an agent. The benefit should go to the proprietor, to my master, Krishna. We should move with this idea, and that will be *bhakti* proper. Otherwise, we will be engaged in *karma-kāṇḍa*: fruit-hunting. I want to enjoy the result of *karma* for myself, but the result should go to my master. I am His servant, and I am working under His order. I am His slave; I am not the proprietor. I am not the proper person to be the recipient of the fruits of energy. The master of energy is the Supreme Lord, and all the products of energy should go to Him. It must not be

tampered with on the way. This should be the attitude of every worker. Then it will be *bhakti* proper. We are not the recipients; He is the recipient. We must always be conscious that the only beneficiary is He. Only then are we devotees. We are not the beneficiaries, but selfless workers. It is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.47):

karmaṇy evādhikāras te
mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr
mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi

“You have a right to perform your duty, but you have no right to enjoy the fruits of your work.” This is a great warning. Krishna says, “Do not think that because you are not the beneficiary of the fruits of your action, you have no reason to take so much trouble to work—never.” That is the most heinous curse, to think that because I am not the beneficiary, I am not going to work. Even selfless activity is also of a lower order. Rather we must perform godly activity for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. That is *bhakti*, or devotion. And there is also a gradation in *bhakti*: there is a big division between *vidhi-bhakti* and *rāga-bhakti*, calculative devotion and spontaneous devotion.

AUTOCRAT, DESPOT, AND LIAR

God is not a constitutional king, but He is an autocrat. To work for an autocrat is the highest conception of sacrifice. What degree of selflessness and courage

is required to work for an autocrat, a despot, a liar who is up to anything? Not only that, His normal position is such. It is not a temporary temperament, but His eternal inner nature. Krishna is an autocrat because law emanates from Him. An autocrat is above law. When there are many, there is a need for law; when there is only one, there is no need for law. Krishna is a despot, but He is absolute good. If there is any check in His despotism, the world will be the loser. Goodness must have its full flow. Is that bad? Can there be any objection to this? Goodness must have its freedom to flow anywhere and everywhere. If we say that God is absolute good, then what do we lose by giving Him autocracy? Should autocracy be with the ignorant and the fools? No. The absolute good must have full autocracy. Not that law will go to bind His hands. Then we will be losers. And Krishna is a liar, to entice us, because we cannot understand the whole truth. So to entice us to gradually come to the truth, He has become a liar.

The first thing to understand is that He is all goodness, so everything emanating from Him cannot but be good. Any defect is on our side. We are encroachers. He is not an encroacher. But He shows this as His play, *līlā*. Everything belongs to Him, so there is no lying. When He says, "Let there be light," there was light: "Let there be water," there was water. If He has such potential power, can there be any lying there?

We have to sacrifice ourselves for Krishna, because He is the absolute good, beauty, and love. Faith and

selflessness are required to such a high degree. If we accept Krishna consciousness as our highest ideal, then so much sacrifice is necessary, but sacrifice means life: “Die to live.” There is no loss by sacrifice. We can only gain by giving ourselves.

So, *kīrtan*, or preaching has been accepted as the means to the end. There are so many ways by which we can approach the souls of this world with *kīrtan*: by direct approach, through books, and by performing *saṅkīrtan*, chanting the holy name congregationally. By helping others, we help ourselves: we help our own fortune and our own faith. Not only will others benefit by our performance of *kīrtan*, but we will also benefit eternally.

ETERNAL VACUUM

Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.47), “Never be attached to not doing your duty (*mā te saṅgo ’stv akarmaṇi*). Because you are required to work for Me, will you stop work? Don’t subject yourself to that painful reaction, for then you will be doomed. Don’t be attached to stop work and strike. No. That is a dangerous vacuum. Don’t jump there in that eternal vacuum, but work for Me, and you will thrive.” Krishna says, “Abandon all varieties of duty, and just surrender unto Me (*sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*). My position is such: I am your guardian, your friend, your everything. Your goal of life is to be found in Me. Believe it Arjuna. At least I must not deceive



As Śrī Chaitanya, Lord Krishna came to preach about Himself.
you. You are my friend—You can take it for certain.”

**man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi satyaṁ te
pratijāne priyo 'si me**

—*Bhagavad-gītā* (18.65)

“Think of Me always, and become My devotee.
Worship Me, and bow down before Me. In this way

you will certainly come to Me. My dear friend, I promise you on oath, I am speaking the truth. I am everything. Try to come to Me. I am the goal, the fulfillment of life not only for you, but for everyone. From the absolute consideration My position is such. At least you are My friend. I won't deceive you. You can believe Me. I promise that I am so."

How shamelessly Krishna is expressing Himself here. He has come to plead for Himself so much, for our benefit. And a record is kept in the *Bhagavad-gītā* for our guidance. And Lord Krishna came as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to preach about Himself. He came as His own canvasser with His eternal associates. He even brought *Śrīmatī* Rādhārāṇī, devotion personified, along with Him, saying, "I will show how charming Your position in My service is, how beautiful and dignified the devotion of My other half can be. So, come along with Me." And Baladeva has come as Nityānanda to canvass, and Vṛndāvana has come to canvass itself in Navadvīpa. So we are most indebted to the canvasser, especially when Krishna Himself has come to canvass and to show how beautiful, how magnanimous, and how sacrificing divine love is.

SAINTS, SCRIPTURES, AND GURUS

The purpose of pilgrimage is to hear from the saintly persons residing in a holy place. The following is a conversation with Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and three European students searching India for truth.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Why have you come to India?

Student: For pilgrimage. We came to visit the holy places like Navadvīpa, Vṛndāvana, and Jagannātha Purī. That was the main reason we came to India.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: How have you come to know all these things? By books?

Student: Yes, by the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What book?

Student: *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Oh. The *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* by Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja.

Student: Yes.

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ: “CURE THYSELF”

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Many years ago, a German scholar expressed his opinion that *Bhagavad-gītā* is the highest spiritual literature. His point was that *Bhagavad-gītā*

clearly advises us not to try to correct our environment, but to correct ourselves, to adjust with the environment. That is the key to the advice of *Bhagavad-gītā*: “Cure thyself.” We have no power to bring about changes in the environment. That is arranged by the divine will. Our environment, the sum total of all the forces acting outside us, is irremovable. We have no ability to interfere with our environment; that will only be a useless loss of energy. Rather, we must try to correct ourselves so that we can adjust with the circumstances outside us: this is the key to our success in life (*tat te ’nukampām susamīkṣamāṇo*). We have our duty to perform, but we must not aspire after the results of our activities; the results depend on Krishna (*karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana*). We make our contribution; at the same time, thousands of millions of others are contributing, creating the environment. So, we must do our duty, but we will have to accept the ultimate result as best, because it is arranged by the Absolute. There are so many results to our individual activities, but we must see how the absolute will harmonize everything and adjust ourselves accordingly.

Our responsibility lies only in discharging our duty. We must never aspire after any definite environment; the environment will go on in its own way. We have no power to change it. Rather, we must try our best to change our own self so that we may come in harmony with the environment.



Bhagavad-gītā—the highest spiritual literature. The Supreme Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna, “Cure thyself.”

Our responsibility is never in enjoying the results of our actions. Because we work for a particular result and don't obtain it, should we be discouraged? No. We should go on doing our own duty. Whatever we contribute should be offered to the infinite, and the infinite will mold the results in His own way. Krishna says, “Never aspire after any particular result for your action. At the same time, don't be idle. Don't be worthless. Go on discharging your duty without depending on any outside consequence.”

Student: Will we have to remember Krishna while we are doing this?

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Then we will be able to come in connection with Krishna and gradually we will come to

realize that our environment is friendly to us. When the reactions of our previous actions disappear, we will find that every wave is carrying good news to us. When our egoistic attitude vanishes, we will find ourselves in the midst of sweet waves all around. We should try to do away with whatever wrong we have done hitherto. We must do our duty and never expect any definite result, but cast it towards the infinite.

DISSOLVING EGO

And then one day will come when our egoistic feeling will dissolve and from within, our real self, a member of the infinite world, will spring up and awaken, and we will find ourselves in the sweet waves of that environment. There, everything is sweet. The breeze is sweet, the water is sweet, the trees are sweet, whatever we come in contact with is sweet, sweet, sweet.

Our internal ego is our enemy, and to dissolve that ego, we must do our duty as we think fit, but never expect any response according to our will. If we adopt this *karma-yoga* then in no time we will find that the wrong ego, which was always expecting something crooked for its selfish purpose, has vanished; the broad, wide ego within has come out, and we are in harmony with the whole universe. The harmonious world will appear before us, and the cover of selfish desires will disappear.

The cause of our disease is not outside us, but within us. A *paramahansa* Vaiṣṇava, a saint of the highest

platform, sees that everything is all right. He finds nothing to complain about. When one can see that everything is good and sweet to the furthest extreme, he comes to live in the plane of divinity. Our false ego creates only disturbance, and that ego should be dissolved. We should not think that the environment is our enemy. We must try hard to detect God's grace in whatever comes to us, even if it comes as an apparent enemy. Everything is the grace of the Lord, but we can't see it; rather, we see the opposite. The dirt is in our eyes.

Actually, everything is divine. It is all the grace of the Lord. The disease is in our eyes. We are diseased, and if the disease is cured, we shall find that we are in the midst of a gracious world. Only the coverings of desire deceive us from having a real estimation of the world. A bonafide student of the devotional school will accept such an attitude towards the environment and towards the Lord. We have to think that God's will is everywhere. Even a blade of grass cannot move without the sanction of the Supreme Authority. Every detail is detected and controlled by Him. We have to look upon the environment with optimism. The pessimism is within us. Our ego is responsible for all sorts of evil.

INFINITE BLISSFULNESS

This is Vaiṣṇavism. If we can do this, then in no time, our disease will be cured, and we'll be in the midst of infinite blissfulness. Our tendency at present is to

cure what we see on the outside. We think, “I want everything to follow my control, my sweet will. When everything obeys me, then I will be happy.” But we must take just the opposite attitude. As Mahāprabhu has said:

**ṭṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ**

We should create no resistance against our environment. Still, if some undesirable things come towards us, we should tolerate that with our utmost patience. And even if someone attacks us we won’t become violent; we must practice forbearance to the extreme. We shall honor everyone; we will seek no honor.

In this way, with the least amount of energy and time we can attain the highest goal: the plane where Krishna Himself is living. That is the most fundamental plane of existence. At that time, all the encasements covering the soul will vanish and die, and the inner soul will awaken and find that he is playing in a sweet wave, dancing and merry-making in Vṛndāvana, with Krishna and His devotees. And what is Vṛndāvana? It is neither a fable, nor a concocted story. The broadest and widest plane of the whole universe is beauty, sweetness, and blissfulness, and that is present in Vṛndāvana in all its fullness. We have to dive deep into that plane of reality.

Our ego has floated us on the surface of trouble in *māyā*, illusion. Concoction, and the search for selfish

satisfaction have taken us here, and these must be dissolved once and for all. And then from within, our golden selves will come out, and we will find that we are in the plane of a happy dancing mood, with Krishna in Vṛndāvana.

HEGEL'S "SELF-DETERMINATION"

In Hegelian language, this is called "self-determination." Self-determination means we must die to live. We must leave our material life and all our material habits; we have to die as we are if we want to have a real life. We must give up our false ego. Our material habits from different births are collected in the ego in subtle forms, not only from the experience of human birth, but even from animal births, tree births, and so many other births. Krishna consciousness means the wholesale dissolution of the false ego. That concocted, selfish figure within us is our enemy. The real self is hopelessly buried beneath the false ego. So great is the depth of our forgetfulness that we do not even know who we are. So, as the German philosopher Hegel said, we have to "die to live."

Reality is for itself and by itself. The world is not created for our selfish end; it has a universal end, and we are part and parcel of that. We must come to an understanding with the whole. The complete whole is Krishna and he is dancing, playing, and singing in His own way. We must enter into that harmonious dance.

Being infinitesimal, should we think that the infinite must be controlled by us? That by our whim everything will go on? This is the most crooked, heinous object ever conceived, and we are suffering from such a disease. This is the real problem in society. Our inquiry should be aimed at solving this.

Student: Does this mean we have to give up material life completely?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Not at once. Everyone must progress gradually, according to his own particular case. If one who has much affinity towards worldly life suddenly leaves that, he may not keep up his vows; he may go down again. So, according to personal capacity we must make gradual progress. That is to be taken into consideration, but still, we should always be eager to give up everything and devote ourselves exclusively to the highest duty. Those who have enough courage will jump into the unknown, thinking, “Krishna will protect me. I am jumping in the name of God. He is everywhere; He will take me on His lap.” With this idea, one who has real eagerness for the truth may leap forward.

Student: I have a problem. For ten years I’ve tried to take up this process. For ten years, I have kept from eating meat, fish, and eggs. I avoid material things—I have no attraction for them. I have left all this behind. But there is one thing I want to give up and also I don’t want to give up. This is *gañja* (marijuana).

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: That is a small thing. There are three real difficulties: the first is women, the second is money, and the third, good name and fame. These three are our enemies. Marijuana intoxication is a small thing. Anyone can give it up easily. But these three things are the fundamental aspiration of every animal, tree, bird, man, or god. These three are everywhere. But intoxication and other fleeting habits are very negligible things and can be conquered very easily.

As we have gradually come into the habit of intoxication, we have to come out; gradually, and not suddenly. Just after World War Two, we read in the newspaper that Goering, Hitler's air general, was habituated to taking much intoxication. But when he was put into jail, no intoxication was supplied to him. He became sick, but treatment went on and he was cured. His disease was cured by the medicine. We also have seen so many opium-eaters who came here, joined the temple, and gradually left their habit.

Many so-called *sādhus* smoke marijuana. It helps concentration, but that is the material mind. It disturbs faith. It is an enemy to faith. No material intoxication, but only faith can take us to our desired goal. The misguided souls think that marijuana, hashish, and so many other things can help us in our meditation. It may do something, but that is mundane and that will frustrate us in our time of need. These things cannot help us rise up very high.

SEX, DOPE, AND GOLD

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.17.38) advises that these five things should be rejected: *dyūtaṁ*: gambling, or diplomacy; *pānaṁ*: intoxication, including tea, coffee, betel, and everything else; *striyaḥ*: unlawful, illegal womanlove; *sūnā*: butchering; and the transaction of gold. Trade in gold makes one very apathetic towards progress in the line of faith. These five are very tempting.

What to speak of the mania that intoxication will help us in our meditation upon the transcendental, Devarṣi Nārada says, *yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ kāmaloḥbha-hato muhuḥ*: even what we acquire by meditation is temporary and has no permanent effect. Only real faith in the line of pure devotion can help us.

SAINTS: LIVING SCRIPTURES

Student: So, how can we develop our faith in Krishna consciousness?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: How have you come to conceive of Krishna consciousness?

Student: By reading *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: *Bhagavad-gītā*. From the scriptures. And the scriptures are written by whom? Some saint. So, the association of saints and the advice of scriptures are both necessary. The saint is the living scripture, and the scripture advises us in a passive way. A saint can actively approach us, and passively we may receive

benefit from the scriptures. The association of the scriptures and the saints can help us achieve the ultimate realization: *sādhū śāstra kṛpaya haya*. The saints are more powerful. Those who are living the life of the scriptural advice are scripture personified. In their association, and by their grace, we can imbibe such higher, subtle knowledge and faith.

All our experiences are futile in the attempt to attain the ultimate destination; only faith can lead us there. The spiritual world is far, far beyond the jurisdiction of our limited visual, aural, and mental experience. The experience of the eye, ear, and mind is very meager and limited, but faith can rise up and pierce through this area, and enter the transcendental realm.

Faith should be developed with the help of scriptures and saints. They will help us understand that the spiritual world is real and this world is unreal. At that time, this material world will be night to us, and that will be day. Presently, the eternal world is darkness to us, and we are awake in this mortal world. What is night to one is day to another. A saint is awake in some matter, and a *dacoit* (thief) is working in another plane. They are living in two separate worlds. A scientist is living in one world; a rowdy is living in another. One's day is night to another. The ordinary persons cannot see what Einstein and Newton have seen, and what the ordinary man sees is ignored by a great man. So, we have to awaken our interest in that plane, and ignore the interests of this plane.



Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja lecturing at his *āśrama* in Nabadwīp, India.
“The association of scriptures and saints can help us achieve the ultimate realization.”

WORLD WAR III: LET IT BE

Student: Many people are worried about nuclear war. They think it may come very soon.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: That is a point on a line, a line on a plane, a plane in a solid. So many times wars are coming and going; so many times the sun, the Earth, and the solar systems disappear, and again spring up. We are in the midst of such thought in eternity. This nuclear war is a tiny point; what of that? Individuals are dying at every moment; the Earth will die, the whole human section will disappear. Let it be.

We must try to live in eternity; not any particular span of time or space. We must prepare ourselves for our eternal benefit, not for any temporary remedy. The sun, the moon, and all the planets appear and vanish: they die, and then again, they are created. Within such an eternity we have to live. Religion covers that aspect of our existence. We are told to view things from this standpoint: not only this body, but the human race, the animals, the trees, the entire Earth, and even the sun, will all vanish, and again spring up. Creation, dissolution, creation, dissolution—it will continue forever in the domain of misconception. At the same time, there is another world which is eternal; we are requested to enter there, to make our home in that plane which neither enters into the jaws of death, nor suffers any change.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16) it is stated:

ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ
punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya
punar janma na vidyate

“Even Lord Brahmā, the creator himself, has to die. Up to Brahmāloka, the highest planet in the material world, the whole material energy undergoes such changes.”

But if we can cross the area of misunderstanding and enter the area of proper understanding, then there is no creation or dissolution. That is eternal, and we are children of that soil. Our bodies and minds are children of this soil which comes and goes, which is created and then dies. We have to get out of this world of death.

ZONE OF NECTAR

We are in such an area. What is to be done? Try to get out. Try your best to get out of this mortal area. The saints inform us, “Come home dear friend, let us go home. Why are you suffering so much trouble unnecessarily in a foreign land? The spiritual world is real; this material world is unreal: springing and vanishing, coming and going, it is a farce! From the world of farce we must come to reality. Here in this material world there will be not only one war, but wars after wars, wars after wars.

There is a zone of nectar, and we are actually children of that nectar that does not die (*śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ*). Somehow, we are misguided here, but really we are children of that soil which is eternal, where there is no birth or death. With a wide and broad heart, we have to approach there. This is declared by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Upaniṣads*, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* all confirm the same thing. That is our very sweet, sweet home, and we must try our best to go back to God, back to home, and take others with us.

FOSSILISM VS. SUBJECTIVE EVOLUTION

The following chapter is an excerpt from a conversation between Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and neurophysiologist Dr. Daniel Murphey, Ph.D.

Darwin has given the theory of evolution—Fossilism. *Vedānta* has given subjective evolution. In Darwin's theory of objective evolution, matter evolves consciousness. The object exists first, and by its development, life is coming, consciousness is coming—from stone. That is objective evolution. But an object is a relative term; without the subject, an object cannot stand. The subject is the primary substance. Whatever is to be felt is only an idea in the subjective ocean. So, the subject, consciousness is first. The object, the gross, proceeds from the subtle.

When a particular potency is handled by Krishna, in His form as Maha-Viṣṇu, then the material energy begins to move and produce something (*mayādhyaṁṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram*). The first product is a general ego. Then, gradually so many plural individual egos emanate from the general ego. The experience of this world develops from ego. When ego contacts the mode

of ignorance, form is produced. When it contacts the mode of goodness, the sun and light are produced. When false ego comes in connection with these three modes of nature, a division takes place, and the objects of the senses, the material senses, and the power of sense perception are generated. So, from the subtle, the gross is coming.

THE GHOST OF DARWIN

That is Vedāntic evolution. But the Darwin theory says that from the gross, the subtle is coming. At present, people are fond of the Darwin theory that stone produces consciousness. Darwin's objective evolution has swallowed us. Although externally, we reject it, we hate it, still, the ghost of Darwin's theory has devoured everyone. Therefore, it is difficult to make them understand that consciousness is more valuable than stone. It's easy for consciousness to produce stone; it is difficult for stone to produce consciousness. Consciousness is more valuable; stone is less valuable. So, a more valuable thing can produce a less valuable thing, but it is difficult to explain how a less valuable thing can produce something more valuable.

FOSSIL FATHERS

The material scientists think that the subtle proceeds from the gross. This is upside-down. It is just the opposite. Not "fossil-fatherism," but "God-fatherism." Their theory is "fossil-fatherism": the fossil is the father

of everyone. The scientists believe that everything moves upward. This is incorrect. It is coming down. This is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.1):

ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākham
 aśvatthaṁ prāhur avyayam
 chandāṁsi yasya parṇāni
 yas taṁ veda sa veda-vit

“The tree of this material world has its roots upward, while its branches extend downward. The leaves of this tree are the Vedic hymns. One who understands this tree, and its origin, is a true knower of the *Vedas*.” So, according to Vedic knowledge, everything moves from up to down, not from down to up.

Matter does not produce the soul; rather the soul contains in its one negligible portion the conception of matter. Like an eczema, it is a disease. The world exists like an eczema in a wholesome body. This is the Vedāntic understanding. It would certainly be a wonderful miracle if stone could produce the soul, but it is easier and more reasonable for us to think that the soul has produced the conception of stone. In the soul, there are many conceptions, and one conception is that of stone. It is all in the plane of consciousness. But that stone can produce soul, or consciousness, is difficult, ridiculous, inconceivable, and unreasonable. Rather, it is the opposite, something like the Berkeley theory that the world is in the mind, and not that the mind is in the world. It is only our deviation from the truth that brings

us into this mundane world. How and where that deviation begins is to be thought out. But deviation from the truth has brought us to this false area.

So, consciousness is producing everything. Consciousness is eternal; this world is not eternal. This is a temporary production, and the temporary stone cannot produce eternal consciousness. Pure consciousness is an eternal subject (*nitya sanātana*). It is not a product; it is *productive*. Ether can produce fire, and earth, but the earth cannot produce ether. The subtle is more efficient than the gross. The gross is of secondary importance. The soul, *ātmā*, is of principle importance. The origin of everything must be conscious; the starting point must begin with the interested party. The soul is endowed with interest, but a stone has no interest, plan, or project, nothing of the kind. But there is a plan and a purpose pervading everything, and that is the important thing. According to that consideration, the characteristic of the Absolute, the original substance should be calculated. An object of limited attributes and capacity cannot be the ultimate cause. Only a thing of unlimited quality and capacity should be taken as the cause of the whole. That is a more reasonable idea. Science should realize this. So, there are some who think that science is gradually trying to meet philosophy.

KARMIC BOOMERANG

Material science is only increasing the circumference of the mortal world. But increasing the tendency

of exploitation cannot help us. Science is only borrowing, extorting power from nature. According to Newton: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." We must be conscious of this fact. All our acquisition here is nothing: like a boomerang, it will come back to zero again. So scientific progress is no progress. It is "progress" in the wrong direction. Actually, the first principle of any living body is to save himself. That is the first principle, and that should be our starting point.

In the *Upaniṣads* it is said:

asato mā sad gamāya
tāmaso mā jyotir gamāya
mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamāya

"I am mortal; make me eternal. I am ignorant, filled with nescience; take me to science, knowledge. And I am threatened with misery; guide me towards bliss". We should begin our research work in these three phases: how to save one's own self and save the world; how to remove darkness and attain light; and how to remove misery and taste nectar, the sweet life of eternity, knowledge, and bliss (*sac-cid-ānandam*, *satyam śivam sundaram*).

SCIENCE DEVOURS ITSELF

This should be the line of our search; all other inquiries are false. This so-called scientific research is a wild goose chase. It is suicidal. The atomic researchers

will soon prove that this kind of science devours itself; it sucks its own blood. It will live, feeding on its own flesh and the flesh of its friends. Material scientific knowledge is no knowledge. We must acquaint ourselves with a vital understanding of pure, real knowledge. We must absorb ourselves and others in that knowledge, remove darkness and bring light, remove misery and establish eternal peace.

Science means *not* to extend the jurisdiction of exploitation, knowing full well there will be a reaction. By extending the space of exploitation, we will also surely be exploited. If one knowingly commits an offense, then he is charged with more punishment. So, so-called scientific advancement is suicidal. And it is clearly proven: presently the leading countries of the world are threatening each other with atomic weapons, the highest product of the scientists.

NEUTRON BOMB: DEATH RAY

What is the difference between the atomic bomb and the neutron bomb? The neutron bomb is something like a death-ray that will kill the people, but will not destroy the buildings. The neutron bomb: man will be killed, the houses, the buildings and everything else will be left behind. The bed will be there, the furniture, everything else will be there, but only the life will be gone, and the bodies will become rotten. That is the effect of the neutron bomb.

And those who emerge victorious will come to enjoy all these things. They will have to remove the dead bodies, and fill the place up with their own men. This is action and reaction in the plane of exploitation.

So, this is a suicidal civilization. The whole civilization is rotten to the bottom. They are exploiting nature for the apparent good of human society, but it is incurring a loan from nature that must be paid to the farthing with interest. Because they do not believe this, they will have no relief. They will be forced to clear the debt; nature won't forgive them. Nature is there like a computer, calculating. So, this civilization is anti-civilization. The whole thing is rotten, a camouflage, a treachery to the soul-world. But our policy is different; plain living and high thinking.

Our policy should be to make the best use of a bad bargain. Somehow or other, we have already come here, so now we have to utilize our time and energy in such a way that with the least exploitation we can get out of this world.

—*Editor's note: shortly after this meeting, Dr. Murphey became an initiated disciple of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj.*

ORIGIN OF THE SOUL

Since time immemorial, man has inquired about the origin of the soul. In this brief chapter, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja answers this most vital of all questions: “Who am I? Where have I come from?”

How does the soul first appear in this world? From what stage of spiritual existence does he fall into the material world? This is a broad question, which requires some background information.

There are two classes of souls, *jīvas*, who come into this world. One class comes from the spiritual Vaikuṇṭha planets by the necessity of *nitya-līlā*, the eternal pastimes of Krishna. Another comes by constitutional necessity.

The *brahmajyoti*, the nondifferentiated marginal plane, is the source of infinite *jīva souls*, atomic spiritual particles of nondifferentiated character. The rays of the Lord’s transcendental body are known as the *brahmajyoti*, and a pencil of a ray of the *brahmajyoti* is the *jīva*. The *jīva* soul is an atom in that effulgence, and the *brahmajyoti* is a product of an infinite number of *jīva* atoms.

Generally, souls emanate from the *brahmajyoti* which is living and growing. Within the *brahmajyoti*, their equilibrium is somehow disturbed and movement begins. From nondifferentiation, differentiation begins. From a plain sheet of uniform consciousness, individual conscious units grow. And because the *jīva* is conscious, it is endowed with free will. So, from the marginal position they choose either the side of exploitation or the side of dedication.

Kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi bahirmukha. *Anādi* means that which has no beginning. When we enter the land of exploitation, we come within the factor of time, space, and thought. And when we come to exploit, action and reaction begins in the negative land of loan. Although we strive to become masters, really we become losers.

Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha servitors are also seen to be within the jurisdiction of the *brahmaṇḍa*, the material universe, but that is only a play, *līlā*. They come from that higher plane only to take part in the Lord's pastimes and then return. The fallen souls come from the marginal position within the *brahmajyoti*, and not from Vaikuṇṭha.

The first position of a soul in the material world will be like that of Brahmā, the creator. Then his *karma* may take him to the body of a beast like a tiger, where he is surrounded with a tigerish mentality, or to the body of a tree or creeper, where different impressions

may surround him. In this way, one is involved in action and reaction. The case is complex; to analyze the details of the history of a particular atom is unnecessary. We are concerned with the general thing: how the transformation of the material conception springs from pure consciousness.

ELECTRONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Matter is not independent of spirit. In the *brahma-jyoti* we are equipoised in the marginal potency as an infinite number of pinpoints of spiritual rays, electrons of consciousness. Consciousness means endowed with free will, for without free will no consciousness can be conceived. An atomic pinpoint of consciousness has very meager free will, and by misuse of their free will some *jīvas* have taken their chance in the material world. They refused to submit to the supreme authority; they wanted to dominate. So, with this germinal idea of domination, the *jīva* enters into the world of exploitation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.27) it is stated:

icchā-dveṣa samutthena
dvandva-mohena bhārata
sarva-bhūtāni sammohaṁ
sarge yānti parantapa

“Two principles in a crude form awaken in the *jīva*: hatred and desire. Then, gradually the soul comes down to mingle with the mundane world.” At first, sympathy and apathy develop in a crude form, just as when a

sprout springs up with two leaves. And gradually these two things help us to dive deep into this mundane world.

Upon retiring from the world of exploitation, the soul may return to his former position in the *brahmajyoti* as spirit. But, if the soul has gathered the tendency of dedication through his previous devotional activities, he does not stop there; he pierces through the *brahmajyoti* and goes towards Vaikuṇṭha.

Why has the soul come to the world of exploitation, and not the world of dedication? That should be attributed to his innate nature, which is endowed with free will. It is a free choice. This is substantiated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5. 14):

na kartṛtvaṁ na karmāṇi
lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ
na karma-phala-saṁyogaṁ
svabhāvas tu pravartate

“The soul is responsible for his entrance into the land of exploitation.” The responsibility is with the soul; otherwise, the Lord would be responsible for his distressed condition. But Krishna says that the soul’s innate freewill is responsible for his entanglement in the material world. The soul is conscious, and consciousness means endowed with freedom. Because the soul is atomic, his freewill is imperfect and vulnerable. The result of that free choice is that some are coming into the material world, and some are going to the spiritual world. So, the responsibility is with the individual soul.

THE RIGHT TO WRONG

Once, an Indian political leader, Śyāmasundar Chakravartī, asked our spiritual master, Prabhupād, “Why has the Lord granted such freedom to the *jīva*?” Prabhupād told him, “You are fighting for freedom. Don’t you know the value of freedom? Devoid of freedom, the soul is only matter.” Freedom offers us the alternative to do right or wrong. Once, Gandhi told the British authorities, “We want freedom.” They replied, “You are not fit to have self-government. When you are fit, we shall give it to you.” But finally, he told them, “We want the freedom to do wrong.” So, freedom does not guarantee only acting in the right way; freedom has its value independent of right and wrong.

Freewill is only absolute with the Absolute Truth. Because we are finite, our freewill is infinitesimal. The possibility of committing a mistake is there. Our first choice was to dominate, and so, gradually we have entered the world of domination. As a result of this first action, everything else has developed. So, in different ranks, the species have been divided, from the demigods down to the trees and stones. And watery bodies, gaseous bodies, anything that we find here has evolved in that way. The activating principle in any form of embryological development is the soul, and from the soul, everything has evolved.

KNOWLEDGE ABOVE MORTALITY

Knowledge above mortality is knowledge proper. Mundane knowledge has no value, for it does not endure. We must inquire elsewhere for permanent knowledge. Real knowledge is stable; it has a firm foundation, and Vedic education deals with how to acquire that knowledge. The meaning of the word *veda* is “Know.” No rhyme or reason is shown why you should know, and no explanation is given: simply “Know.”

Because doubt is absent in the spiritual plane, no cheating is possible. It is a simple, direct transaction—“Know.” In that transcendental plane, everyone is a confidential friend, and they are stainless in their conduct. No cheating tendency is possible there, so there is no suspicion. Here, we are in the plane of misunderstanding and doubt, so we want to examine everything. We are living in a vulnerable and vitiated plane, where people cheat one another. We cannot rely on others, for they may deceive us. But where cheating is unknown, transactions are very simple and straightforward. So, no reason is given for suggestions that come down from that plane. Now, the question arises how to attain that

sort of true, comprehensive, and non-deceptive knowledge? In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34) Krishna says:

**tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ**

“To learn knowledge above mortality you must approach a self-realized soul, accept him as your spiritual master and take initiation from him. Inquire submissively, and render service unto him. Self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you, for they have seen the truth.”

SUPERKNOWLEDGE

We have to approach the domain of knowledge with self-surrender, honest inquiry, and a serving attitude. We have to approach that plane with the mentality of slavery. Higher knowledge will not serve a person of lower status. If we want perfect knowledge at all, we will have to serve the Supreme Lord. He will use us for His own purpose; not that we will use Him. We may be subjects in this mundane world, but we will have to become objects to be handled by the superknowledge of that plane. If we want to connect with that higher knowledge, we must approach with this attitude.

Praṇipāta means that I have finished my experience here; I have no charm or aspiration for anything in this world. Then there is *paripraśna*, or honest, submissive, and humble inquiry with sincere eagerness, and not

with a challenging mood; otherwise perfect knowledge won't care to descend to us. Krishna is already full in Himself, so we have to enter His domain only to fulfill His purpose. He can't be subservient to us, for we are tiny persons with meager experience and a conception of mean fulfillment. We cannot handle Him; we can approach Him only if we like to be handled by Him. So, such a favorable environment should be created where real knowledge is to be cultivated. That knowledge is supreme, and cannot be subservient to the mundane conception, the world of mortality. It is *sac-cid-ānanda*. *Sat* means unassailable existence, *cit* means consciousness, and *ānanda* means beauty and pleasure.

"I must try to relieve myself of my present material miseries and inquire after a proper land where I can live happily." Having come to this conclusion, we will have to search for a person who is a bonafide agent of the higher world and consult with him about how we can be relieved from this present undesirable environment. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.21) it is said:

tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta
jijñāsuḥ śreyaḥ uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇātām
brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam

"What is the conception of real good, and who is considered to be a bonafide agent of the truth? One who has knowledge of the scripture that has descended from the upper domain, who has theoretical as well as

practical knowledge of higher truth, must be approached by a bonafide inquirer, for such a qualified spiritual master can impart proper knowledge to the sincere student.” In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.12) it is also stated:

**tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samiṭ-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-ṇiṣṭhaṁ**

“In order to learn transcendental knowledge, one must approach a genuine spiritual master coming in disciplic succession, who is fixed in the Absolute Truth.”

In this verse, the word *tata* means “after this.” When one’s calculation is finished, he thinks, “Life is not worth living here in this world of birth, death, old age, and disease. I must have a better world in which to live, where I can live as a gentleman. At every moment death is devouring everything. Birth, death, old age, and disease — all these troubles prevent me from fulfilling my ambitions here. I want something categorically different.” At that time, taking the responsibility on his own shoulders, without giving any trouble to the *guru*, and at the risk of poverty, ill-feeding, and so many other hardships, he will approach the *guru*. It is a free transaction. Not that he will give something to *gurudeva*, but he will collect what is necessary for sacrifice, for education, and at his own risk he will approach the spiritual master.

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH SOUND

And what will be the position of the *guru*? He will be well-versed in the scriptures, the *śruti-śāstra*, or that

knowledge which can only be acquired through the medium of sound, by attentive earnest hearing (*śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*).

Brahmā niṣṭham means, “One who is established in *brahman*, spirit, and who is acquainted with the causal position of the universe.” That is described in the *Upanisads*:

yeto vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante,
yena jātāni jīvanti
yat prayanty abhisamviśanti
tad vijijñāsasva
tad eva brahma

—*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 3.1

“The Supreme Brahman is the origin and shelter of all living beings. When there is a creation, He brings them forth from their original state, and at the time of annihilation, He devours them. After creation, everything rests in His omnipotence, and after annihilation, everything again returns to rest in Him.” These are the confirmations of the Vedic hymns.

yasmin vijñāte sarvam evaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati
yasmin prāpte sarvam idaṁ prāptam bhavati

“By knowing Him, everything is known; by getting Him, everything is gained.” We have come to inquire about *Brahman*, the biggest, the all-accommodating principle by knowing which we can know anything and everything. And it is possible; it is not impossible. The *Upaniṣads* say, “If you want to know anything, then

know the whole. And what is the nature of the whole? Everything is coming from Him, everything is being maintained by Him, and again everything enters into Him. That is *Brahman*; so try to know that. If you can know that, everything will be known to you.”

This is also explained in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.31.14):

yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
 tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopaśākhāḥ
 prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇāṃ
 tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā

“Just as if you pour water onto the root of a tree, the whole tree is fed, and just as when you supply food to the stomach, the whole body is fed, so if you can gain knowledge of the prime cause, *Brahman*, then you can know anything and everything.” Faith in this is called *śraddhā*.

The *Vedānta-sūtra*, the very gist of the *Vedas*, says *athāto brahmā jijñāsa*: “Now that you have finished with the fruitive activities recommended in the *karma-kāṇḍa* section of the *Vedas* by Jaimini, we ask you to inquire about Brahman.”

That is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.1) *janmādy asya yato ’nvyād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāt*: “Friends, let us inquire into the prime cause, whose nature is such that whatever we can see, and whatever we can conceive of, springs from Him. He is the ultimate cause of everything, both directly and indirectly.”

Only He knows the purpose for which all things are created and maintained. Only He knows where all things will go. Only He is aware of that fact —no one else.

Artheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāt, means that He knows the meaning of every incident in existence and that He is above giving any explanation to others. He is not responsible to any law or to anyone else. He is absolute and independent.

VEDIC REVELATION

And how do we know that? He has extended knowledge of Himself through the *Vedas*. *Brahma* means *Veda*. So, by the line of inspiration, or revelation, Vedic knowledge was transmitted to the first living being, the creator of the world, Lord Brahmā (*tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi kavaye*). The scholars of the world fail to understand the strategy and nature of that sort of knowledge. They cannot follow the vital and fundamental points of Vedic knowledge, such as the transformation of one thing into another (*muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ*). Water may be transformed into gas, gas may be transformed into ether, earth may be transformed into heat: by such a process, we can understand the existence of this world (*tejo vāri mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā*), for by the transformation of the Lord's energy, this world comes into being. This transformation involves the three mode of nature; *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*. *Tama* means hard, static matter. *Raja*

अथ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता

अथ प्रथमोऽध्यायः

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय ॥

संजय उवाच

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥
पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥

The original Sanskrit text of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the essence of all Vedic knowledge, recorded more than fifty centuries ago in the Himalayas by the sage Vyāsa.

means energy, and *sattva* means spirit, light, knowledge. So, by transformation this world has been created.

In His abode, which is illumined by the ray of His own knowledge, there is no possibility of deception or misunderstanding. (*dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmahi*).

Here, we are being deceived through misunderstanding. We have entered a plane of existence where the whole world is full of misconception, falsity, and miscalculation. We are presently living in the world of *māyā*. *Māyā* means *mā-yā*: “What is not.” I am seeing something which is really something else.

REALITY: BY ITSELF AND FOR ITSELF

Īśāvāsyam —everything is meant for God. That is the Hegelian theory: reality is by itself and for itself. Hegel is the founder of Ideal Realism, so he says, “Reality is by itself and for itself.” “By itself,” means that He is His own cause; no one has created Him. Otherwise, whoever had created Him would have primary importance. “For itself,” means that God exists only to fulfill His own purpose. This is the universal truth: everything is for Him, and nothing is for anyone else. So, when we think that the things around us are meant for us, or for our nation, or for the human beings, this is all a false calculation, and knowledge based on such a miscalculation has its reaction.

“To every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.” I am eating something; it is entitled to eat me. In the *Manu Samhitā*, the word *māṁsaḥ* is used to indicate meat. *Mām* means “Me,” *saḥ* means “he.” *Māṁsaḥ* means “me-he.” What is the meaning? I am eating him; and he will eat me afterwards as a reaction. He is entitled to devour me, as I am at present devouring

him. This is the underlying meaning—every action, whatever it is, has its reaction. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.9):

yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra
loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya
mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara

“Unless work is done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu, one’s own work will be the cause of bondage; therefore work on My behalf, and free yourself from the chain of action and reaction.” *Bhagavad-gītā* says that any work, no matter what it is, causes a reaction. For example, you may nurse a patient. Apparently, it is a good thing, but you are giving the patient medicine that comes from killing so many insects, trees, creepers, and animals. You may think that your nursing is a very pure duty, but you are causing a disturbance in the environment, and you will have to pay for that. In this way, whatever we do here cannot be perfectly good. The German philosopher Kant has said, “Without good will, no action can be perfectly good.” But we are of the opinion that even good will is impossible here in this mundane plane. According to Kant, good will is a pure thing, whereas no action here can be perfect, but we say that even good will is impossible in the relative calculation of the world, because we are plodding in the mud of misunderstanding.

Pure knowledge comes only from above, and we

have to learn to accept that. When that sort of understanding comes within us, it is known as *śraddhā*, or faith. Faith is also a great thing. We should have faith that if we do our duty towards the absolute, then all our duties to the environment in all directions are automatically done (*Kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva karma kṛta haya*). By satisfying Krishna, the whole universe becomes satisfied, for one who is dear to Krishna is dear to the whole universe (*yasmin tuṣṭe jagat tuṣṭam prīṇite prīṇito jagat*). Just as by watering the root of the tree all the leaves and branches are automatically nourished, by fulfilling one's duty towards Lord Krishna all one's duties are automatically fulfilled.

KRISHNA'S TRANSCENDENTAL ABODE

Everything is meant for Krishna. We are also meant for Him (*iśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*). This is true knowledge, and this is the true situation of the world. Exploitation is an incomplete and reactionary idea for which we incur a debt that we shall later have to pay. We may go to Satyaloka, the highest planet in the material universe, but by exploiting nature, we incur a debt, become heavy, and go down. And when we go down, others come to exploit and extort us until our debts are paid. Then the heaviness goes, and we become light and go upward to the higher planetary systems again. And when we go up, we exploit those who are in a lower position. In this way, there is continual

exploitation and clearance of debt. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16):

ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ
punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya
punar janma na vidyate

“All planetary systems within this world of matter are places of repeated birth and death, but one who attains My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.” Upon going there, one never returns to this material world (*yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama*). Krishna’s abode is *nirguṇa*, or transcendental to any material quality.

We must firmly establish the conception of *īśāvāsyam*: everything, including ourselves, is meant for the Supreme Lord. We are all His servants, and we are meant to utilize everything in His service. Any work we perform will bind us in this environment of matter, unless we perform *yajña*, sacrifice (*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanaḥ*). And the *Vedas* enjoin, *yajño vai viṣṇu*: “Sacrifice is meant exclusively for Viṣṇu, or Krishna.” This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.24), where Krishna says, “I am the only enjoyer of every sacrifice.” (*aham hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca*). Sacrifice is not meant for the country, or for the society, or for anything else. Sacrifice is meant only for the Supreme Lord. No one less than He is worthy of sacrifice. So, only by connecting our

activities with the infinite can we be freed from the present environment of action and reaction.

When knowledge comes in connection with the absolute, it loses its filthy characteristic. Then we can have full knowledge, which will lead us to *prema-bhakti*, love of God. Everything is meant for Krishna. He is the only enjoyer of everything. He is the absolute autocrat, and He is the absolute good. We are all His servants, and everything is meant for His satisfaction. We must come to this understanding. The *guru-kula* system of Vedic education should be conceived in this line.

GURU—HEAVIER THAN THE HIMALAYAS

Guru means “heavy.” *Guru* means “one who dispels the darkness,” and “who is heavy, who cannot be moved by any proposal.” He is so well-established in the truth that no offer of alternative knowledge, or any other proposal, can move him from his position. He is firm there. He can help the *laghu*, the people who are very light; those whom anyone can handle like dolls of play. But the *guru* can never be moved from his position. He will sit tight there, heavier than the Himalayas, and face all fleeting conceptions of knowledge, breaking them right and left, and establishing the universal characteristic of absolute knowledge. He will impart knowledge of the Absolute Truth, *Brahman*, the supreme whole, dispelling all misconceptions and establishing knowledge of the

absolute upon the throne of the heart. This is the conception of *guru-kula*, the Vedic system of education of ancient India.

The Vedic system of education deals with knowledge proper—not half-knowledge, but knowledge of the whole, which can deliver us from all troubles and guide us to the most desirable position. Nowadays, we can sell knowledge, but *this* knowledge cannot be sold. Intellectual knowledge can be taken into the market, but this knowledge cannot be taken into the market, for this is absolute knowledge. Vedic knowledge gives us our fulfillment of life, attaining which we will no longer feel the necessity to run here and there for any greater knowledge.

Previously, that knowledge was taught within the *guru-kula*, the ancient Vedic school. Vedic knowledge means knowledge which comes from outside the area of misunderstanding, miscalculation, and false historiography. The books recorded here are filled with temporary truths and misconceptions. Such things may be useful now, but after some time, it won't work; mundane law will have no position, and everything will be dissolved. The Earth will be dissolved. Matter will be dissolved, and we won't be able to trace any quality of matter when everything is reduced to ether. No trace of air, or heat, or anything else will remain in any way. With the dissolution of this mundane world, nothing will remain but transcendental knowledge.

THE LAND OF DEDICATION

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.6) Krishna says, “One who reaches My abode never returns to this material world (*yad gatvāna nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama*). The dissolution will go on in the plane of the material world, but if you can secure a visa for that land, if you can enter into that soil, you will never be mishandled. When the sun, moon, and stars are all dissolved, your eternal self, your devotional ego, will be quite safe in My plane.” The material world is the land of exploitation; the spiritual world is the opposite—the land of dedication. In the middle there is the *brahmajyoti*: the line of demarcation between exploitation and dedication.

Here in this material world, every unit is of an exploiting nature; there it is just the opposite. Everything there is wholly dedicated to the service of Krishna, and there is no want of anything, rather whatever is necessary to make service to Krishna possible comes automatically. Here, everything is based on *kāma*, desire, so real service is not possible in this plane.

There is no possibility of exploitation existing in the land of dedication, for every unit there is a dedicating one. In the lower portion of the land of dedication there is some calculation, some awe and reverence. But in the higher sphere, it is all automatic spontaneous love: a labor of love, with increased intensity and earnestness. And we are only charmed by the beauty and love that is found in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the

supreme abode of Krishna. In a nutshell, this is what we understand by the grace of our spiritual masters. We are very much attracted by this conception which has been given to us by our *gurudeva* as he has received it from the Vedic scriptures, especially the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This has been explained by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, by His teachings and practices, and this conception has been expounded by His followers, the Six Goswāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

SIX PHILOSOPHIES OF INDIA

There are six ancient philosophical systems of India. The first is the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy of Kaṇāda Ṛṣi: the atomic theory. According to him, everything is made of atoms. So many different atoms combine and produce this world. *Kaṇa* means atomic particle. So many atomic particles have combined and produced this world by chance, with no necessity of any reason, rhyme, consciousness, nothing of the kind. And the outcome of these combinations has produced what we find here. That is the opinion of Kaṇāda: it is an atomic world.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the nineteenth century founder of the Krishna consciousness movement, sings in one song: *keśava! turyā jagata vicitra*. “O my Lord Krishna, I see that everything is available in Your world, which has an infinite, variegated nature. Separated from You, however, we are always feeling miseries. A continuous flow of suffering has swallowed us from birth to death, and we cannot tolerate the pain of such misery. And so many relief agents: Kapila, Patañjali, Gautama, Kaṇāda, Jaimini, Buddha, are running towards us, offering their solutions.”

ANALYSIS, YOGA, AND LOGIC

Kapila has come with the *Sāṅkhya* philosophical system of analysis saying, “Analyze matter, and you will be free from all this pain.” Patañjali has come with yoga, “Hey, *jīvātma*! Come to meet *Paramātmā*! Then all the problems of this world will go away from you. Come in connection with *Paramātmā*, the Supersoul.” This is his recommendation .

Gautama comes with logic, *nyāya śāstra*: “There is one Maker, one Creator, but He is indifferent. He has created this world, finished, and left it. And you must try to live with the help of your reason. Develop your reasoning faculty, and be reasonable in all your conduct. Then only can you help yourself in this world. There is no other remedy. Be a good logician, and then you will be able to control the environment with the power of reason, and you will be happy.” And Kaṇāda: “By chance atoms have been combined, and with the dissolution of atoms, nothing will remain. Why do you bother? Don’t care. What is fate? It is nothing; ignore it. And when the body is dissolved, nothing will remain. Why lament?”

ATOMIC THEORY AND KARMA

Then, with the philosophy of *karma-mīmāṃsā*, Jaimini says, “There may be One who has connected us with this world and our *karma*, but *karma* is all in all. He is an indifferent observer. He has got no hold on us

any longer. According to our *karma* we shall thrive or we shall go down. So, these activities are recommended to you. If you go on with your *karma* you will be happy. Of course, it cannot be denied; *karma phala*, the result of *karma*, diminishes and is ended. But stick to *karma*, good *karma*; don't go to bad *karma*. The result of good *karma* will be finished, but that does not matter; again go on doing good *karma*, and the good result will await you in heaven, and you will have a happy life. If anything is friendly to you, it is your *karma*. There is God, but He is indifferent. He is bound to serve you either good or bad, according to your *karma*. He has no independence."

"DISSOLVE YOUR MIND"—BUDDHA

Then another class of philosophy is that of Buddha: "Only the combination of different things has created your mental system. With the dissolution of the mental system, nothing remains. So, somehow, we must dissolve the mental system. Practice *ahimsā*, nonviolence, *satya*, truthfulness, and so on."

It is seen that all these philosophers are talking either of renunciation or of exploitation (*bhukti*, *mukti*). And by setting different types of enchanting traps, they arrange to capture the *jīva* soul. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "But I have come to realize that these fellows are all cheaters. And they all have this common stand; they have no touch of Your devotion, Your service.

There, they are one. They cannot deliver any real good. They are common to oppose Your devotional service and supremacy. And ultimately they leave us in chaos.

“But from the ultimate standpoint, I see that they are agents engaged by You to segregate the seriously diseased persons to another ward, for the good of the less seriously diseased patients. It is Your arrangement to segregate the hopeless persons to another side for the benefit of the good side. That is Your design, and they are playing in Your hand like so many dolls. They are Your agents and they are also serving You in some way, because nothing is outside You.” Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura concludes saying, “I bid good-bye to them all. I feel in my heart that I shall show respect to all these so-called good agents from a distance, however, my only real capital is the dust of the holy feet of Your devotees. I rely on that dust as the source of all my prospects. I seek to put all my energy into taking the dust of their holy lotus feet upon my head. This is everything for me.”

BEYOND CHRISTIANITY

In the following conversation, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja compares theistic beliefs with some Christian students from America.

Christian: Can you explain the Vaiṣṇava viewpoint of Christianity?

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Christianity is incomplete Vaiṣṇavism — not full-fledged, but the basis of devotional theism. We find the principle of “Die to live” there to a certain extent, at least physically. The Christians say that the ideal shown by Jesus is self-sacrifice. In our consideration, however, that is not full-fledged theism, but only the basis. It is an unclear, vague conception of Godhead: “We are for Him.” But how much? And in what shape, in what attitude? All these things are unexplained and unclear in Christianity. Everything is hazy, as if seen from far off. It does not take any proper shape. The cover is not fully removed, allowing us to come face to face with the object of our service. The conception of service to God is there, and a strong impetus to attain that, so the foundation is good, but the structure over the foundation is unclear, vague, and imperfect.

Christian: Christians like the ideas of surrender, service, and giving everything to God.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, that is common. But surrender to whom?

Christian: Christians say that Jesus is the only way.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, and his way is “Die to live,” but what for? What is our positive attainment? What is our positive engagement in the Lord’s service? We must not only submit in gratefulness to the highest authority, but we must have a direct connection with Him, and cent percent engagement in His service. Simply going on in our own way, praying, “Oh God, give us our bread,” going to the church once a week is not sufficient. Twenty-four hour engagement is possible in full-fledged theism. God can engage us twenty-four hours a day—we must attain that position: full engagement with Him. Everything else is subordinate to that position.

ADAM AND EVE: FORCED TO LABOR

Christian: There are some Christian traditions that are very similar to Krishna consciousness.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: They are very akin in their foundation. We agree that we must sacrifice everything for God. But who is He? And who am I? And what is our relationship? Christianity gives us only a hazy conception.

In the Christian conception, when Adam and Eve were surrendered, they had no problems in life. But then they tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge, calculation of self-interest, and they fell, and were forced to live a life of labor. Only a general idea of

our relationship with God is given there, but when we have to define in detail the characteristics of God, and in which relationships to approach Him, Christianity gives us only a hazy idea.

Once some Christian priests told our *guru mahārāj* that *mādhurya rasa* (conjugal relationship with God) is also found within Christianity. In the middle ages, there was a fashion amongst the Christians to consider Christ as a bridegroom, and some parable is also given where Lord Jesus Christ is considered as a bridegroom. So, they said that *mādhurya rasa*, the consort relationship, is also found within Christianity. Prabhupād told them, “That is with His Son, with His devotee; not with God.” Son means *guru*, the deliverer.

FATHER, SON, AND GHOST

Their conception of God is the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Ghost. The Ghost is perhaps considered to have the highest position. If it is so, then Christianity ends in *brahmavāda nirviśeṣa*. Do you follow?

Christian: Yes. I think you explained before that *Brahman* means the impersonal aspect of God’s existence.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: God the Father means God the creator. God the Son is *guru*. And God as Ghost perhaps holds the supreme position in Christianity: over the Father conception, and over the Son conception. If that is the case, then their understanding goes to impersonal *Brahman*.

I was told that once in a drama in Germany, they had to show the figure of God, so in some high position in a balcony they put a figure of grave nature with a gray beard, commanding from there. God the Father was shown like that. That is their idea: the Fatherhood of Godhead, a gray-bearded, old man as God. But from the consideration of *rasa* and *ānanda*, ecstasy, God should be the center of all different relationships, including sonhood, and consortherhood.

To conceive of God as our Father is an incomplete understanding, for parents are also servitors. He must be in the center; not in any extremity of the whole. He is not simply watching over the whole; the conception of Krishna is that of God in the center. Of all approaches to God, the approach for a loving relationship is supreme. The intensity of that relationship is to be considered, and God must be at the center of all loving relationships. *Ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān*. *Ānanda* is the most precious thing ever discovered. And the full representation of the highest *ānanda* should be considered as the highest absolute which can attract everyone: not by power, not by force, but by charm. The center of all attraction is Krishna. His attraction is by beauty, by charm, and by love — and not by coercion and force. That is the Krishna conception of Godhead.

Christian: Christians are afraid to go beyond Jesus, because Jesus has warned us about cheaters.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I am not speaking about the Christians;



The center of all attraction is Krishna. His attraction is by beauty, by charm, and by love — not by coercion and force.

I am speaking about Jesus, who has given the ideals of Christianity. I am speaking about the principles of Jesus. He has given some understanding by installments, but not full knowledge. We agree about the

strong foundation of theism. Jesus was crucified because he said, "Everything belongs to my Father. Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and render unto God that which is His." So, the foundation is very good; it is laudable, but that is only the first installment of the theistic conception.

Who is my Lord? What is His nature? Who am I? What is my inner self, and what is my connection with Him? How can I live continuously in His memory and service? The conception that we are meant for Him, designed and destined for Him, is laudable, but it must be clarified. We must attain the highest position. All these things are absent in Christianity. Only sacrifice for the Lord is given, and that is all right, it is the basic necessity of the soul. But after that, what is to be achieved? They are silent.

BEYOND JESUS

Christian: They are afraid to go beyond Jesus.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, but there is so much grace, so much love in divinity that God can sit on our lap and embrace us. A much more intimate connection is unfolded in Vaiṣṇavism. But if we are afraid to cross the fundamental advice of Jesus, then we become *sahajiyās* (imitationists). We must risk everything for our Lord and make our position firm in His service. We must die to live. And what is living? We have to analyze what real life is. And if without dying, we want to drag

God into our fleshy play, then we become *sahajiyās*, imitationists.

We must cross the threshold given by Jesus. He has declared, "Die to live." The Lord's company is so valuable to us that we must risk everything for Him. This material achievement is nothing; it is all poison. We must have no attraction for it. We must be ready to leave everything, all our material prospects and aspirations, including our body, for Him. God is great. But what is His greatness? What is my position? How can I engage myself in His service twenty-four hours a day? Here, Jesus is silent.

We receive no specific program from the Christians at this stage, so Vaiṣṇavism comes to our heart's relief, to satisfy our inner necessity, whatever it may be. Our inner thirst will be quenched there. You may be conscious or unconscious of the many demands within you, but they will reach full satisfaction in its most beautiful form there alone. It is not only that from far off we shall show God some reverential salute, but we can have Him in a very intimate way. The ideal of an intimate loving connection with God has been given by Vaiṣṇavism, especially by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and in Vṛndāvana, the land of Krishna.

The feeling of possessing anything here in the material world cannot be real; it is a perverted reflection, but that feeling must be present in the original world,

otherwise what is its origin? From where do the different feelings of necessity within us come? They must be present in the causal world, for everything is emanating from Krishna. So, the hankering of every atom of our body, mind, and soul will receive its greatest fulfillment there. This understanding is given by Vaiṣṇavism, by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ: ITS HISTORY AND TEACHINGS

Christian: I've heard of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. What is the history of its origin?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna tells Arjuna, "What I am saying to you now is not a new thing. I have already told this to Sūrya, the sun-god, and he delivered it to Manu, the father of man. In this way, this knowledge descended in disciplic succession, and by the influence of time it was finished. Again, I am repeating that ancient knowledge to you."

This refers to *karma-yoga*: "Don't care about the result, good or bad; go on with your duty. Then you can have general peace of mind."

Christian: What is the message of the *Bhagavad-gītā*?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: There are different stages of education imparted in *Bhagavad-gītā*: *bhakti-yoga*, *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, so many different layers of theism, but pure devotional theism begins where Krishna says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya* "Give up your affinity to all other

activities, whether religious or nonreligious, and wholly surrender to Me. Don't try to push your demands on Me, but ask Me what will be most beneficial for you. And what shall I do on your behalf? Fully surrender to Me, and I will give Myself to you."

"All these other methods and their prospects are more or less effective and valuable, but don't aspire after anything but Me. That will be your highest prospect; to want Me, to have Me, to live in Me, to do what I say, to enter into My own personal family in my private life. That will be your highest attainment. Don't aspire for anything else from Me. The comparative study of all religious aspirations will show that the highest inner necessity may be satisfied by entrance into My personal private dealings."

Christian: Christians think that if we are to be sincere, we should follow the Bible. We take very literally the word of Christ.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, according to one's capacity he may be enlisted in a particular class. Some will go to Christianity, and after finishing that, if their hankering is still unsatisfied, they will seek somewhere else, thinking, "What is God? I want to know more perfectly."

In this regard, I can give one example: there was a Professor Nixon in England. He went to fight against Germany in the First World War, on the French side. As he was flying over the German lines, his airplane was hit, and began to fall. He saw that the plane would

fall on the German lines. When I met him here in India, he told me, “At that time, I prayed, ‘If there is any God, let Him save me, and I promise that if I do not die in this plane crash, I will go to search after Him. I will devote my whole life in search of Him.’”

The plane crashed, and when Professor Nixon regained consciousness, he found that he was behind the French lines, in a hospital in France. At that time, He thought to himself, “There is God! He has heard my last prayer.” When his wounds were healed, he went straight to England to see some churchmen. He told them, “I want to search after God, and engage myself twenty-four hours a day in the cause of His service. I want to see Him face to face.”

BISHOPS: “GO TO INDIA”

He saw many clergymen and even some bishops, and they ultimately advised him, “If you want to see God face to face, then go to India. We cannot recommend such a process to you. But we have heard that in India there are *yogīs* who internally connect with the Lord in the heart. You may try your fortune there.” So, he came here to India, where he met the Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University. In talking with him, Professor Nixon met the Vice-Chancellor’s wife, who was a Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava, a devotee of Mahāprabhu. He was so much charmed by her advice that he accepted her as his *guru*. Finally he took *sannyās* (the renounced

order of life), and his name became Swāmī Krishna Prema. He established a temple here in India, and preached about *bhāgavata-dharma*, and Mahāprabhu.

He made a comparative study of all religions, beginning from Christianity, and gradually came to Vaiṣṇavism, attracted by Mahāprabhu's gift. One German scholar also said, "In all the religious conceptions of the world, the conception of twenty-four hour engagement with God (*aṣṭakālīya-līlā*) has never been given. I have studied all religious theologies, but none could even conceive of twenty-four hour service to the Supreme Lord. It is only given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*."

Rūpa Goswāmī has given the scientific representation of Krishna: *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ*. He is the reservoir of all possible pleasures. All possible tendencies for satisfaction that we may feel, and even those that we may not feel are present in Krishna and have their ideal, purest satisfaction with Him alone. He is all-accommodating and all-comprehensive. Whatever satisfaction our inner heart demands can be fulfilled only by Him.

Christian: Some Christians are so much afraid to go beyond the Bible that they will not make a study of other theistic beliefs.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: According to one's capacity, he will purchase in the market (*sve sve 'dhikare ya niṣṭha sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ*). In the market, there may be valuable things, but the buyer must have some capacity to purchase them. The ṛṣis, the tradesmen of knowledge have also gone so far

as to say, “This is the highest. Go no further.” Similarly, Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.35), *svadharme nidhanam śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahah*: “Don’t go ahead—you’ll be doomed. Take your stand here; go no further.”

Why is such a great warning given to us? Generally our teachers advise us, “Pay full attention here. Only then will you understand everything completely, and your march to the end-point will be sincere and satisfactory. Otherwise, *sahajiyāism*, imitationism will enter your heart. Do you think that in one leap you can capture the summit of a hill? Impossible. You must march, but your march must be sincere. You must make real progress, not imitative progress.” This warning is given at every stage of life. “This is the highest for you. Give your whole attention to this. Don’t be absent-minded and haphazard in your study. Engage yourself fully in this lesson, and the next higher stage will come to you automatically.”

As a matter of policy, we are told that our present stage of instruction is the highest. When a professor comes to teach a child, he will accept the mentality of the child. He will say, “Only go so far, and no further. This is the final stage; give your whole attention to understanding this point, and when that is finished, then go further.” In this way, by gradual installments, knowledge is revealed.

Christian: So, there are different stages for different persons?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given his decision, in his *Tattva-sūtra*, that although when *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken to Arjuna, he engaged himself in fighting, had it been Uddhava in place of Arjuna, after hearing the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā* where Krishna says, “Give up everything and surrender to Me,” Uddhava would have accepted this and gone away from the warfield. Upon hearing the same advice, Arjuna acted in one way, but Uddhava would have acted in another. After hearing the first installment of Krishna’s instructions Arjuna tells Krishna in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.1-2):

jyāyāsī cet karmaṇas te
matā buddhir janārdana
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ
niyojayasi keśava
vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena
buddhiṁ mohayasīva me
tad ekaṁ vada niścitya
yena śreya ’ham āpnuyām

“You say that *jñāna*, knowledge, is better than *karma*, work. Why then do you want to engage me in this dreadful *karma* of fighting?” Then Krishna said, “You have your capacity in *karma*: finish your career, and then you can aspire to come to the level of *jñāna*, inquiry into knowledge. It is not a cheap thing to transcend all activity and attain *naiṣkarmya*, freedom from *karma*. First finish the course of your *karma*; then you

will become free from *karma*, and gradually you will develop transcendental knowledge and devotion. So, I say, 'Engage yourself in this present fight.' Fighting is not recommended for everyone, but for you, and men of your section."

Christian: In your opinion, what stage of God realization should people be advised to follow?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Krishna consciousness should be preached in a general way; and people will come according to their inner response. Some may even come to attack us. The communists will say, "No religious preaching is allowed here. It is all theoretical; you neglect the concrete world, and take the abstract to be everything. By hearing this, the people will suffer, so we won't allow it." That is one stage. Beginning from there, there are so many stages. If you preach to a crowd, those who find a response within their inner hearts will come to you according to the degree of their realization. Their inner demand will bring them in contact with an agent of truth.

Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj went to the West and preached, and so many converted to Krishna consciousness. How was it possible? They were not Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, but they felt some inner affinity. While wandering in this world, everyone is gathering some new experience, some new taste. According to the degree of his awakening, one will respond to a preacher in his own layer. He will find, "Oh! After so long, I see that there is the possibility of an outlet for

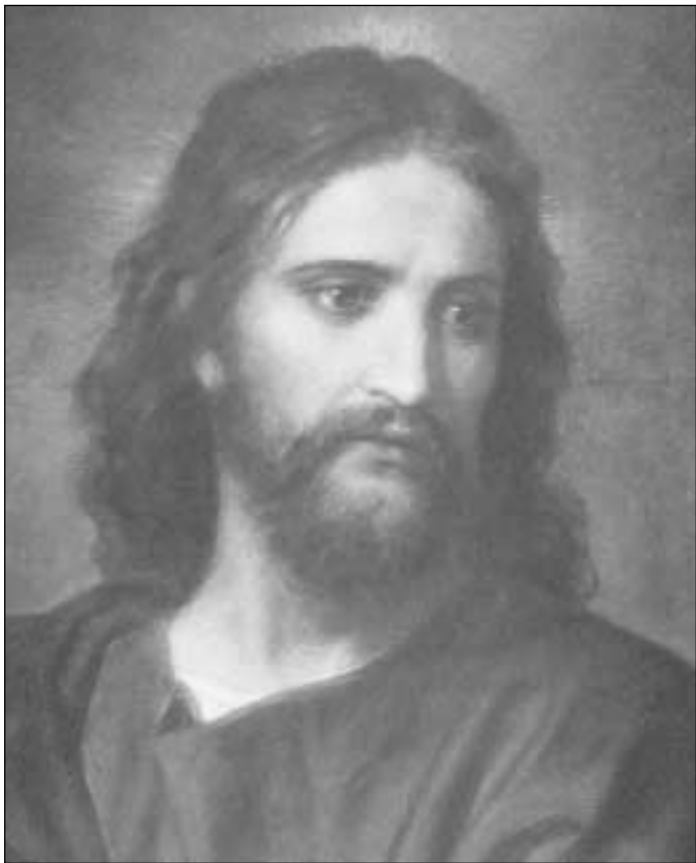
the urge I found in my heart. There is a plane that can satisfy that aspiration of mine. I must connect with him and inquire of that land of my dreams.” In this way, they will come to seek the association of devotees. “Birds of a feather flock together.” According to their inner taste, they will come together and go on with their duties in that plane, at that pace, until from there they can go further, to a higher position. Sometimes in the same life one may change his creed and go higher, and sometimes one may wait until his next birth.

Christian: If the quality of preaching is too high, people may be discouraged.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: It may be too high for one and too near for another. It is not too high for all, for if it was, then how would conversion be possible? So many people are becoming Mohammedans, Christians, and Hindus. All Christians were not born Christians. How were people first attracted to become Christians? There arose in their hearts the hankering for Christianity.

When Acyutānanda Swāmī, the first disciple of Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj, went to my birthplace here in Bengal, a headmaster asked him, “We are so near and we cannot appreciate the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu; how is it that from such a far off country, you have come to sacrifice your life for the service of Śrī Chaitanyadeva?”

Acyutananda Swāmī answered, “*Brahmāṇḍa bhrahmite kona bhāgyavān jīva*. We have to acquire this



We must cross the threshold given by Jesus Christ. He has declared, "Die to live."

capacity during the course of our wanderings in different positions throughout the creation."

We are wandering from this land to that land, from this species to that species, and in the course of that, we

gather some *sukṛti*, pious credits. *Ajñāta-sukṛti* means that unknowingly and unconsciously our energy is spent in the service of the Lord, and the reaction comes in the form of some pious credits. And when *sukṛti* is more developed, it becomes *jñāta-sukṛti*, or pious activities knowingly performed. Then, *śraddhā*, faith, our inner attraction for the universal truth comes to the surface. In this way it may develop from any stage. Even a beast may feel the tendency to serve Krishna. In Vṛndāvana, so many living beings; trees, beasts, and even the water have acquired their position by consciously desiring it. Although they have accepted an apparently material pose, they eternally hold that position in the service of Krishna.

WAY OF THE PILGRIM

Christian: There is one book called *The Way of The Pilgrim*, about a Christian who chants the name of Jesus on beads.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, the Catholics also use beads. Some Christians may chant the name of Christ.

Christian: This man was chanting the name of Jesus, his heart was growing soft, and he was feeling ecstasy, great love for Jesus.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Then he may attain the position of Jesus, at most. It may be that in his attempt for perfection, his growth is finished there, in the eternal paraphernalia of Jesus. He may remain there. If he has found his fullest satisfaction, he is fated to be there.

By the will of God, and by the powerful will of an exalted devotee, even from the impersonal *Brahman* effulgence one may be roused from his slumber and moved to action in devotional service. Generally, they pass long ages there in the nondifferentiated plane, satisfied with their spiritual attainment; however, in the consideration of infinite time, nothing is very great or spacious. They may remain holding that position for a long time, so many dissolutions and creations may come and go, but the possibility remains that their slumber may be broken at any time. Since time immemorial, this created world has been in existence, and so many souls are ascending to the *Brahman* effulgence and again descending. So, even in the midst of the infinite *Brahman* effulgence, some souls are coming out. It is a question of infinity, so the position of Jesus may be considered as eternal, and the time may come when Jesus himself may be converted into Vaiṣṇavism. It is not impossible.

JESUS: DYNAMIC OR STATIC?

Christian: Do you think that Jesus had awareness of Krishna as the Personality of Godhead?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: When his inner attainment is most closely detected, then we are bound to say that in the course of his eternal life, there is some possibility of his achieving Krishna.

Christian: I don't understand.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Is Jesus stagnant or progressive?

Where he has reached, is that finished forever, or is he dynamic?

Christian: Christians will say that he has full knowledge.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So, is he stagnant there, finally fixed? Is that Jesus' position? Do the bishops say that his position is final? Does he have a progressive life? Or is Jesus alone barred from making further progress? Is he a member of the dynamic world? Or the stagnant world?

So, this is the nature of the infinite. Being finite, we are going to deal with the infinite? That is our ludicrous tendency. It is ludicrous for us to deal with the infinite.

Why is Krishna considered to be the Absolute Truth? This you should inquire about in a scientific way, step by step. As I have recommended, you should go on reading about that in the *Śrī Krishna Saṁhitā*, and the *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*. You should try to follow very minutely the dynamic development of theism as it is presented there.

REINCARNATION—TRANSMIGRATION

Christian: As I understand it, reincarnation means that a soul may regress into a lower species by performing sinful acts. But how does it benefit a soul to be punished by taking birth in the animal species if later he has no recollection of this?

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Sometimes it is necessary for doctors to make a patient unconscious. Sometimes a *dacoit* is imprisoned and put under chains. When his movements

will be detrimental to society, he is confined in a cell and chained. So, sometimes it is necessary to take away one's independence, his voluntary action. By suffering the reactions to his previous *karma*, one may be relieved; then again he may be given voluntary action. When by his voluntary will a soul has done so many misdeeds and acquired so many reactions, it is necessary that his freewill be stopped temporarily. He will be allowed to suffer the reactions of his previous sins, and then again some freedom will be given to him so that he may take the proper course which is useful for him. As long as a drunkard is a drunkard, when he is expected to do some mischief to the environment, he should be confined. And when the madness of drinking is gone, then he will be released and allowed to move freely.

“DO UNTO OTHERS” INCLUDES ANIMALS

Christian: Christians generally don't accept that animals have souls.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Jesus did not care to bring his followers within that conception. He saw that they were accustomed to eating animals and fish, so he did not want to embarrass them with all these questions. He thought they should begin theistic life, and when again they are able to consider these points, at that time they may be given this installment.

Life is also present within the nonhuman species, and it is no less qualified than the human position,

but in the course of the evolutionary movement of the soul, it is thrown into such a condition as the result of *karma*. Wherever life is present, the soul is there within. It is a common thing, but Jesus thought it would be impossible for them to adjust their understanding of the environment to such a degree. He thought to let them begin with the culture of theism, and then gradually such instruction could be given.

He told them, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." That is also good. But not only is the soul present there; God is also there, and everywhere. The lower species are also feeling pain and pleasure. In animals it is quite clear that when they are killed, they feel pain. So, there is life. The vibration of pain is there, consciousness is there, and the soul is a unit of pure consciousness. But the persons to whom Jesus preached were not so qualified as to extend their knowledge that far. They are not prepared for such a great amount of sacrifice in their practices. So, for those who are not prepared to sacrifice themselves to such an extent, Christianity has been given by Jesus.

Still, everything has been ordained from the same common center. Christianity has its necessity, Islam also has its necessity. There is room for such creeds in the universe. They are not unnecessary, but they hold a relative position.

Then what is the position of the Absolute Truth? When we have to inquire deeply about this, then we

come to India. There it has been dealt with very extensively, with all possible conceptions of religion. So many variegated theological conceptions are found in India that a fraction of that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. But ultimately, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was given as the highest conception. How? That we have to understand and follow very minutely. You should study the *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta* and its more modern form, *Śrī Krishna Saṁhitā* by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Christian: I have read that.

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: But you must read it more closely, and more scrutinizingly. You must read that again and again, until you find satisfaction, and answers to all your inquiries. There, the gradation of our relationship with God is shown, explaining how from a particular stage of theism, one is forced to progress to a higher level of attainment.

LEVELS OF GOD REALIZATION

The gradation of transcendental realization has been explained by Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī in his book *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*. There we find that in the course of the realization of *śuddha-bhakti*, pure devotional service, the great sage Nārada Muni is visiting different places. First, he encounters *karma-miśra bhakti*, or devotional service mixed with fruitive activities.

Once there was a *brāhmaṇa* in Allahabad. He was a wealthy man, and on the occasion of the *Kumbha-mela*, when millions of sages and devotees gather for a religious festival, he arranged for services to the different types of saintly persons who were present there. He conducted a sacrifice and finally finished the function with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The *brāhmaṇa* was mainly engaged in *karma-kaṇḍa*, or fruitive work, but he was also rendering service to the saintly persons. Ultimately he ended everything with *nāma-saṅkīrtan*, the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.

Nārada Muni approached the *brāhmaṇa* saying, “You are very fortunate that you are doing these things. This is the proper utilization of your money and caste. By engaging in such holy activities, you are certainly most

fortunate.” The *brāhmaṇa* told him, “What am I doing? This is nothing. You should go to see the fortune of King Indradyumna. He is distributing the *prasāda* remnants of Lord Jagannāth in a grand style. How grandiose is the worship of Nārāyaṇa there! Go there, and you will appreciate his devotional service.

So, Nārada Muni went to see Indradyumna Mahārāj, and there he also found the king extensively engaging all his resources in the worship of Lord Jagannāth. Nārada approached him, saying, “You are so fortunate in this world.” The king told him, “What can I do Nārada? This is nothing. If you want to see how devotional service should be practiced, you should go to Lord Indra, the king of heaven.

Nārada Muni went to Indradeva and praised him by saying, “O Indra, you are very fortunate. Vāmanadeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared as your younger brother. And here in Indraloka, there are always religious festivals worshipping Krishna.” Indra said, “Oh, what do you say? What love have I for Krishna? Everything belongs to Him, but in my foolishness, I tried to prevent Him from taking the *pārijāta* tree from heaven. Not only that, but I am always being attacked by the demons, and my wife is also sometimes disturbed; what fortune do you find in me?”

From Indra, Nārada went to Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe. There he found the personified



South Indian relief of Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe (left), and Lord Śiva, the universal destroyer (right).

Vedas singing praise to Lord Brahmā. Nārada, who was also his son and disciple, approached Lord Brahmā saying, “How greatly fortunate you are! You are entrusted by Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself with the management of the whole universe, and sometimes you visit Him for guidance in the administration of the universe. We also find that some portions of the *Vedas* are engaged in singing your glories. You are so fortunate!”

Lord Brahmā felt a little disturbed. He said, “What are you saying, Nārada? You are praising me and increasing my false pride, but did I not tell you that I am nothing but a small creature in the hand of Nārāyaṇa? I am engaged in external activity. I have no time to give in the interest of my devotional life. My Lord has rather deceived me by engaging me in such a busy matter as managing the universe. I am most unfortunate. Rather, you should go to Mahādeva, Lord Śiva. He does not care for anything in this world. He is aloof and indifferent, and has his aim toward Lord Nārāyaṇa. He is devoted to Lord Rāmacandra, and he is very fond of the holy name of Lord Rāma. His wife, Pārvatī devi, is also helping him in his devotional life, and she is very happy.

Nārada Muni went to Śivaloka and began to chant in praise of Lord Śiva, “You are the master of the world. The *Vedas* sing your glories. You hold the highest position.” In this way, Nārada began to glorify him, but Lord Śiva became very excited and a little angry at this: “What are you saying, Nārada? I have so much indifference towards this world that I am mainly interested in knowledge and penance. This holds the better portion of my interest. Whatever little inclination I have for devotional service to Nārāyaṇa is very negligible. Sometimes I have such an apathetic spirit towards Nārāyaṇa that I even fight with Him in favor of one of my disciples! I am disgusted with my position. Penance,

power, mystic yoga perfection, and indifference to the world: that is my business.”

This is *jñāna-miśra bhakti*, or devotional service mixed with empiric speculative knowledge. Lord Brahmā is the ideal of *karma-miśra bhakti*, or devotional service mixed with fruitive activity, and Lord Śiva is the ideal of *jñāna-miśra bhakti*. He still maintains some affinity for an independent position, and not for cent-per-cent acceptance of service to the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa.

Lord Śiva said, “If you really want to experience *śuddha-bhakti*, go to Prahlāda Mahārāj. There you will find pure devotional service.”

In this way, we have been directed to trace the development of *śuddha-bhakti*, pure devotional service, beginning with Prahlāda Mahārāj, because Prahlāda does not want anything in exchange for his devotional service.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.10.4.) he says:

nānyathā te 'khila-guro
ghaṭeta karuṇātmanaḥ
yas ta āśīṣa āśāste
na sa bhr̥tyaḥ sa vai vaṇik

“Whoever is doing something for the satisfaction of Nārāyaṇa and wants something in return, is not a servant, but a merchant. He wants to give something to the Lord and then take some price in exchange for that.” So, Prahlāda Mahārāj is a pure devotee, and

only through a pure devotee of Nārāyaṇa can one attain pure devotion.

NEUTRAL LOVE OF GOD

All these peculiar achievements in the devotional world begin with Prahlāda Mahārāj. The nature of his devotional service is that of *śānta rasa*, neutrality, where there is no actual service, but only perfect adherence to Nārāyaṇa under all circumstances. Whatever may be the unfavorable condition in the environment, he stands true to the faith that Nārāyaṇa is all in all, and that He is our master. So, Prahlāda Mahārāj, and the four Kumāras, the sons of Lord Brahmā, are in the position of *śānta rasa bhakti*, or neutral love of God.

Prahlāda Mahārāj is Nārada Muni's disciple. Still, for our benefit, Nārada Muni was approaching him to measure the standard of his devotion in a comparative study of the devotional world. Approaching Prahlāda Mahārāj, Nārada said, "I have come to see you, Prahlāda, because Lord Śiva also appreciates your position. You are really a devotee of Lord Krishna. You are so fortunate! I have come to see how you are."

Prahlāda Mahārāj told him, "*Gurudeva*, you are all in all. Have you come to test me? Whatever fortune I may have, I have received by your grace. I was born in a family of demons, so the demonic qualities have not exclusively left me. Don't you know that in Naimiṣāraṇya, I went to fight with Lord Viṣṇu? I

repent for that, but what can I do? He has given me such a position. I cannot have the privilege of direct service to Him, but only mentally I think of Him. I think that He is everything, but I do not have the great fortune of rendering service to Him. Hanumān is really a devotee. How fortunate he is! What grace he has received! He gave everything to Lord Rāmacandra. I envy his situation, but what can I do? God's dispensation is absolute. We must accept that. Hanumān's position is really enviable. How attached to his master he is, and what a great magnitude of service he has done for Lord Rāma."

HANUMĀN: SERVANT OF RĀMA

From there, Nārada Muni went to visit Hanumān. He approached Hanumān's residence, playing on his *vīna* the *mantram*: *Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma*. When Hanumān suddenly heard the name of his master, Lord Rāma, he jumped towards that direction, and even in the sky, embraced Nārada Muni. Hanumān said, "Oh, who is helping me to hear the sound of Lord Rāma's holy name? After such a long time, the sound of Rāma *nāma* is enlivening me. I was dying without hearing the name of Rāma." Ecstatic tears were running down the eyes of both of them. Then Nārada Muni went to Hanumān's quarters, and began to praise his fortune, saying, "How fortunate you are! Oh, Hanumān, You serve Lord Rāmacandra so intimately; you do not know anything



Deity of Hanumān, the devoted servant of Lord Rāmacandra.

but your master, Lord Rāma. You rendered such great service to Him that your service has become the ideal for the whole of human society.”

Hanumān told Nārada, “Yes, by His grace I was able to do something, but it is all His grace; I am nothing, I am worthless. But I hear that now Lord Rāmacandra has come as Lord Krishna. Although I don’t like any incarnation other than Lord Rāma, I have heard from a distance how Krishna, who is Rāmacandra Himself, is showing His favor to the Pāṇḍavas. The Pāṇḍavas are very fortunate because the Lord is dealing with them like an intimate friend. So, I have great appreciation for the fortune of the Pāṇḍavas. “In this way, Hanumān began to praise the Pāṇḍavas for their fortune.

KRISHNA’S FRIENDS, THE PĀṆḌAVAS

Leaving Hanumān, Nārada Muni then went to the Pāṇḍavas. There he found Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāj seated on a throne and began to sing the glories of the Pāṇḍavas. He told Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāj, “How friendly you are in your relationship with Krishna! How fortunate you are!” Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāj said, “What are you saying Devarṣi? Of course Krishna favors us, we can’t deny that, but what is our position? We have no position at all. On the other hand, I feel now and then, that by seeing our example the people in general won’t want to serve Krishna, because they will calculate that being

such intimate friends of Lord Krishna, the Pāṇḍavas had to pass through difficult troubles and dangers their whole lives. They will think that to be a devotee of Krishna means that one must suffer troubles throughout his whole life. So, I am afraid that by thinking of us, people will not venture to approach Krishna.”

Devarṣi Nārada said, “No, no, I don’t see it from that angle of vision. What is danger or affliction to the Pāṇḍavas? What is the meaning of that? That is the message that Krishna is coming. When the Pāṇḍavas are in danger that is nothing but the message that Krishna is coming to save you. So, your mother also prayed:

**vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śāśvat
tatra tatra jagad-guro
bhavato darśanaṁ yat syād
apunar bhava-darśanam**

“‘Let dangers come: may they visit me always. I don’t care for that, because that brings Krishna much closer to us. We rather like the dangers that bring Krishna into our intimate connection.’ That famous statement of your mother, Kuntīdevī, stands there.”

The Pāṇḍavas, headed by Mahārāj Yudhiṣṭhira said, “Yes, Krishna visits us now and then, in the time of our dire need, but how fortunate are the Yadus! Lord Krishna is always with them. They are so proud of their master, Lord Krishna, that they do not care for any other power in the world. They are so fortunate that Lord Krishna is always closely connected with them.” So, Nārada Muni

went to the Yadus and began chanting in praise of them. They said, “What do you say, Devarṣi Nārada? Krishna is with us, of course, and in any time of great danger He comes to help us, but how much do we care for Him? We are living independently, careless about His existence. But among us, Uddhava is really His favorite. Whatever Krishna does, He always consults with Uddhava, and in all His confidential matters, Uddhava is present there, and in every case, He is always very thick with Uddhava. Even we envy the fortune of Uddhava.”

UDDHAVA: MORE DEAR THAN KRISHNA

Then Nārada went to Uddhava and told him, “Uddhava, you are the most favorite devotee of Krishna. Krishna says:

**na tathā me priyatama
ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr
naivātmā ca yathā bhavān**

“O Uddhava! What to speak of other devotees like Brahmā, Śiva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, or Lakṣmī; you are more dear to Me than My own life.’ You are such an intimate associate that Krishna values you more than His own life.” Uddhava said, “Yes, of course, out of His causeless benevolence, He might have said something like that, but I don’t think that I am His real devotee, especially after visiting Vṛndāvana. All my pride has been melted by seeing those devotees. The spirit of service and the

intensity of love towards Krishna that I found in the devotees in Vṛndāvana is unparalleled. O Devarṣi, I am nowhere. Do you know that statement of mine? It is recorded in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.47.61):

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
 vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
 yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-patham ca hitvā
 bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām

“The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana gave up their husbands, children, and families who are difficult to renounce, and sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna, which are sought after even by the *Vedas* themselves. O! Grant me the fortune to take birth as a blade of grass in Vṛndāvana, so that I may take the dust of the lotus feet of those great souls upon my head.

“There I have disclosed my heart fully. The quality of love for Krishna that I found in the damsels of Vṛndāvana is so exalted that I could not but aspire to be born in Vṛndāvana as a piece of grass, so that the foot-dust of those divine damsels might touch my head. So, what are you saying Devarṣi? If you would like to see real devotion, real divine love, you should go to Vṛndāvana. Don’t put us in an awkward position, saying that we possess devotion to Krishna; this is rather a mockery, a foundationless utterance. I found real devotees of the Lord in Vṛndāvana.”

In this way, Sanātan Goswāmī tries his best to take us through the path, by showing us the gradual development of devotion to Krishna. Prahlāda Mahārāj has been accepted as the basis of *śuddha-bhakti*, the beginning of pure devotional service, because he is situated in *śānta rasa*, or devotional service in neutrality. Above that there is *dāsyā rasa*, love of God in servitude, as shown by Hanumān, and above that there is *sakhyā rasa*, or the mood of friendship. That is exemplified by the Pāṇḍavas. Uddhava is somewhat *sakhyā*, connecting with *vātsalya*, parental love, and *mādhurya*, conjugal love. In this way we can trace the progressive development of devotion.

Our close adherence to Krishna develops in this way to Vṛndāvana. The acme of devotional service is found there. In the conversation between Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu we find it mentioned that Rādhārāṇī's devotional service is categorically higher than that of the *gopīs* (*tebhyas tāḥ paśu-pāla-paṅkaja-dṛśas tābhyo 'pi sā rādhikā*). The kind of serving spirit we find there is unaccountable and inconceivable.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu came with *that* quality of adherence to the truth: unconditional surrender. He came seeking that fortune of serving the truth. If we can seek such a higher type of existence, we may consider ourselves most fortunate.

Self-surrender is the very basis of our highest fortune. We cannot but surrender ourselves to whatever beautiful and valuable thing we have come across. Our appreciation for any higher thing is shown by the degree of our surrender to that. So, we can measure the quality of the truth we are connected with only by the intensity of our surrender.

THE KRISHNA CONCEPTION

Surrender is not a lip transaction. Surrender means not only to surrender one's possessions, but to realize that the possessions themselves are false. I am not a master of anything. I am not even master of myself. Surrender means to give everything to the *guru*, and rid ourselves of the unholy connection of so many possessions, so that they may not disturb us by always suggesting, "You are my master," and in this way misleading us.

We should think, "Everything belongs to the Lord and His delegation, the *guru*. I am not the master of anything." That sort of knowledge we should imbibe, and that will be helpful to our real spiritual progress. This is reality. We have to realize that fact. We want the truth, and we want to free ourselves from false notions. So, proper *dīkṣā*, spiritual initiation, imparts the divine knowledge that nothing belongs to us; not only that, but everything belongs to God, including ourselves. That is the conception of *dīkṣā*: "I belong to Him; everything belongs to Him. I am His servant, and these are the objects of His service."

FOOL'S PARADISE

This is reality, and we are suffering under non-reality in an imaginary world. We are living in a fool's paradise. We should do away with the fool's paradise and try to enter into real paradise. When we have a peep into the characteristic of the absolute environment of reality, and even a little regard for the truth, we can no longer relish the paraphernalia of this world as we did previously. Because we have had a real taste of the higher truth, we will have no charm for this material world. We will no longer feel encouragement to meet with the duties that are relating to this world of enjoyment. We will be indifferent.

We know that the connection with the present enjoying mood brings a painful reaction. We can realize that, but we cannot leave it behind. We cannot cut off the connection completely in the stage of *sādhana*, spiritual practice. Still, we have no other alternative. Our affinity for the positive truth should be increased more and more, and gradually our affinity for our paraphernalia and obligations will all disappear. Although repeatedly we may not be successful, still we will be unable to give up the idea. We will attempt again and again to make progress towards the truth, and when we are unsuccessful, our heart will ache to think that we are repeatedly being defeated by the enemies who are all around us.

MENTAL MUSHROOMS

But the fire of Krishna consciousness is there, and that fire is not to be quenched. It is a spark of eternal truth. So, the fire will continue, and the day will come when the enemies that are surrounding us will have to retire once and for all. One day we will find that Krishna has gradually captured our whole heart, and the others have retired forever; they are no longer present to trouble us in our mental circle. We will find that those unwanted things were like mushrooms; they came out from our mental soil, and now they have all gone and died. They have all gone away, and Krishna alone is in the heart. At that time, the heart is only full of Krishna, full of the Krishna conception.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once instructed a disciple at the time of initiation into the Hare Krishna *mantra* that Krishna should be allowed to land in our hearts, just as an army is landed by the navy. An army is carried by a ship, and when they have landed, the fight begins, and they capture the country, just as Julius Caesar said, “*Veni vidi vici*, I came, I saw, I conquered.” So, we have to allow Krishna to land in our hearts. Then the fight will begin.

What is the proposal of Krishna consciousness, and what is the proposal of so many other conceptions? They are all giving us their assurances from time immemorial, saying, “I shall give you this, I shall give

you that,” but the Krishna conception will enter and say, “My claim is this: the whole thing is Mine, and you are all trespassers.” The fight will begin; the unwanted things are sure to withdraw, and Krishna consciousness will capture the whole heart. This is the process. Krishna consciousness has only to land within our hearts. Somehow or other, from a pure devotee, a bit of real Krishna consciousness should enter through our ears into our hearts, and Krishna will supply whatever is required. One who has imbibed even a slight regard for Krishna consciousness is assured of success in spiritual life, today or tomorrow.

KRISHNA IS A THIEF

We may have erected high walls on all sides to protect ourselves so that Krishna consciousness may not enter, but Krishna is a thief, and a thief requires no invitation. No preparation is necessary for His welcome. He will enter for His own interest, and that is our consolation. Our solace is that Krishna is a thief. *Māyā* has erected her high walls on all sides, but nothing is sufficient to stop Krishna consciousness. Krishna is a thief, and stealthily He will enter one day.

A devotee may become hopeless, thinking, “The enemy is within my own house; my own kinsmen are my enemies. I am hopeless.” We may become disappointed, but Krishna consciousness will not leave us in any way. Krishna will persevere, and in due course of time, He

will conquer. And other things, no matter how closely related they may be in private and well-protected rooms in our hearts, will have to go. They must take leave from every corner of our hearts. Krishna will conquer. Krishna will capture the whole thing. The unwanted lusty desires of our heart are foreign things. They are only mushrooms. Like mushrooms, they come out; they have no permanent stability or root. They are not rooted to the soil. We may think that what we have stored in our hearts is very near and dear, and that is already mixed with us as a part of our existence, but when Krishna consciousness enters, that will all float like mushrooms.

After all, they are mushrooms; they have no footing, no connection with the soil. They are only floating. All material interests are only floating on the surface. They are not deeply rooted within and without the whole of our existence. Only Krishna consciousness is present everywhere, within all parts of our existence. So, the mushrooms will have to vanish one day. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.8.5):

**praviṣṭaḥ karṇa-randhreṇa
svānām bhāva-saroruham
dhunoti śamalam kṛṣṇaḥ
salilasya yathā śarat**

When Krishna enters the heart through the ear, He captures the lotus of the heart and then gradually makes all the dirt in the heart disappear. Just as when

the autumn season comes, all the water everywhere becomes pure, so also, when Krishna enters our hearts, all the impurities within will gradually vanish, and only Krishna will remain forever.

THE HARE KRISHNA MANTRA

Before chanting the holy name of Krishna, we must first chant the Pañcha-tattva *mantra*:

śrī kṛṣṇa chaitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

The Pañcha-tattva, or five features of the Absolute Truth, came to give the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra* to the fallen devotees of this age, so they are the general representation of *guru* for us. They help us to enter into the domain of Krishna and also the plane of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

After chanting the Pañcha-tattva *mantra*, we should count on the beads of the *japa-mālā* and chant the *mahā-mantra*:

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare**

While counting beads and chanting the holy name, the beads should be placed inside a cloth bag, and the



Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and associates ecstatically chanting the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*.

index finger, which is generally considered inauspicious, should not touch the beads, but should remain outside the bag. Generally we use the thumb and middle finger to count. One should chant sixteen rounds, as recommended

by Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj, but if there is any emergency, he must chant at least four rounds; the *mālā* should not be kept fasting.

In the process of counting, we begin from the bigger beads and go towards the smaller, and again return in the same line. The giant bead in the center is called Mount Sumeru. We must not cross over that.

This *harināma mahā-mantra* is found in the *Upaniṣads*, as well as in the *Agni Purāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. In the *Kalisantraṇa Upaniṣad*, it is recommended as the highest *mantra*, and scholars have mentioned this *mantra* as a means of address only; no appeal should be attached to that. This Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra* is the *yuga dharma nāma*, or the process of God realization especially meant for the present age, *Kali-yuga*. We find the *mahā-mantra* mentioned everywhere in the *Purāṇas*. This *mantra* can be chanted silently, mentally, and aloud. It has been given to us by Mahāprabhu as the general recommendation for the fallen souls. He has given it for all, whether they are qualified or unqualified. The only condition for receiving it is *śraddhā*, faith.

It is mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa* that there are ten kinds of offenses we must try to avoid in the chanting of the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*. There are also four kinds of *nāmābhāsa*, or apathetic chanting, which will not give us entrance into the domain of mercy. Mere liberation will be effected by that kind of invocation.

These two improper kinds of chanting stem from our tendencies for exploitation and renunciation. We must chant the name with the spirit of service and avoid the ten offenses.

ABUSING SAINTS

The first offense is to abuse the devotees who are the agents of spreading the greatness and nobility of the Supreme Lord, Krishna. If we abuse and dishonor His agents, then the name is dissatisfied. Only the devotees of Krishna are real saints, because they are after eternal life. Those persons who worship demigods for temporary gain are not considered saints. They may be neglected, for they are not devotees. Saint means Vaiṣṇava, or devotee. All others, such as the worshipers of demigods, are not considered saints. We avoid them. A saint is one who has no ambition in his life but to have a connection of loving service with the Supreme Lord. Only those who are agents of eternal truth, absolute good, are to be considered saintly. We should not abuse such saintly persons.

DEMIGOD WORSHIP

The second offense concerns how we should treat the demigods, including Śiva, Śakti, the Sun-god, and others. They are not to be considered equal to or greater than Viṣṇu, or Krishna. They are under Him, and they are all inferior to Him. They are given engagements by the Supreme Lord, Krishna, and they have to discharge

their duties according to His order. They are never equal or superior to Krishna.

GURU: GOOD AS GOD

The third offense is to consider the *guru* a human being. Although so many human symptoms may be found in him, still, according to our sincerity to meet Godhead, the Lord descends and represents Himself in the *guru* to satisfy our hunger for the truth. We must see him as the agent of the Lord. It has been advised to us in a general way not to think of the *guru* as a mortal being, because if our attempt to attain the Absolute is sincere, then He will also come to us to deliver us. God is omniscient, so through a particular agent who acts as His representative, He comes here to accept us and take us up to the higher plane. We are ordered by the advice of the scriptures to see the *guru* as the representative of the Absolute, because none can give us Krishna but He Himself.

God's presence should be perceived in our *gurudeva*. We should see that God has come to give Himself to us. Generally we find mortal signs in the body of the spiritual master, but we must transcend that. The Ganges water may be filthy in external appearance, but still the dirty Ganges water can purify us by its touch. To our material senses the Deity seems to be wood, stone, or earth, but that is our polluted vision. Krishna is there, and sometimes He is seen to walk and to talk with devotees of a higher



His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja chanting the Hare Krishna *mantra* softly on the *tulasī* beads of the *japa-mālā*.

order. We must not think that He is made of material stuff. When we go and stand before the Deity, we should not think that we can see Him, but that He is seeing us. He is in the subjective plane; I am His object.

He is mercifully seeing us to purify us. In this way our vision must be adjusted. Krishna was killed by a hunter; the atheists will interpret that it was an ordinary incident, but it is not so. Sītā was stolen by Rāvaṇa. This is all external, all illusory. The real truth is above, in the transcendental realm. So, we are requested by the expert transcendentalists and by the *śāstra* to see that our *gurudeva* is above these mortal signs. Krishna says:

ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyān
nāvanmanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ

“I Myself am the *āchārya*. Do not think that the *guru* is an ordinary man. I myself reside within the heart of *gurudeva* with all My parts and parcels, for the benefit of the disciple.”

BLASPHEMING THE SCRIPTURES

The fourth offense is *śāstra nindā*: blaspheming the *śāstra*, the scriptures. Of course this means those scriptures which are concerned with praising the greatness and nobility of Krishna, not others. We must not abuse those scriptures that instruct us about God and His devotees, and teach us the eternal good.

HOLY NAME: GOD IN SOUND

The fifth offense is to interpret the holy name of Krishna with the help of the dictionary and grammar,

to find diverse meanings in the words of the name. The sound is transcendental. The dictionary, grammar, and any other books of mundane knowledge cannot limit or qualify the holy name. Above the material sound of the name is the transcendental sound within (*śabda-brahma*). The name itself is the Supreme Person incarnate by His own free will. He is inseparable from His name and fully present in His sound form.

The *vaikunṭha śabda*, transcendental sound, is different from the mundane sound that can be produced by the tongue and lips. In homeopathic medicine, all the globules are apparently the same, but the potency within is all-important. It is something like that. The ordinary sound of the name, and the sound vibrated by a pure devotee come from different planes. The difference is in the potency within. The holy name descends from the spiritual world and comes to express itself by dancing on the tongue. The transcendental sound of the holy name is inseparably connected with the person whom it represents.

The sixth offense is to consider the glories of the holy name of Krishna to be a concoction.

TO SIN AND CHANT IS SUICIDAL

The seventh offense is to sin on the strength of the holy name. The scriptures declare that one name is sufficient to clear all the sins one can commit, so if we go on indulging, committing many sins with the idea that we will chant one name to cleanse the sin, it will

be an offense to the name, and not the name proper. We cannot try to utilize Him for our service; He is above all this *māyā*. The real name will not appear there. We must not think, "I can do anything and everything, and the name will purify me." It is written in the scriptures that if you go on with this spirit it will be suicidal.

HARE KRISHNA: THE SUPREME PURIFICATION

The eighth offense is to think that chanting the holy name is another pious activity like penance, pilgrimage, giving in charity, service to the country, and so on. If we think lightly of the holy name in this way, then we commit an offense, because the holy name is absolute and these other processes have only a partial, relative position. Other processes are partial; they award some success in this mundane world, but the name can give the Lord Himself. So, no other process of purification can hold the same position as chanting the holy name of Krishna. It is supreme and none can come close to it.

FORBIDDEN FOR THE FAITHLESS

The ninth offense is to give the name to those who do not deserve it, who have no faith in chanting the name. If you press them to chant the holy name, a bad reaction will come to you. Also, without getting any inspiration, we should not make disciples and give

harināma initiation. We will commit offense against the name if we make a business or trade with name-giving. If we give the name to anyone and everyone, out of greed for becoming a *guru*, then it will be an offense. Without sanction from above, if one runs to become a *guru* to get name and fame with some mundane purpose, then it is a great offense.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The tenth offense is to be too much addicted to a particular thing, or to have too much affinity towards the body and bodily wealth. When a boat is anchored, rowing will simply move the boat around the anchor. The anchor must be taken up, and then the boat can move forward. So, we must not anchor ourselves down with a particular thing. We must be open. The name will create some transformation within the mental system, and we must be open and unprejudiced enough to go where the name will send us. If we carefully try to avoid that transformation and stick to our present life, that is an offense against the name: to invite Him, and then ignore Him.

We must not accept the name as a foreign thing: He is our friend. We should be quite at home with Him. We are going to attain a very soothing and friendly connection by the realization of the holy name of Krishna, which is all-good, all-beautiful, and all-charming. By chanting the holy name we will attain our

most desirable end of life and go back to God, back to home, and not to any foreign country.

We must take the name in a friendly, affectionate way. The name is the only object of our love. He is our friend, and not any anti-party. So, the name will take us home — not to any foreign land. That is our sweet home, and He is our sweet guardian. With this spirit, we shall go on chanting the holy name of Krishna.

These are the ten offenses to be avoided in chanting the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

NĀMĀBHĀSA: THE TWILIGHT NAME

In chanting the holy name, there are also four kinds of *nāmābhāsa*. *Nāmābhāsa* means a faint connection with the holy name. *Nāmābhāsa* is neither offense nor service mood, but between the two. Its basis is renunciation, but we must also cast away this indifference and become earnest for serving the name, who is our friend and master. *Nāmābhāsa* may be classified into four categories. The first is *sāṅketyaṇi*: chanting indirectly, to indicate something else, as in the case of Ajāmila.

Ajāmila was a *brāhmaṇa*'s son. Somehow, he connected with a low-class woman and entered into a degraded life as a *dacoit*, drinking and doing many other nasty things. After many years, the time came for

his death. As he lay in a coma, suddenly he saw three messengers with a horrible appearance come and put a rope around his neck and begin to drag him away. He was horrified.

Just before this, he had seen his son Nārāyaṇa playing nearby, so he sought the help of the child and called “Nārāyaṇa!” But in the course of calling his name, Ajāmila thought within himself, “What can this boy Nārāyaṇa do? How will he deal with these three furious figures? He is nothing.” So, by the connection of the holy name of Nārāyaṇa, Lord Nārāyaṇa came to his mind.

When in his apprehension his call for Lord Nārāyaṇa was sincere, four agents from Vaikuṇṭha descended. They were sober and mild, and addressed the Yamadūtas, the messengers of death saying:

“Who are you? Why have you come?”

“We have come because it is the last day of Ajāmila. He was a great sinner, and we have been sent by our king, Yamarāj, the Lord of death, to drag him away for punishment.”

“Don’t you know what is *dharma*, duty?”

“Oh yes, we know.”

“Then why are you here?”

“He committed immense sin.”

“Didn’t you hear him take the name of Nārāyaṇa?”

“Yes we have heard. What of that? His whole life he has committed so many sinful acts, and only one name of Nārāyaṇa will do away with that? It is not possible.”

“Oh, you have not been properly directed by your master. Now that Ajāmila has taken the name of Nārāyaṇa, his jurisdiction has at once changed. He is no longer under the jurisdiction of your master. Has he not given such instructions to you?”

“No, no, we do not know all these things.”

“Then, go back, and ask him.”

Ajāmila was released. Frightened by the posture and grandeur of the messengers of Viṣṇu, the Yamadūtas fled. Ajāmila thought, “What is the instruction to be learned here?”

This is *nāmābhāsa*. It is a faint connection with the holy name. It was neither out of faith, nor by the order of his *guru*, that he chanted the name of Nārāyaṇa. It was not that he purposely went to take the name, but by accident it flashed in his mind. Still, as a result of his previous pious activity, *nāmābhāsa* gave him salvation.

Ajāmila at once awoke; he remembered all his past sinful activities and began to repent. He began his journey towards Hardwar without speaking a single word to family or friend. There, he chanted the name of Nārāyaṇa for a long time. At the proper time, those four Viṣṇudūtas descended with a divine chariot and took him to the conscious spiritual domain of Vaikuṇṭha.

TO JOKE AND CHANT

Pārihāsyā is another kind of *nāmābhāsa*. *Pārihāsyā* means jokingly. Sometimes in sport we may say, “Oh,

you are chanting the name of Krishna?” If one is cutting jokes, ridiculing the Hare Krishna devotees in the street, and says “Hare Krishna,” that may be *nāmābhāsa* if it is connected with his previous pious credits. *Mukti*, or liberation, may be effected by that kind of chanting, but not the opportunity for divine service.

KRISHNA AS CODE NAME

Another form of *nāmābhāsa* is *stobha*: to use the name with some other intention. Sometimes these words, Nārāyaṇa, or Krishna may be used for some technical meaning, or for a code word. Jīva Goswāmī has taken advantage of this in his book of Sanskrit grammar, the *Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*. When one is playing the *mṛdaṅga* drum, using the names *gaura nitāi*, *gaura nitāi* to represent different drumbeats, it may be *nāmābhāsa*.

INDIRECT CHANTING

Helā is another kind of *nāmābhāsa*: neglectfully chanting the name. When we are rising from bed in the morning sometimes, we may negligently say “Hare Krishna.” In this way we may cast off our indolence. Even there it may be *nāmābhāsa*. It may liberate us from our present position, but may not give us entrance into Vaikuṇṭha. That is possible only through devotional service.

One Mohammedan, who was being killed by the tusk of a boar, shouted “*Haram!*” meaning, “This is abominable!” but because of his previous *sukṛti*, or

pious credits, it became *nāmābhāsa*, and he achieved liberation by chanting the name of Lord Rāma.

Nāmābhāsa may come, and *mukti*, liberation, may be effected, but we cannot get the opportunity of service there. Only if our mind is surcharged with a serving attitude will it elevate us to the subtle and higher plane, otherwise not. If the tendencies for renunciation and exploitation are mixed with our chanting, it won't yield the desired result.

The chanting must be done with a service attitude (*sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*). What is our aim? We want the service of the Lord: "Die to live." We want a life of purity which is full of self-giving; we want a generous life. We want to live the life of those who want not to extract, but to give. We want a civilized life in the domain of higher civilization, where everyone is a giving unit, an emanating unit, and not an absorbing unit. There, everyone is especially God-centered and harmonious. They are all of the nature of divinity. And divinity means dedication towards the center of all harmony, the absolute good. So with that spirit, we are to chant the holy name, and every action should be done with devotion for Krishna. We should try to take the positive line of serving Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇava, Krishna and His devotees, and with this sort of attitude we should chant the holy name of Krishna.

Service of the Holy Name

Student: I have one question about chanting the Hare Krishna *mantra* on beads (*japa-mālā*). My spiritual master has given me many preaching duties, so sometimes when I am trying to concentrate on my *japa-mālā*, instead of hearing the holy name, I think of all these different duties I have to do.

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura emphasized that *kīrtan* means not only loudly singing the holy name, but preaching. Jīva Goswāmī has given a definition of *saṅkīrtan*: *bahubhir militvā yat kīrtanam tad eva saṅkīrtanam*: “When many people come together and glorify the Supreme Lord, Krishna, it is known as *saṅkīrtan*.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu came and introduced *saṅkīrtan*. In this age of Kali, if the holy name is chanted congregationally, the combined efforts will be fruitful (*saṅgo śakti kalau yuge*). There is the difference between the preaching mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the so-called *bhajana* of the *sahajiyās*, or imitationists.

Once, one of our Godbrothers was the subject of our *guru mahārāj*'s stern remark. He was a man of good character, but his tendency was generally towards *nāma bhajana*. He did not like to do any other service, but was only inclined to chant the name of Krishna on his beads. I was in charge of the Delhi temple at the time, and was intimate with him, so I wrote to Prabhupāda: "If you permit, I would like to engage my Godbrother in some preaching work here in the Delhi temple." The letter that Prabhupād wrote is still here. He wrote me in his letter, "If you can bring him there and make him help you in the work of preaching, then you will be doing the service of a real friend to him. I don't recognize that sitting in the jungle of Balihati only chanting, counting beads, is *Kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, the proper cultivation of Krishna consciousness."

PREACHING MEANS A FIGHT

So, *kīrtan* means preaching, *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*. *Kīrtan* does not simply mean loudly chanting, but preaching. And preaching means there must be a fight with the opposition party. *Kīrtan* means a fight. *Kīrtan* creates the divine vibration which will fight with all the ordinary vibrations that are floating in this world in subtle and gross waves. So, Prabhupād told us that our *tulasī* beads should not fast. His minimum advice was that we must do some service in the form of chanting Hare Krishna while counting on beads, at least once

daily. His exact words were, *mālikā upabāsa nā*: “The beads should not fast.” And his general instruction was to preach as much as possible.

Once I had a talk with one of the big spiritual leaders of the Udipi temple in Madras. He told me, “Sometimes I preach about Madhvāchārya and the *bhakti* cult, but I have no time for *sādhana*, (regulated spiritual practices such as *japa*, *gayātrī mantra*, scriptural study, and so on). I supported him. Our *guru mahārāj* said that *hari-kathā*, preaching about Krishna, is no less important than *sādhana*. Rather, it is a more living thing. Preaching is more vital. When we are preaching, automatically we must have the maximum concentration. On the other hand, while chanting on our *japa* beads, we may be absentminded. When we are speaking about Krishna to another person, we must be all-attentive. Otherwise we cannot speak accurately. All our attention will automatically be concentrated when we talk about Krishna. And in writing about Krishna, accuracy is even more necessary than in speaking about Krishna. So, writing is also *kīrtan*. The cultivation of Krishna consciousness may even be more intense when we are engaged in writing about Krishna.

GAUḌĪYA MAṬH: WAR AGAINST MĀYĀ

So, the preaching mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, the Gauḍīya Maṭh, has declared totalitarian war against *māyā*, illusion, and even all



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Founder-Āchārya of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh, declared totalitarian war against *māyā*, illusion, and even all other existing conceptions of religion.

other existing conceptions of religion. And our authority is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Divine love is the supreme most goal of every soul. Beauty and love is the *summum bonum*, our highest attainment; that is the ultimate controlling principle, and not power. And beauty and love are found at their highest position in Krishna in Vṛndāvana. The ultimate conception of the Absolute Truth is that of reality the beautiful and divine love. At the same time, the difference between lust and love should be clearly realized. That should not be misconceived. The acme of dedication is demonstrated in the love of the inhabitants of Vraja.

So, preaching (*saṅkīrtan*), and not counting beads (*japa*), is the real service of Krishna. But because we have taken a vow, and it is ordered by Mahāprabhu and our *gurudeva*, we must chant the holy name while counting beads; it is our duty. Our *guru mahārāj* told us, “The *japa* beads must not fast.” So, if we engage ourselves in preaching work, there should be no doubt that we are really obeying the order of Mahāprabhu. Although he has advised us to chant one hundred thousand names, or sixty-four rounds daily, that is a provincial saying. What is really all-important is the spirit of service. We are not told that the *gopīs* always count the name on *tulasī* beads, yet they possess the highest position in the service of Krishna in Vṛndāvana.

VṚNDĀVAN EXPRESS TRAIN

So, Krishna *nāma* will help us greatly to go towards Vṛndāvana. Its importance is there. Like an express train, the holy name of Krishna carries us to the goal without stopping at any other station. If we are chanting the name without any formal petition, without asking, “Give me this, give me that,” it acts like a special train that will go to Vṛndāvana non-stop. There, the impurities of *karma* and *jñāna* are absent. The devotees of Vṛndāvana simply think, “I want Krishna. I do not know what is good or bad. I simply want Krishna.”

Student: How many rounds did your *guru mahārāj* ask his initiated disciples to chant each day? Did he prescribe any set number?

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: His general recommendation was to chant twenty-five thousand names, sixteen rounds, daily, or at least four rounds minimum. When someone had no work, he could chant one hundred thousand names, or sixty-four rounds.

Student: Would Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura give *harinām* initiation to someone who could only chant four rounds daily?

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

Śrīdhara Mahārāj: There was no such consideration. Formally, one had to do some counting, but there was no rigid limitation. What he wanted from us was

intense engagement in the service of the Lord, under the guidance of a Vaiṣṇava, because the all-important point is service. Our attainment of the goal is not insured simply by increasing the number of times we repeat the name; only by increasing the quality will we reach success.

There are so many sayings in the scriptures to encourage our realization of the holy name in different ways, but Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has given us a central thought. He quotes the *Padma Purāṇa*: *ataḥ śrī kṛṣṇa nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*. Our senses, physical or mental, are ineligible to come in touch with the transcendental. The name is nonmaterial (*aprākṛta*), without mundane limitation (*vaikuṇṭha*). It belongs to another plane. So, nothing about Krishna — His name, form, qualities, or pastimes — can be touched by our physical or mental senses. But when we have a serving attitude, He comes down to us of His own accord. Only then can our tongue really pronounce the name of Krishna. Otherwise, only the physical sound of the letters of the name can be produced. Our tongue, our hands, physical sound, all these mundane things cannot come in touch with Krishna. Some intervening medium is necessary to connect this body with the supramundane. And that connection is our earnest desire to serve Krishna, to satisfy Him. A bulb won't light if there is no electricity. Only when the electrical current is there will the bulb be illumined. So, the name may appear on the tongue and

in the ear, in the mind, or in writing, but we must have the connection from *Vaikuṇṭha* to this mundane world. And that connection is devotional service, a functional serving attitude. That alone can connect the physical realm with *Vaikuṇṭha* and *Vṛndāvana*.

FIRING BLANK MANTRAS

Krishna will appear of His own accord. He will descend upon your tongue, and then your tongue will be able to chant the name of Krishna. A gun that has no bullet, but only a blank, may make some sound, but no bullet is actually fired. Similarly, chanting the name of Krishna without an attitude of service produces sound, but that is only tongue deep. It is like firing a gun with blanks instead of bullets. Our chanting of the holy name of Krishna must be surcharged with a serving temperament, the tendency to satisfy Krishna.

Otherwise the sound we produce is bogus. It is only an imitation, or a permutation. The holy name cannot be experienced by our senses. It is supramental and transcendental. An ordinary sound of this mundane world cannot be the name of Krishna. Our ear cannot even hear the name if that mediator, the serving attitude, is not there. The earnestness to satisfy Krishna's will must mediate between Krishna and the ear, through the mind. Then only will Krishna's name enter our ear and reveal to us His form, qualities, and pastimes. The holy name is not physical, it is *aprākṛta*, transcendental,

supramundane. Only through our service attitude will it come down to this mundane world.

Our *guru mahārāj* laid the highest stress on developing a serving attitude. Otherwise it is all bogus, all imitation. And people will say, “Oh, there is no Krishna there. These men are hypocrites. They are only dancing and making noise, they are not surcharged with a serving spirit.” Only through service can we directly come in contact with Krishna. The real point is to practice how to attain the spirit of service, *Vaiṣṇava seva*. The *Vaiṣṇava* is doing service, and we must imbibe from him the methods of attaining this serving attitude.

Under the order of a devotee we must practice to give ourselves. Self-abnegation and self-dedication are necessary. And that positive thing we will receive from a devotee. If children are given pen and paper in the beginning, it will not be fruitful, so a stone is given, and on the earth they practice writing. So, in the beginning, we must try to practice how we can develop a serving attitude, dedicating habit. It is our innate wealth, and that is our solace.

If we try to develop a serving attitude, the pure devotee will help us. It is said that if one is miserly, he should at least give some trash in charity to anyone. One says to a miser, “At least give some ash to others and let your hand practice giving.” So, the serving spirit is a high thing. We must practice to give ourselves in the service of Krishna.

We must not be afraid that we are not attaining the highest form of service in *nāmabhajan*, the worship of the holy name. We should not think, “Why have I been asked to sweep the temple? Any ordinary man can do this.” We must not be afraid of that. It is necessary for us to acquire a service attitude. Self-giving, selflessness, and self-forgetfulness are required. It is said that Socrates is an example of self-forgetfulness and Jesus Christ is an example of self-sacrifice. And for what purpose? For the cause of the Supreme. And for that we must have a positive connection with a devotee. Under his order we will connect with the plane of service. Our energy may go to the transcendental plane only by his grace or mediation. So, our *guru mahārāj*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, laid ninety percent stress on developing a service attitude for preaching, and that should be our aim, whatever our position may be.

Nectar of the Holy Name

Not only the sound of the holy name of Krishna is necessary, but also the proper meaning, the substance, the spirit of the sound. Only the physical aspect of the holy name is represented in *nāma-aparādha*, offensive chanting, not the real name. The real name is all spiritual. *Nāmākṣara bāhirāya baṭe tabhu nāma kabhu naya*: the sound of the letters of the name alone is never the real name. This is explained in the *Prema-vivarta* of Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, a book which is full of the philosophical conclusions of Krishna consciousness. It was published and edited by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. There you will find this passage: *Nāmākṣara bāhirāya baṭe tabhu nāma kabhu naya*: merely the sound of the holy name of Krishna should never be thought of as the actual name.

Even in *nāmābhāsa*, the twilight dawning of the holy name which occurs before pure offenseless chanting, the sound of the name is there, but the inner substance of the name is not there. *Nāmābhāsa* can give us *mukti*, or emancipation from the negative side, the

material world. But there we cannot trace participation in the positive side, the spiritual world. The name is absent there. The holy name of Krishna is a positive thing, and if we really want a touch of the holy name, we must gain admission into the positive world. When we are in the negative side, how can we get the touch of the name? *Nāmābhāsa* may give us liberation, but not participation in the devotional realm. So, the real name is not to be found in *nāmābhāsa* either.

JEWELS OF THE VEDAS

Only a particular group of liberated souls worship the holy name, not everyone. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has written in his *Nāmāṣṭakam* (1):

**nikhila-śruti-mauli-ratna-mālā-
dyuti-nīrājita-pāda-paṅkajānta
ayi mukta-kulair upāsyamānaṁ
paritas tvāṁ hari-nāma saṁśrayāmi**

“O Holy Name! The tips of the toes of Your lotus feet are eternally worshiped by the glowing effulgence radiating from the gemmed chapters of the *Upaniṣads*, the crest jewels of the *Vedas*. You are eternally adored and chanted by great liberated souls like Nārada and Śukadeva Goswāmī. O *hari nāma*! Clearing myself of all offenses, I take complete shelter of You.”

Rūpa Goswāmī says that so many liberated souls worship the holy name of Krishna, offering their respects



A sixteenth century portrait of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. He was described in *Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* as, “an exact replica of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.” Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī authored one hundred thousand verses on Mahāprabhu’s instructions.

from all sides. He explains that the greatness of the holy name may not be found in the ordinary scriptures, but if you study all of them as a whole, you will find the very spirit of the holy name. Ordinary people may not find this in their study, but there are those who can collect the real substance, the real purpose from those vast writings, and detect the greatness of the holy name as the whole purpose of all the main Vedic scriptures.

JUNGLE OF SOUNDS

The principle codes in the *śruti*, the *Vedas*, are giving hints about the holy name of Krishna. *Śruti* means *śabda*: that which can be grasped by the ear, the sound form of the revealed truth which has descended from above. The *Vedas* naturally tell us that we can approach the supreme reality only through sound. Otherwise they would be suicidal. If they do not say that by sound only we will attain the truth, then what is the necessity of the *Vedas* which are only embodied sounds? So, if we can trace their real characteristic we shall find that the principle *Vedas* say that by the cultivation of sound we can attain the Lord. So, we can come to understand this only through sound (*śabda pramāṇam*). Sound alone can deliver reality. The *Vedas* must say so, otherwise they will only be an ineffective jungle of sounds.

Śruti means that which can be received through the ear, and that sound is absolute. The *śrutis* have come to declare to us that through sound alone we can attain the highest end. The main codes (*sūtras*) of the



“Just as while performing *ārati* we offer a lamp to show the Deity form of the Lord . . . the principle *śrutis* are helping us to have this clear conception: by sound only can we have the Supreme Lord.”

śruti inform us: *nikhila-śruti-mauli-ratna-mālā*. *Mauli* means the principle scriptures. They are like so many gems or jewels forming a necklace. By their luster, the lotus feet of the holy name are being revealed. Just as while performing *ārati*, we offer a lamp to show the Deity form of the Lord more clearly to the ordinary people, the principle *śrutis* are helping us to have this perception; by sound only we can have the Supreme Lord.

Rūpa Goswāmī says that if we are more attentive to their meaning, we will find that the principle *śrutis* are only trying to show us the lotus feet of the holy name, just as during *ārati* the ghee lamp helps us to see the figure of the Lord. We may have a general view of the Deity, but with the help of the lamp, we can have a particular conception of the different parts of the body of the Lord. Similarly, we find that the principle *śrutis* with their light are trying to show us the lower portion of the holy name of Krishna. They are leading us and helping us to have a conception of the remotest part of the holy name, a vague conception that the name is everything. Rūpa Goswāmī says that those who are really liberated are all surrounding the holy name and offering praise and adoration. And he prays, “In this spirit, I take refuge in the holy name of Krishna.”

The real meaning of the *Vedas* is difficult to understand. Some people will say, “Chanting Hare Krishna is not recommended in the *Vedas*. Rather, sometimes ‘Krishna’ is mentioned as the name of a demon. Why

should we chant the name of Krishna?" In the *Vedas* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.13.1), we find this verse:

**śyāmāc chavalām prapadye
śavalāc chyāmaṁ prapadye**

"By the help of black (*śyāma*), we shall be introduced to the service of white (*śavalā*); by the help of white (*śavalā*), we shall be introduced to the service of black (*śyāma*)." What is the meaning of this verse? Our *āchāryas* have explained that the absolute can be understood by the help of the energy and the energetic. *Śyāma* means Krishna, who is blackish, and *śavalā*, white, means Rādhārāṇī. So, by the help of Rādhā, we can have the service of Krishna, and by the help of Krishna, we can have the service of Rādhārāṇī.

GOD THROUGH SOUND

So, Rūpa Goswāmī says that only a superficial study of the *Vedas* will frustrate us. But if we search with a positive mind, by the grace of the *sādhus*, the *āchāryas*, and the *mahājanas* we will find that the principle *śrutis* are leading us towards the conception that the whole object of all the Vedic sounds is that central sound; the holy name of Krishna. There are so many sections of the *Vedas* that have come to distribute the tidings of the absolute realm, but there must be a center. So, the principle sounds are all emitting light like a torch, to show us that they have a central sound which represents

the supreme whole, and that is Krishna. So many liberated souls are all around, offering their respects to the name of Krishna, that central sound from which all Vedic *mantras* have come to give us some idea of the sound aspect of the absolute center. This is Rūpa Goswāmī's argument.

The branches of the *Vedas* are all sounds, and so many sounds must come from a central position. They cannot but direct one who has a proper eye towards that fountainhead of sound, saying, "Go! Run towards that direction! In our source you will find everything. We are all partially representing so many things but we have a center, we have a fountainhead. Go in that direction and you will find the sound that can sufficiently satisfy you, and you may also be introduced to other aspects of that sound."

The holy name of Krishna is most important; it is no less than Krishna Himself. It fully represents the whole. Rūpa Goswāmī says, "O Holy Name, I take refuge under Your lotus feet. You are the grand, central sound who has given cohesion to all the sounds in the revealed scriptures."

And Sanātan Goswāmī, who is the spiritual master of Rūpa Goswāmī, says:

jayati jayati nāmānanda-rūpaṁ murārera
viramita-nija-dharma-dhyāna-pūjādi-yatnam
katham api sakṛd-āttam muktidaṁ prāṇinām yat
paramam amṛtam ekaṁ jīvanam bhūṣaṇam me

“Let ecstasy in the service of the divine name be victorious. If somehow we can come in contact with that sound, *nāma rūpaṁ murāreḥ*, then all our other activities will be paralyzed; we will have no necessity of performing any other activity. Our many variegated duties will have no importance to us at all if we can achieve the service of the divine name of Krishna.”

Dharma means the business engagement of the *karmis* or fruitive workers. *Dhyāna* means retiring from this physical world and performing meditation from within, trying to exploit the internal world. Both of these are stopped, paralyzed by the ecstasy of service to the divine name.

The Rāmānuja sect worships Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa in the mood of opulence and veneration in Vaikuṇṭha. By the ecstasy of the holy name, that will also be stopped. One who gets the real grace of the divine name of Krishna will retire from all phases of these different kinds of worship, namely *varṇāśrama dharma*, or social duty; *dhyāna*, the internal meditation of the *jñānis* (mental speculators) and *yogis*; and *puja*, the opulent worship of Vaikuṇṭha, after liberation, which attracts the followers of the Rāmānuja *sampradāya*. The holy name will take us to the perception of Goloka, Krishna’s own abode, where we will have to completely retire from all these other phases of our divine life. We will have to retire from any work, even if it may be done for Krishna. We will have to give up internal meditation and calculation, and even *pūjā*, worship in awe and reverence.

The holy name will stop all these tendencies, and we will find so much sweetness in chanting the name that we won't be able to give attention to anything else. When we really come in contact with the sound aspect of the absolute, then all our other enthusiastic endeavors and functions will be paralyzed. We will be unable to attempt them. We will take to the name only. Then, when the name allows us to perform other services again, we will be able to do them. The name has such power, such a high degree of potency that it will stop all other branches of service, and charm you.

“I WANT MILLIONS OF EARS!”

In the writings of Rūpa Goswāmī we find this verse:

**tunḍe tāṇḍavanī ratim vitanute tunḍāvalī-labdhaḥ
 karṇa-kroḍa kaṇḍambinī ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām
 cetaḥ prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṇām kṛtim
 no jāne janitā kiyadbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī**

When the holy name of Krishna descends and captures the tongue and lips, it controls them so strongly that it engages them in chanting the holy name as if the lips and tongue have gone mad. In this way, the power of the name descends in them, and one feels that only one tongue and one mouth are not enough; thousands of mouths are necessary to taste the name. Then the holy name of Krishna enters the ear with such a great

force and current that the ears are captured, and one thinks that only two ears are insufficient; he wants millions of ears to attend to the sweet current entering the ears. Two ears are nothing to him; he wants millions of ears. The nectar of the holy name is coming like a flood through his ears, pushing its way within the heart.

It is so sweet that as it goes to capture the heart, the center of all senses, everything is paralyzed. Wherever that sweet aggressor touches, the whole thing is captured with such intensity that everything else is ignored. Rūpa Goswāmī writes, “I don’t know, I can’t say, I fail to express how much nectar there is in the holy name of Krishna. These two syllables contain so much sweetness, and such a high quality of sweetness. And this sweetness is so aggressive that it captures everything.” This verse is found in the *Vidagdha-Mādhava* written by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī.

In his book, *Śaraṇāgati*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained the *Nāmāṣṭakam*, eight prayers in glorification of the holy name, written by Rūpa Goswāmī. The whole thing is described there very beautifully.

He writes, “My heart is just like a desert, hot with the rays of the sun. This is my internal mental condition. The desire for mortal things cannot satisfy me because by nature they are death-producing. And not one or two, but thousands of such death-producing desires have taken shelter in my mind. So, my subconscious region is always burning. This is my condition.

“But somehow, by the grace of the *sādhū* and *guru*, the holy name of Krishna with its infinite prospect has entered through the holes of my ears and reached the plane of my heart. And there, with some peculiar hope, with infinite, auspicious possibilities, it touched my heart with a new kind of nectar.

ECSTASY OF THE NAME

“New hope is aroused by that sound. Then by force, it comes from the heart towards the tongue. Not that by the endeavor of my tongue I am producing that sound —no. What came from the heart of a saint through my ear, entered my heart, and that forcibly appeared upon my tongue, and began to dance. That is the holy name proper. It descends from above. It cannot be produced by the material form of this tongue. Its source is above.

“And through an agent of the absolute it comes through the ear to the heart. From the heart it gathers some sympathy, then the holy name of Krishna forcibly appears upon the tongue, and begins to dance. With great force it comes to the end of the tongue, and that sweet sound begins its dancing.”

The real effects of the divine name have been described here. If it is a living and real name, the voice will be choked up, there will be shivering in the body, and the legs will be unable to stand. Sometimes tears will flow in a current on the body, and one's hairs will stand

on end. Sometimes changes of color will be found in the body, and we will be unable to find any trace of the mind or consciousness. We may fall in a swoon, the whole body and mind will appear as if it is being attacked, shivering, and influenced in different ways. Apparently it may seem that so many troubles are created in the body and the mind, but the real heart is overflowing with a particular kind of strange, sweet juice.

OCEAN OF NECTAR

Sometimes one thinks, “I am in an ocean of nectar. My whole existence is within an ocean of nectarine liquid. I am beside myself. I can’t understand where I am. Where am I? What is this? What is all about me? It has almost made me mad. Am I a madman? Where is my past experience, my seriousness, my gravity, where are they? What am I?

“I have been converted wholesale by a foreign thing. I am a doll in the hands of a great force, which is also so affectionate to me. I can’t ascertain how it is possible that by my faith I have entered this great, unknown environment, unexperienced before.

“And at last I find that I am captivated. My entire being, within and without, has been captured by a particular sweet force. I can’t help being prey to such a sweet power. I can’t give any proper description of this. I came to take shelter under Him and accept Him as my guardian; now at His hand I am being dealt with in such

a merciless and despotic way. Still, I feel that everything is very pleasing, beyond my experience. What is this?

“I can’t resist anymore. I am fully captured. Let my fate go anywhere. I can’t come out. I am a captive in the hand of a sweet friend; my whole independence is gone. There is no way left to me but to surrender. I am unable to describe my real position. I find that He’s an autocrat. Whatever He likes to do, He will do. Since it is not possible for me to give any resistance, I must surrender. Let me also cooperate with whatever He is pleased to do. Otherwise, what can I do? I am helpless.

“Sometimes I find that the sweetness of the name is condensed like a blossoming flower, and very wonderful streams of sweet current are flowing from it. The holy name contains so many sweet variegated forms of current within Him, and He is wonderfully expressing Himself in different ways. Sometimes He emanates a peculiar type of color and figure, and disappears.

“So many charming aspects are shown as if to my eyes within, and He forcibly takes me to surrender at the foot of that altar. He shows Himself in His full-fledged form, in Vṛndāvana, in His Vraja *līlā*, with Rādhārāṇī, and He takes me there. I find that I am in the midst of His peculiar, very sweet and loving paraphernalia. And He says, ‘You see! I have so many wonderful things. This is your home. I am not merely imagination, but concrete reality. You will find here that the environment is very favorable and sweet. You are to live here.’

“I see there that he is dealing in different ways with His associates, in different *rasas*. And I find that I have another body that has emerged from my previous one, and that has a permanent place here in His service. Such a new life I find here. And then I find ultimately that all consideration of my past life and experience has vanished. And it is true: my real life is here. This is proper, and that was a sham, that life has vanished.

“Then I find that chanting the holy name gives me new encouragement, a new prospect, and new hope. Whatever we want, whatever is our internal demand, it is supplied by the name. If we take the name, all our internal hankerings will be fulfilled. It is eternal, it is the purest of the pure, and it is full of ecstasy. Now I find I have been completely converted.

“Now, my innermost hankering is this: let whatever is against this sweet name vanish eternally from the world. If anything is in opposition to this sweet life, let it vanish, and if necessary, I will give my life to make it disappear from the world forever. Then others will be able to enjoy it at their free will. No hindrance should come to that fulfillment of life. It has no other second. So, everyone may come here, and if necessary, I will sacrifice myself to finish any opposition, so that all can smoothly, peacefully, and without any danger, enjoy this absolute, sweet, and blissful life.” This is the statement of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in the final song of his book, *Śaraṇāgati* (*Surrender*).

Reality the Beautiful

Rāmānanda Rāya was a married man, but he was recognized by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as a master of his senses to the extreme degree. Once a *brāhmaṇa* priest named Pradyumna Miśra came to Mahāprabhu and told Him, “I would like to hear about Krishna from Your lips.” Mahāprabhu said, “I do not know anything about Krishna, but Rāmānanda Rāya knows. Go to him and hear about Krishna. Take My name, and perhaps he will talk with you.”

Pradyumna Miśra was hesitant, but he went and observed Rāmānanda Rāya for some time and then returned and reported to Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu asked him, “Have you heard about Krishna from Rāmānanda?” “No.” “Why?” “I saw him engaged in something objectionable. I watched for some time, and then returned here.” “What did you see?” Pradyumna Miśra answered, “I saw Rāmānanda Rāya training some young dancing girls!”

Girls who are generally devoted to the service of the Jagannāth Deity from a young age are known as *deva-dāsīs*. They do not marry, and sometimes their

character is not very good. Pradyumna Miśra saw Rāmānanda Rāya training *deva-dāsīs* in a very objectionable way. He was showing them how to go before the Jagannāth Deity and dance and sing. He showed them how their posture should be, how they should gesture, and how their looks should be enticing. And for such training he would sometimes even touch their private parts. So Pradyumna Miśra told Mahāprabhu, “Seeing Rāmānanda doing all these things, I had no regard for him, so for some time I saw him busily engaged in that matter, and then I went away.”

MASTER OF THE SENSES

Mahāprabhu told him, “Don’t underestimate Rāmānanda Rāya. He is the master of his senses. There is not a tinge of craft in him. Even I feel trouble from sense disturbance within Me, but Rāmānanda has no such trouble. We have no direct experience that a stage can be attained where it is possible to be above mundane sense pleasure, but we have only heard through the scriptures that there is a stage when a man may transcend all these gross attachments.

“This is mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39):

vikriḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ
 śraddhānvito ’nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
 bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmāṁ
 hr̥d-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ

“One who hears with firm faith the supramundane amorous affairs of Lord Krishna and the *gopīs*, as described by a pure devotee of the Lord, soon becomes freed from mundane lust and achieves divine love of Krishna.

“One may be engaged bodily in such activities, while his heart is elsewhere. And there is only one who is of that type, Rāmānanda Rāya. There are not big numbers of Rāmānandas; there is only one Rāmānanda, who has acquired such a stage because he is well-versed in the kind of sentiment and realization which is necessary for the service of Krishna and the *gopīs*. His heart is completely dedicated to the cause of Krishna; He has no selfish interest. He is always in Krishna consciousness, and whatever he does is for Krishna’s satisfaction, so don’t think ill of him. Go there again.”

MAD FOR KRISHNA

Then Pradyumna Miśra again went to see Rāmānanda Rāya, and Rāmānanda began their conversation by saying “Oh, on that day I could not oblige you. But again you have come to hear about Krishna. How fortunate I am!” In the morning, Rāmānanda Rāya began to speak, and when the afternoon came, still he was madly talking about Krishna. He completely forgot about eating, bathing, or anything else. He was mad, incessantly speaking of Krishna. Then, when it was late, his servants came twice, thrice, to ask him to take bath and eat his dinner, and finally, he had to

leave the talk and go. Then Pradyumna Miśra returned to Mahāprabhu and said, “Yes, I have heard from Rāmānanda Rāya, and my heart is full from hearing about Krishna from him.”

Mahāprabhu Himself had heard from Rāmānanda Rāya, and He said, “Rāmānanda knows what is Krishna. What I taught to Rūpa and Sanātana, I heard from Rāmānanda.” It is mentioned that Mahāprabhu took *dīkṣā*, initiation, from Īśvara Purī; for preaching purposes he took *sannyāsa*, the renounced order, from Keśava Bhāratī; and for entrance into the transcendental pastimes of Krishna in Vṛndāvana, He took *rāga mārga* initiation from Rāmānanda Rāya. Of course, Īśvara Purī, Keśava Bhāratī, and Rāmānanda Rāya never thought of themselves as the *guru* of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. But it was seen that Mahāprabhu treated Rāmānanda with some respect. It is mentioned in the *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 8.204) that if one wants to enter into the spontaneous devotion of Krishna’s pastimes in Vraja, it is required that he take shelter of a confidential maidservant in conjugal mellow, *mādhurya rasa* (*sakhī vinā ei līlāya anyera nāhi gati*). They are masters of that situation. The whole storehouse of this *mādhurya līlā* is in the hands of those maidservants. Only they can give it to others. In *mādhurya rasa*, the *guru* is seen in the form and spirit of a *sakhī*, a maidservant of Rādhārāṇī (*guru rūpa sakhī*). Rāmānanda Rāya was Viśākhā-sakhī, the right-hand personal attendant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu gives us a hint of the necessity of approaching a confidential associate of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī when He says to Rāmānanda:

**kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva vettā, sei ‘guru’ haya**

“Why do you shrink away from instructing Me? I am learning so much from you. You are well-versed in the affairs of Krishna, so you are *guru*; therefore I am hearing from you. Whoever is the master of that storehouse of *Krishna-līlā*, and whoever can distribute it—he is *guru*; of this, there is no doubt.”

The famous talks between Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took place on the banks of the Godāvarī river. The name Godāvarī is significant, for it indicates that place where the highest fulfillment of our spiritual senses was given. The fullest engagement of all our senses was announced there on the banks of the Godāvarī: “Your senses are not to be rejected. If you can give up the spirit of exploitation and renunciation, then your senses will have their fulfillment with Krishna. Those tendencies bar your approach to Krishna. To properly approach Krishna, you will have to utilize your senses to the fullest extent.” That was dealt with on the banks of the Godāvarī.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE

There, in his famous conversations with Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began the approach

সখী বিনা এই লীলায় অন্নের নাহি গতি ।
 সখীভাবে যে তাঁরে করে অনুগতি ॥ ২০৪ ॥
 রাধাকৃষ্ণ-কুঞ্জসেবা-সাধ্য সেই পায় ।
 সেই সাধ্য পাইতে আর নাহিক উপায় ॥ ২০৫ ॥

The original Bengali text of the conversation between Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Rāya, recorded in the *Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* five hundred years ago by Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswāmī.

to pure devotional service in a general and comprehensive way. This is recorded in the *Madhya-līlā* of *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* (8.51-313). He asked Rāmānanda Rāya, *prabhu kahe*, “*paḍa śloka sādhyera nimāya*”: “What is the ultimate goal of life? I not only want to hear your statements, but also evidence from the scriptures.”

The answer came from Rāmānanda Rāya: *rāya kahe*, “*sva-dharmācaraṇe viṣṇu-bhakti haya*.” “Discharge your own duty, without expecting anything in return.” *Sva dharma* means *varṇāśrama dharma*, Vedic social stratification. “You are posted in your present position by your previous *karma*. According to your present position, you have to discharge your duties on one condition: you must do them without remuneration. If you go on with your duties in *varṇāśrama dharma*, without any mundane aim, you can achieve *viṣṇu-bhakti*, devotion to God. This is confirmed in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3.8.9):

varṇāśramācāra-vatā
 puruṣeṇa paraḥ pumān
 viṣṇur ārādhyate panthā
 nānyat tat-toṣa-kāraṇam

“The only way to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, is to worship Him by properly executing one’s prescribed duties in the social system of *varṇa* and *āśrama*.” Here, Rāmānanda Rāya says that *viṣṇu-bhakti*, adherence to the Lord who is permeating everything, is the object and ultimate destination of our life. This is the Vāsudeva conception: everything is in Him, and He is everywhere. Rāmānanda explained that from our local interests, we must come to embrace the general interest, and that must reach the level of Viṣṇu consciousness: *viṣṇu-bhakti*. Our submission to Viṣṇu, the internal spirit who is everywhere, is the object of life. We must connect with Him and live accordingly, not a phenomenal life, but a spiritual life pertaining to a deeper, more subtle plane.

DEVOTION MIXED WITH DESIRES

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “This is superficial; go deeper.” Of course, it may be thought that actual theistic life begins from here, giving up the special, local purpose, and acting for a universal purpose, as already ordered and programmed in the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*. But Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “This is superficial; go deeper.”

Then, Rāmānanda Rāya said, *kṛṣṇe karmārpaṇa—sarva-sādhya-sāra*: “To offer the results of one’s activities to Krishna is the essence of all perfection.” In *varṇāśrama dharma*, it is the fashion that people are generally engaged in external activities and do not care to give up the fruits of their action. Even if they do, they have no direct consciousness of Viṣṇu or Krishna. They worship the goddess Durgā, perform the *śrāddhā* funeral ceremony and execute so many other religious practices. Indirectly, it is ultimately connected with Viṣṇu. They may or may not know how, but the link is there. That is the general conception of *varṇāśrama*, but here, Rāmānanda says that it will be better to have direct consciousness that Krishna is the authority. All the results of whatever we do within the *varṇāśrama* social system must be given to Krishna. If we perform all our physical, social, national and spiritual activities in Krishna consciousness, then we can approach the fulfillment of our goal in life.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said “This is superficial; go deeper.” Then Rāmānanda Rāya revealed new light, quoting the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66): *sarva-dharmāṇa parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*, “Give up all your duties, and just surrender to Me.” We must be particular with the object of life, not the external activities of *varṇāśrama*. Less importance should be given to the form of our activity; whether I am a king, a *brāhmaṇa* intellectual, or a worker does not matter. We may think, “I

have this sort of duty, I have that sort of duty,” but that does not matter very much. We must have no attachment for that. The king may leave his kingdom and take to a brahmanical life of renunciation and austerity. A *śūdra* may give up his labor, become a beggar, and chant the name of Krishna. A *brāhmaṇa* may give up his performance of sacrifice and become a mendicant. So, we are to be particular about the aim of life, not the form of our duty. We must exclusively devote ourselves to the cause of the Lord, ignoring our present paraphernalia and duty.

KNOWLEDGE AND DEVOTION

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “This is also superficial; go ahead—deeper.” Then, Rāmānanda Rāya explained *jñāna-miśra bhakti*, devotional service mixed with knowledge, by quoting from the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.54) where Krishna says:

**brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām**

One who has come to the stage of identifying himself with spirit above matter has nothing to do with this mundane world. Any loss or gain in this mundane world is of no use to him. He is spirit; his prospect is in the world of soul, and he has nothing to do with this material world, whether it is laudable or blamable. He is already settled in the consciousness that he is soul proper

and has nothing to do with matter, so within himself he feels satisfaction. He is *ātmārāma*: self-content; he neither mourns, nor aspires for anything. If something is lost, does he mourn? No. He thinks, “This is nothing; it is only matter.” And when something is gained, he is not overly cheerful, because it is only matter; it is unnecessary and unimportant. Now true devotional service can begin. His soul can begin living in the spiritual plane, with a pure serving attitude, unmixed with any mundane aspiration. When one attains the spiritual platform, he gets the opportunity to practice a higher type of service.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “This is also superficial. Such a person is only on the verge of devotional service; he has no substantial touch of devotion. He has not entered the domain of *bhakti*; he is just waiting in the marginal position, at the door. He may attain *bhakti*, but he has not yet achieved it. His negative forces are finished, but still, he is just at the door; he has not yet entered. He may enter; he may not enter. From there, if he gets anything, it will be pure, but he is still at the door.

BEYOND SPIRIT, “GO DEEPER”

Rāmānanda Rāya then said, *jñāne prayāsam udapāśya namanta eva*: “It is a very difficult thing to cross the charm of knowledge.” We think, “I want to understand everything first, and then I shall act.” Calculation and an underlying suspicion is there. Before we act, we want to know everything fully; only then will we risk our

capital. The ego, the "I" is very strong, and he wants to have an account of his loss and gain. He thinks, "I am the master. The key is in my hand, I want to test everything, I want to know it all. I know what is good for me." So, we think ourselves masters, not servants, and from the position of a master we make our inquiry.

But this calculating mentality must be given up if we at all want to enter into the domain of the Lord, where everything is superior to us. No one there will care to come to us with an explanation, thinking that we are their master. They will not reassure us by saying, "Yes, there will be no loss; your gain will be big." We may think, "I am an independent separate entity, so in my account there must be no loss. I must stand here with my head erect," but that won't do. We are to go there as slaves, not masters. That sort of mentality is necessary: we must bow down our heads, not that with our heads erect we will march over everything. But everything there is superior in quality to us.

DIVINE SLAVERY

So, we have to enter into that transcendental land, where even the earth, water, air, and whatever we will find, is made of higher materials than we ourselves are made of. They are all *guru*, and we are disciples. They are all masters, and we are servants; we have to enter the land where everything is our master. We will have to submit; that will be our real qualification. What we

will be ordered to do, we will have to do. We are not to exercise our brain so much there. The brain has no room there; they are all brainier than we. Our brain is unnecessary there; only our hands are necessary. Menial labor is necessary there. Brain there is enough. We are to enter that land if we like. It is a land of slavery for us. So, we are to hatefully dismiss our brains, and taking only our hearts, we must approach and enter that land.

We should think, "I am as insignificant as a mosquito," just as Lord Brahmā did when he went to Dwārakā to visit Lord Krishna. And it is not only for the time being; not that one will accept a humble attitude, finish his work and then come back. No. We will have to accept such an insignificant position eternally. Of course, we may expect to be educated about Krishna consciousness: how it is good, how it is great, how it is useful to us. We will be allowed *paripraśna*, honest inquiry. In the transcendental realm, everyone is our friend. They will come to help us, to make us understand that devotional service is beautiful, and that Krishna consciousness is the best form of life. Our aspiration and purity of purpose is to be valued, not our external position. The recruiters from that side will consider our purity of purpose, not so much our present position and capacity.

And although apparently it seems that we are going to be slaves, the result is just the opposite. If you can accept such an attitude of surrender and slavery, then

He who can never be conquered, will be conquered. Friends will come and help you; the *sādhus* will come and make you understand that we should become slaves, that Krishna likes His slaves very much. He is the master of slaves, and sometimes He wants to become the slave of His slaves (*gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*). This is the key to success, and we can achieve the highest gain through this attitude.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu told Rāmānanda Rāya, “Yes, this is true. The unconquerable is conquered by surrender. We can capture Him. I accept this as the beginning plane of divine love: by giving we can get as much as we risk. As much as we risk to give ourselves, so much we can demand from that unconquerable infinite.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “I accept this as the beginning of *śuddha-bhakti*, pure devotional service. But go farther.”

THE SCIENCE OF RASA

Rāmānanda Rāya explained that from there pure devotional service develops in a crude form, in a general way. And when it is more mature, it must take the shape of *śānta*, neutrality; *dāsyā*, servitorship; *sakhya*, friendship; *vātsalya*, paternal affection; and *mādhurya rasa*, conjugal love. In *śānta rasa*, there is adherence, *niṣṭhā*; one thinks, “I cannot withdraw myself from this consciousness of continuous submission to the truth.

Neutrality develops into *dāśya rasa*, the desire to do some service. When a devotee is not satisfied by only sitting, showing loyalty to the Supreme Authority, he wants to be utilized by Him. He awaits the Lord's order, praying that the Lord may give him some engagement. When a devotee has such deep penetration that he wants to be utilized in any way by the Lord, that is known as *dāśya rasa*, or devotion in the mood of service. Then there is *sakhya rasa*; devotional service in friendship.

GOD THE FRIEND

When, in *dāśya rasa*, confidence is added to service, then it becomes a little superior. Generally old servants who are faithful become confidential servants, so when the confidential stage is added to service, it becomes *sakhya rasa*, or devotional service as a friend of the Lord. First there is *niṣṭhā*, adherence, submission; then the devotee wants to be utilized for His satisfaction; then there is confidential utilization; and then it comes to friendly service, *sakhya rasa*. In *Vaikuṇṭha*, where Lord Nārāyaṇa is served in calculative devotion, only *śānta rasa*, *dāśya rasa*, and half of *sakhya rasa* are seen. Full confidence is not possible there. Awe, reverence, splendor, grandeur, pomp, apprehension—all these vanish when we develop a more confidential relationship with the Supreme Lord. At that time, the object of our worship or love changes in another way.

Then from *Vaikuṇṭha*, we feel attraction for *Ayodhyā*, the divine abode of Lord *Rāmacandra*, where there is neutrality, servitorship, and friendship with *Vibhīṣaṇa* and *Sugrīva*. There, we can also trace *vātsalya rasa*, parental love of Godhead.

GOD THE SON

In *vātsalya rasa*, confidence has developed to the peculiar stage in which the servitors think themselves promoted to the post of protecting the object of their veneration. Filial affection is also service. Although it seems that the parents are masters of the situation, controlling the Lord as their son, sometimes chastising and punishing Him, this is a superficial view. If we can enter into the depth of their service, we shall find an incomparable love of a most peculiar type. On the surface, they are engaged in punishing and rebuking the Lord; underground, they are full of interest for the welfare of the object of their service. *Vātsalya*, or parental love of Godhead, is a peculiar type of divine love. We see a very light type of *vātsalya* in *Ayodhyā*, so it is almost ignored.

MATHURĀ: THE KRISHNA CONCEPTION

Rūpa Goswāmī leaped from *Vaikuṇṭha* to *Mathurā* in one stride. In his *Upadeśamṛta* (9), he writes: *vaikuṇṭhaj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād*. “*Mathurā* is superior to *Vaikuṇṭha* because Lord *Śrī*

Krishna appeared there.” It is there that everything is shown in a clear and substantial way. In Mathurā we find the Krishna conception of Godhead. In one stride he has come from Vaikuṇṭha to the Krishna conception, but Sanātana Goswāmī has filled up the gap. In his book, *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, he says that on the way to Mathurā there is Ayodhyā, the spiritual kingdom of Lord Rāma, and there we find *sakhya* and *vātsalya rasa*.

But Rūpa Goswāmī goes to Mathurā at once. He says, “Come to Mathurā; here you will find *sakhya* and *vātsalya rasa* clearly visible. He has shown how *sakhya rasa* service is present there. The devotees there are playing with Krishna, sometimes climbing on His shoulders, and perhaps sometimes even giving Him a slap. But although they may mix with Him in this way, their heart is full of a peculiar type of service attitude. That is the criterion; they may give up their lives a thousand times to take a thorn out of His sole. They can sacrifice themselves a thousand times for the slightest satisfaction of their friend. They consider Him a thousand times more valuable than their own life. In *vātsalya rasa* also, the criterion is similar. For the slightest interest of the object of their veneration they can give their lives millions of times. Such affection is found there.

And then, from *vātsalya*, it progresses to conjugal love (*mādhurya rasa*), the all-comprehensive *rasa* which includes adherence (*śānta-niṣṭhā*), service (*dāsyā*),

friendly confidence (*sakhya*), and parental love (*vātsalya rasa*). But the wholesale dedication of every atom of our existence for Krishna's satisfaction is found in *mādhurya rasa*, which includes all other *rasas*.

PARAMOUR LOVE

And *mādhurya rasa* is more enhanced when it is couched in the form of *parakīya*, or paramour relationship. In *parakīya rasa*, the *gopīs* risk everything for the service of Krishna. *Parakīya rasa* takes two forms: in one, there is no obligation of anything; the union may happen or may not happen. So, because their meeting is very rare, it becomes even sweeter. There is another kind of *parakīya rasa*: we are told that ordinary food is not palatable to Krishna, but when He takes food by stealing, that is more tasteful to Him. If we can follow this art, that may also be applied in the case of *parakīya rasa*. "I am deceiving the party, getting what I want. I am stealing the property of someone else." That sort of posing becomes more tasteful to the subjective party.

And the dedicated party risks everything: their good name, society, future, and even the dictation of the religious scriptures. They take a wholesale risk, just as one time, when we were in Madras, the King of Jaipur gave some money for the construction of a temple. The money was sent to our head office in Calcutta. Out of five thousand rupees, the first installment was one thousand rupees, and the construction

work was begun by sending a worker from our main center. Then, Mādhava Mahārāj and I were sent to Madras, where we heard that the king would soon come. In order to show him that some work had been done we raised the construction to some extent, so the king could be told, “Your money has been spent, and now the next installment is necessary.” In order to do this, we incurred a debt. We took a loan for bricks and other things and raised the construction to a higher level.

When we wrote this to our *guru mahārāj*, we had some apprehension that he would chastise us, “Why have you taken this loan?” Instead of that, he gave us his appreciation. “You have risked your future in the service of Krishna. You have taken a loan, and that means you have to pay off that loan, so you have engaged your future energy in the service of Krishna. You will have to collect money and pay off the loan, so there is service with risk for the future.” The *gopīs* consciously risked their future: “We have disobeyed our superior persons and the directions of the *Vedas*; what we do is neither approved by society, nor by the religious books. Our future is dark.” Still, they could not but serve Krishna.

So, *vaikuṇṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād*. *Janito* means *vātsalya rasa*, and *mādhurya rasa* in Vṛndāvana: *rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ*. In the *mādhurya rasa* also, three groups are shown: Vṛndāvana in general, selected groups in Govardhana, and the highest

group in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. All these things have been shown in the conversation between Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

RĀDHĀ: QUEEN OF THE GOPĪS

After this, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Go further.” Then, Rāmānanda Rāya began to explain the kind of service rendered by Rādhārāṇī in *mādhurya rasa*. Her devotional service is categorically higher than that of all the other *gopīs*. *Rādhām ādhāya hṛdaye tatyāja vraja-sundarīḥ* (Gīta-govinda 3.1 by Jayadeva Goswāmī). The whole group of *gopīs* can be canceled for only one: Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. What peculiar type of service may come from Her? And Krishna, the Original Personality of Godhead (*svayam-rūpa*) is only by the side of Rādhārāṇī. By the side of other *gopīs*, that is *prābhava prakāśa*, a plenary expansion, not *svayam-rūpa*, the original form. Such is the quality of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. We should show our highest reverence to this highest ideal of devotional service.

RĀDHĀ-KRISHNA: UNION IN SEPARATION

Then the last question came from Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu: “Can you think of anything more than this?” Then, Rāmānanda Rāya said, “You asked me to quote scripture to support whatever I say, but here I won’t be able to quote scripture from anywhere. Still, I



Lord Śrī Krishna, ecstasy Himself and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the embodiment of ecstatic love of Godhead.

have a new feeling within me, and if You would like to know that, I can explain it to You.” In this way, one song was composed by Rāmānanda Rāya. He introduced this song by saying, “Whether or not it will be pleasing to You, I do not know, but it seems to me that there is a stage which is even better than the meeting

of Rādhā and Govinda.” There is a stage where both of Them, the positive and negative are combined, no individual consciousness is clear, and one is searching another in self-forgetfulness. This searching of one party by the other is very strong and intense. This seems to be a more highly elevated love: union in separation. Rādhā and Govinda are so intense in Their search of one another that even They have no consciousness of whether They have each other. Rādhārāṇī sometimes experiences that even while Krishna is present before Her, She fears losing Him; that feeling becomes as intense as if She has lost Him. They are together, but the apprehension that one may lose the other makes their meeting intolerably painful, just as a mother is always alert about the safety of her son (*aniṣṭa-śaṅkīni bandhu-hṛdayāni bhavanti hi*). A mother thinks, “Oh, my son is out—is he in an accident?” This fear of separation is the symptom of deep love.

ŚRĪ CHAITANYA AVATĀRA

Rāmānanda Raya’s composition gave a hint about the divine appearance of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in which both Rādhā and Govinda are combined, and it is as if they are unconscious of Their separate existence. One is searching the other. Krishna Himself is overflowing with the feelings of Rādhārāṇī, and They are so deeply embraced that one is lost in the other. Then, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu put His palm over

the mouth of Rāmānanda Rāya, and told him, “No further.” *Rasa-rāja mahābhāva—dui eka rūpa*. Lord Śrī Krishna is the fountainhead of all pleasure, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the embodiment of ecstatic love of Godhead. These two forms are united as one in Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

RASARĀJA: ECSTASY HIMSELF

Mahāprabhu replied, “Oh, because you are a cent-per-cent devotee, wherever you cast your glance you see only Krishna, nothing else. The object of your interest is represented everywhere.” Rāmānanda Rāya said, “My Lord, don’t deceive me in this way. You have come here so graciously to purify this mean person, and if You act diplomatically now, it will not look well for You. I won’t hear what You say; come out with Your real position. Who are You?” Mahāprabhu said, “By dint of your loving devotion, you can know everything in this world; nothing can be concealed from your loving eye.” *Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*.

Then, Mahāprabhu revealed Himself: “When you see Me to be externally of a golden color, it is not so. It is by the touch of the color of Rādhārāṇī. And who can Rādhārāṇī touch and closely embrace? She will never touch anyone except Krishna. So, now you know who I am: Rasarāja—ecstasy Himself, and Mahābhāva—the one who can taste that highest *rasa*. See how They mingle together!

Rāmānanda Rāya fainted and fell flat on the floor. He could not keep his senses. Then by the touch of His hand, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu again brought him to his senses. Rāmānanda returned to his previous stage of consciousness and saw a *sannyāsī* sitting before him. After a short pause, Mahāprabhu said, “Remain here, I am going.”

Afterwards, Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu had some other talks, and Mahāprabhu said, “Rāmānanda, as long as I live I want your company.” Rāmānanda replied, “Yes, I must take shelter of Your divine feet and live there for the rest of my life.” Rāmānanda later made arrangements with the King of Orissa to retire from his post as Governor of Madras and came to Jagannāth Purī. For almost two years, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu wandered about the holy places of Southern and Western India and at last returned to Purī. There they again met.

TRANSCENDENTAL MADNESS

After this, Mahāprabhu went to Vṛndāvana through Bengal. Six years passed, and Advaita Prabhu almost gave leave to Mahāprabhu, saying, “Our pastimes of introducing the chanting of Hare Krishna are finished.” Then Mahāprabhu continuously showed Rādhārāṇī’s mood of tasting *krishna-prema*, ecstatic love of Krishna, for twelve years. Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya, who are Lalitā and Viśākhā, the two principle *gopī*



An Orissan relief of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and his two intimate associates, Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarupa Damodara. They assisted Mahāprabhu in tasting ecstatic love of Krishna during the last twelve years of His manifest pastimes.

assistants of Rādhārāṇī, were Mahāprabhu's most important company during that time. There, so many things about the deep feelings of Divine love have been shown. It has never been found in the history of the world, or even expressed in any scripture how such intense love within can produce such corresponding symptoms on the surface. That was shown by Rādhārāṇī and later shown by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

It was shown by Mahāprabhu in His practices also, how *krishna prema*, love of Krishna, can play a man like a doll. Sometimes His legs and hands would enter inconceivably into His body, and sometimes His joints would disconnect and His transcendental body would appear elongated. Sometimes His whole body would

become white, and He would lay unconscious, breathing so slowly that His breath could not be traced. In this way, He exhibited many amazing symptoms of ecstasy.

Svarūpa Dāmodara, the personal secretary of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has explained the meaning of His appearance in his memoirs, which were recorded in the *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kavirāj Goswāmī. He writes:

**rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam**

Sometimes Rādhā and Krishna are combined; sometimes They are separate. They are separate in Dvāpara-yuga, and in Kali-yuga they are combined as Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Both are eternal expressions of the same Absolute Truth. Summer, autumn, winter, and spring continue in a cyclic order; it cannot be said that summer is the beginning and winter comes later. So, the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā and Krishna are eternally being enacted. In ancient times, sometimes Rādhā and Krishna divided Themselves and showed Their pastimes; again both of Them, the potency and the owner of the potency, are combined and closely embraced as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The predominating and the predominated moiety are mixed, and an extraordinary ecstatic feeling is there. Krishna is overpowered by His potency, and He Himself is



Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu: Krishna Himself tasting His own internal sweetness and madly dancing in ecstasy. Krishna Himself is engaged in the search for Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful.

searching after His own Self: *kṛṣṇasya ātmānusandhāna*. Krishna Himself is engaged in the search for Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful. The influence of Rādhārāṇī over Krishna has transformed Him into a devotee, and He is searching Himself. Sweetness is tasting Itself and becoming mad. And it is living sweetness — not dead or static, but dynamic ecstasy, sweetness endowed with life. And He is tasting Himself, the personification of happiness, ecstasy, and beauty — and dancing in madness. And His performance of *kīrtan* means distributing that ecstasy to others. The ultimate sweetness, or *ānanda*, is such that no other thing exists that can taste itself and express its own happiness with such intensity. I have described Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in the *Prema Dhama Deva Stotram*:

**ātma-siddha-sāvalilā-pūrṇa-saukhya-lakṣaṇaṁ
svānubhāva-matta-nṛtya-kīrttanātmavaṇṭanam
advayaika-lakṣya-pūrṇa-tattva-tat-parātparam
prema-dhāma-devam-eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

“The highest conception of the Absolute Truth must also be the highest form of *ānanda*, ecstasy. Mahāprabhu’s dancing indicates that He is full of ecstasy, and His *kīrtan* is distribution of that *rasa*. So, if we scientifically search out who Mahāprabhu is, we cannot but find that He is the Ultimate Reality. He is mad in tasting His own internal nectar, and His dancing is the outcome of His transcendental ecstasy. And He is chanting, distributing that to others. So, studying quite

closely the character of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, we cannot but think that He is the Supreme Absolute Truth, in its fullest, and most dynamic expression.”



Explanation of the Logo of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

by His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Om is the very gist of *Gāyatrī*, and from that *Om* comes merciful rays, like the rays of the sun. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, where *saṅkīrtan* is always going on, is inside the flute of Krishna, and from there comes this sound *Om*. *Om*, the meaning of *Gāyatrī*, is coming from the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, and from there the explanation of *Gāyatrī* has been given by Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj:

gāyatrī muraliṣṭa-kīrttana-dhanaṁ rādhā-padaṁ dhīmaḥi

The position of the *guru* is like water; the servitors of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh are like lotuses; and the position of the worshipful Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Divine form of Rādhā-Krishna, *Om*.

Everything is within *Oṃ*. *Oṃ* is coming from the flute of Krishna, and the meaning of *Oṃ*, of *Gāyatrī*, is *gāyatrī muralīṣṭa-kīrttana-dhanaṁ rādhā-padaṁ dhīmahi*. Krishna's flute does not make any other sound except the glorification of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and that is the real meaning and gist of the *Gāyatrī-Mantram*.

The sun's merciful rays give nourishment to the lotus, but if there is no water—if one cannot take shelter of Śrī Guru and His grace—then the lotus will become burnt by the rays of the sun.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math Road, Kolerganj, P.O. Nabadwip, Dt. Nadia,
West Bengal Pin 741302, ☎: (03472) 40086 & 40752
E-mail: govindam@scsmath.com

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math's principal Web site:
<http://www.scsmath.com/>

Affiliated Main Centres & Branches World wide

India

Calcutta

**Sree Chaitanya Saraswata
Krishnanushilana Sangha**
Opp. Tank 3, 487 Dum Dum Park
Calcutta, Pin 700055, West Bengal
India
Phone: (033) 551-9175 & 549-6408
Email: govindam@scsmath.com

**Sree Chaitanya Saraswata
Krishnanushilana Sangha**
Kaikhali, Chiriamore
(by Calcutta Airport)
P.O. Airport, Calcutta, Pin 700052
West Bengal, India
Phone: (033) 573-5428

Burdwan

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram
P.O. and Village Hapaniya
District of Burdwan
West Bengal, India

**Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda
Seva Ashram**
Village of Bamunpara, P.O. Khanpur
District of Burdwan
West Bengal, India

Orissa

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
Bidhava Ashram Road, Gaur Batsahi
Puri, Pin 752001,
Orissa, India
Phone: (06752) 31413

Mathura

Srila Sridhar Swami Seva Ashram
Dasbisa, P.O. Govardhan
District of Mathura, Pin 281502
Uttar Pradesh, India
Phone: (0565) 815495

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math & Mission

96 Seva Kunja, Vrindavan
District of Mathura, Pin 281121
Uttar Pradesh, India
Phone: (0565) 446778

U.S.A.

California

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram
2900 North Rodeo Gulch Road
Soquel, CA 95073, U.S.A.
Phone: (831) 462-4712
Fax: (831) 462-9472
Email: bpjanardan@lcd.com
Web: <http://www.lcd.com/sevashram/>

Mahila Sakha

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram
269 E. Saint James Street
San Jose, Ca 95112, U.S.A.
Phone: (408) 288 6360 and
408) 287-6360
Email: devi@scsmath.com
Web:
<http://www.lcd.com/sevashram/sanjose>

New York

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
P.O. Box 311, Oaklyn NJ, U.S.A.
Phone: (856) 962-8888
Fax: (856) 962-0894
Email: swamigiri@attglobal.net
Web: <http://www.atmasamarpan.com/>

Hawaii

**Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda
Mission**
RR1 Box 450-D, Crater Road
Kula, Maui, HI 96790, U.S.A.
Phone & Fax: (808) 878-6821
Email: mdasa@krsna.cc
Web: <http://www.krsna.cc/>

Sri Chaitanya Sanctuary

P.O. Box 1292,
Honokaa, HI 96727, U.S.A.
Email: gaura@ilhawaii.net

Mexico**Mérida****Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar****Seva Ashram de México, A.R.**

Calle 69-B, No. 537, Fracc. Santa Isabel
Kanasín, Yucatán c.p. 97370, Mexico
Phone: (52-99) 82-84-44
Email: ramahari@sureste.com

Guadalajara**Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar****Seva Ashram de México, A.R.**

Reforma No. 864, Sector Hidalgo
Guadalajara, Jalisco, c.p. 44280
Mexico
Phone: (52) 3826-9613

Email: pitambar@foreigner.class.udg.mx

Monterrey**Sri Chaitanya Saraswat****Krishnanushilana Sangha**

Alhelí 1628, Col Santa María
Cd. Guadalupe, Nuevo León,
c.p. 67160, Mexico
Phone: (52-8) 360-41-42

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati**Seva Ashram de México, A.R.**

Apartado Postal 510
Col. del Valle, Nuevo León,
c.p. 66250, Mexico
Phone: (52-8) 319-53-58 & 356-49-45
Email: madhumayi@mail.cmact.com

Tijuana**Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar****Seva Ashram de México, A.R.**

Mutualismo 720-C3, Zona Centro
Tijuana, Baja California, c.p. 22000
Mexico
Phone: (52-6) 685-76-63
Email: jaibalai@telnor.net

Veracruz**Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar****Seva Ashram de México, A.R.**

1ro. de Mayo No.1057,
(entre Iturbide y Azueta)
Veracruz, Veracruz, c.p. 91700, Mexico
Phone: (52-2) 931-30-24
Email: madhuchanda@infosel.net.mx

Orizaba**Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar****Seva Ashram de México, A.R.**

Andador 13 No. 108, U. Hab. El Trebol
Orizaba, Veracruz, c.p. 94348, Mexico
Phone: (52-2) 721-00-37 and 726-08-51
Fax: (52-2) 726-08-51
Email:
yuthesva@orizaba.rodpas.com.mx

México D.F.**Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar****Seva Ashram de México, A.R.**

Fernando Villalpando No.100, interior 103
Col. Guadalupe Inn,
Deleg. Alvaro Obregón
México, D.F., c.p.01020, Mexico
Phone: (52) 50-97-05-33
Email: laksmi92@df1.telnet.net.mx

Morelia**Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva****Ashram de México, A.R.**

Calle Loma Florida No 258
Sector Independencia,
Col. Lomas Del Valle
Morelia, Michoacán, c.p. 58170
Mexico
Phone: (52-4) 327-53-49
Email: subha@prodigy.net.mx

Europe**England****Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math**

466 Green Street
London E13 9DB, U.K.
Phone: (0208) 552-3551
Email: devashis@dircon.co.uk

Republic of Ireland**Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sangha**

Annalough Lodge
Inchaquire, Balitore, Moone
County Kildare, Eire (Ireland)
Phone: [+353] 458 64766

Germany**Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram**

Willibald-Alexis Str. 20
10965, Berlin, Germany
Phone & Fax: [+49] (30) 6919-320
Email: premanidhi@mailberlin.net
Web:
<http://www.scs.math.home.pages.de>

Italy**Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram Italia**

Corte Giulini, 1
20040 Usmate-Velate (MI)
Phone: (039) 6829477
Email: jaynimai@tin.it

Netherlands**Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Ashram**

Middachtenlaan 128
1333 XV Almere, Buiten
Netherlands
Phone: 036 53 28150
Email: gandiva@chello.nl

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Van Beuningenstraat 81
1051XD Amsterdam
Netherlands
Phone: (020) 686-2099
Email: sacidevi@dds.nl

Portugal**Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math,**

Rua do Sobreiro 5,
Cidreira, 3020-143 Coimbra,
Portugal

Hungary**Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math**

Andras Novak
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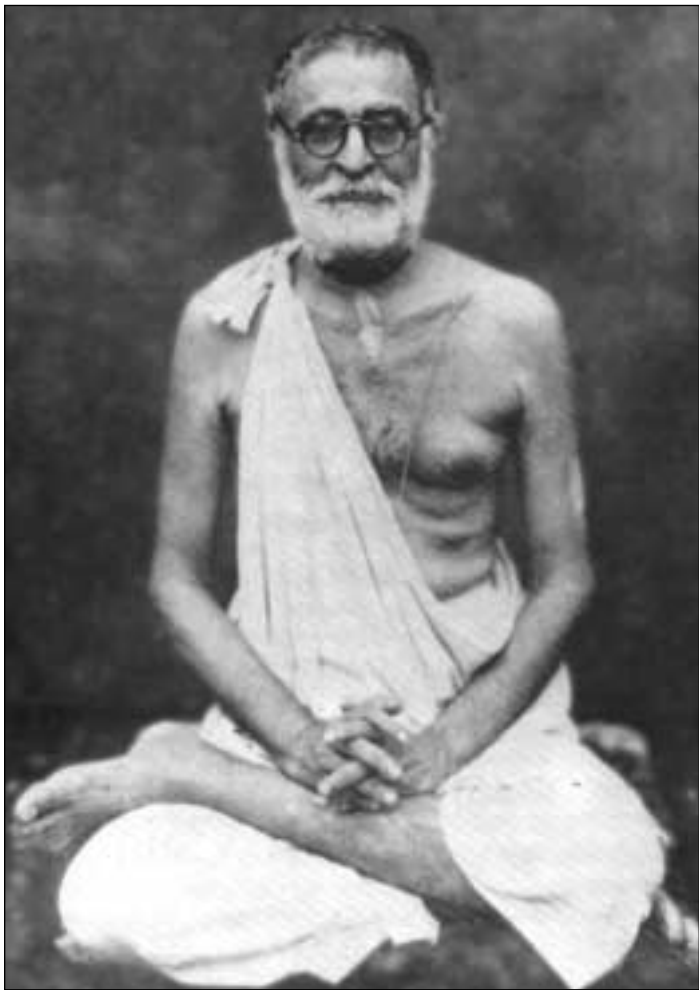
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Preface

By His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhuṇāḍa
*Founder-Āchārya of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness*



In ten short years, Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhuṇāḍa inundated the world with Krishna Consciousness. In the following excerpt from one of his essays, he smashes the sectarian misconception that the spiritual master is limited to a particular person, form, or institution, and establishes the universal conception of guru.

sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvyata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam

“In the revealed scriptures it is declared that the spiritual master should be worshiped like the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this injunction is obeyed

by pure devotees of the Lord. The spiritual master is the most confidential servant of the Lord. Thus let us offer our respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of our spiritual master.”

Gentlemen, on behalf of the members of the Bombay branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, let me welcome you all because you have so kindly joined us tonight in our congregational offerings of homage to the lotus feet of the world teacher, *āchāryadeva*, who is the founder of this Gauḍīya Mission and is the President-*āchārya* of Śrī Śrī Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabhā—I mean my eternal divine master, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Sixty-two years ago, on this auspicious day, the *āchāryadeva* made his appearance by the call of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda at Śrī Kṣetra, Jagannātha Dhāma at Purī.

Gentlemen, the offering of such an homage as has been arranged this evening to the *āchāryadeva* is not a sectarian concern, for when we speak of the fundamental principle of *gurudeva* or *āchāryadeva*, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my *guru* from your’s or anyone else’s. There is only one *guru*, who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me and all others.

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.12) it is said:

**tad-vijñārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samt-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham**

“In order to learn the transcendental science, one must approach the bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession, who is fixed in the Absolute Truth.”

Thus it has been enjoined herewith that in order to receive that transcendental knowledge, one must approach the *guru*. Therefore, if the Absolute Truth is one, about which we think there is no difference of opinion, the *guru* cannot be two. The *ācāryadeva* to whom we have assembled tonight to offer our humble homage is not the *guru* of a sectarian institution or one out of many differing exponents of the truth. On the contrary, he is the *jagad-guru*, or the *guru* of all of us: the only difference is that some obey him wholeheartedly, while others do not obey him directly.

In the *Bhāgavatam* (11.17.27) it is said:

**ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyān
nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ**

“One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am,” said the Blessed Lord. “Nobody should be jealous of the spiritual master or think of him as an

ordinary man, because the spiritual master is the sum total of all demigods.” That is, the *āchārya* has been identified with God Himself. He has nothing to do with the affairs of this mundane world. He appears before us to reveal the light of the *Vedas* and to bestow upon us the blessing of full-fledged freedom, after which we should hanker at every step of our life’s journey.

The transcendental knowledge of the *Vedas* was first uttered by God to Brahmā, the creator of this particular universe. From Brahmā the knowledge descended to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsadeva, from Vyāsadeva to Madhva, and in this process of disciplic succession the transcendental knowledge was transmitted by one disciple to another till it reached Lord Gaurāṅga, Śrī Krishna Chaitanya, who posed as the disciple and successor of Śrī Īśvara Purī. The present *āchāryadeva* is the tenth disciplic representative from Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, the original representative of Lord Chaitanya who preached this transcendental tradition in its fullness. The knowledge that we receive from our *gurudeva* is not different from that imparted by God Himself and the succession of the *āchāryas* in the preceptorial line of Brahmā. We adore this auspicious day as Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-tithi because the *āchārya* is the living representative of Vyāsadeva, the divine compiler of the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

We cannot know anything of the transcendental

region by our limited, perverted method of observation and experiment. But all of us can lend our eager ears for the aural reception of the transcendental sound transmitted from that region to this, through the unadulterated medium of *śrī gurudeva* or Śrī Vyāsadeva. Therefore, gentlemen, we should surrender ourselves today at the feet of the representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva for the elimination of all our differences bred by our unsubmitive attitude. It is accordingly said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34):

**tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ**

“Just approach the wise and bona fide spiritual master. Surrender unto him first and try to understand him by inquiries and service. Such a wise spiritual master will enlighten you with transcendental knowledge, for he has already known the Absolute Truth.”

To receive transcendental knowledge, we must completely surrender ourselves to the real *āchārya* in a spirit of ardent inquiry and service. Actual performance of service to the Absolute under the guidance of the *āchārya* is the only vehicle by which we can assimilate transcendental knowledge. Today’s meeting for offering our humble services and homage to the feet of the *āchāryade-*

va will enable us to be favored with the capacity of assimilating the transcendental knowledge so kindly transmitted by him to all persons without distinction.

Gentlemen, although it is imperfectly that we have been enabled, by his grace, to understand the sublime messages of our *ācāryadeva*, we must admit that we have realized definitely that the divine message from his holy lips is the congenial thing for suffering humanity. All of us should hear him patiently. If we listen to the transcendental sound without unnecessary opposition, he will surely have mercy upon us. The *āchārya*'s message is to take us back to our original home, back to God. Let me repeat, therefore, that we should hear him patiently, follow him in the measure of our conviction and bow down at his lotus feet for releasing us from our present causeless unwillingness for serving the Absolute and all souls.

Sitting at the feet of the *āchāryadeva*, let us try to understand from this transcendental source of knowledge what we are, what is this universe, what is God, and what is our relationship with Him. The message of Lord Chaitanya is the message for the living entities and the message of the living world. Lord Chaitanya did not bother himself for the upliftment of this dead world, which is suitably named *Martyaloka*, the world where everything is destined to die. He appeared before us four hundred and fifty years ago to tell us something of the

transcendental universe, where everything is permanent and everything is for the service of the Absolute. But recently Lord Chaitanya has been misrepresented by some unscrupulous persons, and the highest philosophy of the Lord has been misinterpreted to be the cult of the lowest type of society. We are glad to announce tonight that our *āchāryadeva*, with his usual kindness, saved us from this horrible type of degradation, and therefore we bow down at his lotus feet with all humility.

We are happy that we have been relieved of this horrible type of malady by the mercy of His Divine Grace. He is our “eye-opener,” our eternal father, our eternal preceptor and our eternal guide. Let us therefore bow down at his lotus feet on this auspicious day.

Gentlemen, although we are like ignorant children in the knowledge of Transcendence, still my *gurudeva* has kindled a small fire within us to dissipate the invincible darkness of empirical knowledge. We are now so much on the safe side that no amount of philosophical argument by the empiric schools of thought can deviate us an inch from the position of our eternal dependence on the lotus feet of His Divine Grace.

Gentlemen, had he not appeared before us to deliver us from the thralldom of this gross, worldly delusion, surely we should have remained for lives and ages in the darkness of helpless captivity. Had he not appeared before us, we would not have been able to

understand the eternal truth of the sublime teaching of Lord Chaitanya.

Personally, I have no hope for any direct service of the coming *crores* of births in the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command.

Abhay Charan Das
For Members, Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh
Bombay

—*This lecture was originally published in The Harmonist in 1936, on the advent day of His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Tāhkur.*

Introduction

By His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī
Mahārāj

Founder-Āchārya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh



To err is human. To err is inevitable for all, being not perfect. Still, no one wants to remain imperfect. There is an element within all that is animate that tends towards perfection. If it were not so, we would feel no want at all. Our ten-

dency towards perfection is certainly very weak and limited; otherwise we could attain the goal at once. Our limited capacity and tendency for perfection makes room for the guide or *guru*.

The imperfect is not so if it is not in need of help, and that also from beyond itself. The perfect is not perfect if He cannot assert Himself or help others, and that too, of His own accord. So the guidance to perfection or Absolute Truth is necessarily a function of the absolute Himself, and the divine agent through whom this function manifests is Śrī *Guru* or the divine guide.

For a seeker of the Absolute Truth, submission to the *guru* is unavoidable. A class of thinkers believe, however, that when scientific research is possible, why cannot higher spiritual knowledge also be evolved from within? Such people are ignorant of the most essential nature of absolute knowledge, that He alone is the Absolute Subject and all else including ourselves constitutionally stand only as an object to His omniscient vision. It is impossible for the eye to see the mind; it can have some connection with the mind only when the latter cares to mind it. In a similar way, our connection with absolute knowledge depends mainly on His sweet will. We must solely depend on His agent, or the spiritual master, through whom He likes to distribute Himself.

Our human society with its finest culture forms but an infinitesimal part of the dynamic absolute. How, except by the direct and positive method of revelation, dare we hope to comprehend or evolve any conception of the supernatural knowledge of the unconditioned infinite? All intellectual giants prove themselves but pygmies before the absolute omniscient omnipotence who reserves the right to give Himself away through His own agents alone.

To our best knowledge and sincerity, however, we should see not to submit to a false agent. Here of course, we can't help ourselves very much; because in our present state we are mainly guided by our previous *samskara*

or acquired nature. “Birds of the same feather flock together.” Yet, although we are generally overpowered by habit, there is still the possibility of free choice to a certain extent, especially in the human species, otherwise correction becomes impossible, and punishment mere vengeance. Reality can assert itself. Light does not require darkness for its positive proof. The sun by itself can establish its supremacy over all other lights. Before an open and unbiased eye, the *sad guru* (real guide) shines above all professors of phenomenon.

Śrī *Guru* manifest himself mainly in a twofold way—as the director from within and the preceptor from without. Both functions of the absolute help an individual soul—a disciple—to reach the absolute goal. In our fallen state we cannot catch the proper direction to the inner guide, so the merciful manifestation of the preceptor without is our sole help and hope. But at the same time it is only by the grace of the *guru* within that we can recognize the real preceptor without and submit to his holy feet.

A bona fide disciple must always remain fully awake to the fact that his highest spiritual fortune is but a gracious grant from the Absolute Lord, and not a matter of right to be demanded or fought out. Constitutionally, we are equipped only to be proper recipients of God’s favor. In this connection it should be clearly understood that an individual soul can never

be substantially the same as the Absolute Person. Not even in his liberated or fully realized condition can an individual soul be one with Godhead. The misconception of oneness has been introduced from the slothful nondiscrimination of the Absolute Personality from the luminous orb around His eternal, spiritual, and blissful home. In fact, an individual soul constitutes only a part of a particular power of intermediate value of the Supreme Lord, and as such he is capable of being converted from both sides. He differs from the Absolute Entity both in quantity and quality, and is merely a dependent entity on the Absolute. In other words, the Absolute Lord Krishna is the master, and an individual *jīva* soul is His constitutional subordinate or servant.

Such a relationship is constant and really wholesome for the *jīva*. The apprehension of slavery does not arise because of his free choice and immense positive gain. The freedom and individuality of the *jīva* are not only unharmed by surrender to the Absolute Good, but they really thrive in Him alone. Individual freedom and interest are the part and parcel of those who are of the absolute, and so they are quite at home there, as a fish is at home in water or an animal in a healthy atmosphere. But the freedom as well as all other qualities of the Supreme Personality are unlimited and transcendental, and so only by their partial functions they harmonize all relative entities.

Śrī guru is not exclusively the same as the Supreme Lord Himself, but he fully represents the essence of the whole normal potency and embodies the most comprehensive and excellent service and favor of the Lord. As he is the fittest servitor of the Lord, he is empowered by the Lord to reinstate all misguided souls to their best interest. So guru is the divine messenger of immortal hope and joy in this mortal and miserable world. His advent is the most auspicious and happy event to the suffering animation, and can be compared to the rising of the morning star that can guide the traveller lost in the desert. A gentle touch of śrī guru's merciful hand can wipe away the incessant tears from all weeping eyes. A patriot or philanthropist makes the problem only worse in his frantic and futile attempt to alleviate the deep-rooted pain of a suffering soul, as an ignorant doctor does in eagerly handling an unfortunate patient. Oh the day when this poor soul realizes the causeless grace of śrī gurudeva.

Swāmī B.R. Śrīdhar

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Surrender to Śrī Guru

Even great scholars are perplexed in understanding what is good and what is bad, what to accept, and what to dismiss (*kiṁ karma kiṁ akarmeti kavayo'py atra mohitāḥ*). Even great scholars fail to understand their real necessity. This material world is a jungle of perplexities, where the soul has accepted so many different kinds of bodies in different types of consciousness. In the Laws of Manu, it is written:

jalajā nava-lakṣāni
sthāvarā lakṣa-vimśati
kṛmayo rudra-saṅkhyakāḥ
pakṣiṇām daśa lakṣaṇam
triṁśāl-lakṣāṇi paśavaḥ
catur-lakṣāṇi mānuṣaḥ

There are 900,000 kinds of aquatics, 2,000,000 kinds of trees and plants, 1,100,000 kinds of insects and reptiles, 1,000,000 kinds of birds, 3,000,000 kinds of four-legged beasts, and 400,000 kinds of human species. Manu says that the trees are in such a hopeless position

as a result of their own *karma*. Their feelings of pain and pleasure are similar to ours; their souls are not of a lower standard. Still, they are in such a deplorable position as a result of their own *karma*. They have no one to blame but themselves. This is the state of affairs in this external world.

We are living in an environment which is afflicted with serious misconception, misunderstanding, misguidance, and misbehavior. How are we to ascertain what is good and what is bad, what we should aspire after and what we should reject? Innumerable alternatives have thronged in a crowd, coming to influence us. And when this area, covered by illusion and influenced by misunderstanding, is filled with such diversity, how can we hope to know the infinite spiritual world of *Vaikuṇṭha*? With what attitude should we approach that realm which is transcendental, beyond the realm of the senses and mind, *adhokṣaja*.

THE GENUINE GURU

We must accept any way and any alliance that will help us gain entrance into that realm. We shall try to have even the slightest connection with that perfect goal of our innate aspiration. We are helpless; we are hopeless in the midst of disappointment. We are in extreme danger. We rely on our free will, our capacity of selection for our own good, but it is too minute and

helpless to guide us. What danger we are in! All around us are witnesses to this danger. How important is a real *guru* who can guide us to our real welfare.

We are in the midst of different forces that are drawing us, attracting us towards different directions, so proper guidance is the most valuable and the most important thing for all of us. If we accept direction from anywhere and everywhere, we will be misguided. Therefore, we must be careful to get proper direction. That direction has been given by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34):

tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ

“To understand transcendental knowledge, you must approach a self-realized soul, accept him as your spiritual master, and take initiation from him. Inquire submissively and render service unto him. Self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you, for they have seen the truth.”

QUALIFICATIONS OF A DISCIPLE

Here, Krishna has given us the standard by which we can understand what is what from a bona fide source. The standard to measure truth or untruth must come

not from a vitiated, vulnerable plane, but from a real plane. And to realize that, we must have these three qualifications: *praṇipāt*, *paripraśna*, and *seva*. *Praṇipāt* means we must surrender to this knowledge, for it is not an ordinary class of knowledge, which as a subject we can make our object; it is supersubjective. We may be the subjects in this mundane world, but we will have to become objects to be handled by the superknowledge of that plane.

Praṇipāt means that one approaches a spiritual master, saying, "I am finished with the experience of this external world; I have no charm for anything in this plane, where I have already traveled. Now I am offering myself exclusively at your altar. I want to have your grace." In this mood we should approach that higher knowledge.

Paripraśna means honest, sincere inquiry. We must inquire not with the tendency of discussion or in the mood of argument, but all our efforts should be concentrated in a positive line to understand the truth, without the spirit of doubt and suspicion. With full attention we should try to understand that truth, because it is coming from a higher plane of reality that we have never known.

Finally, there is *sevayā*, or service. This is the most important thing. We are trying to gain this knowledge not so we can get the help of that plane, not so we

can utilize that experience for living here; rather we must give our pledge to serve that plane. Only with this attitude may we approach that plane of knowledge. We shall serve that higher knowledge; we won't try to make it serve us. Otherwise, we won't be allowed to enter into that domain. Absolute knowledge won't come to serve this lower plane. We must offer ourselves to be used by Him, not that we shall try to use Him in our own selfish way, to satisfy our lower purpose.

With the mood of service we shall dedicate ourselves to Him; not that He will dedicate Himself to satisfy our lower animal purpose. So, with this attitude we shall seek the plane of real knowledge and receive the standard understanding. And then we can know what is what, and have a proper estimation of our environment.

This is Vedic culture. Absolute knowledge has always been imparted by this process alone, and never by the intellectual approach. Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta used to give the analogy of the bee: honey is in a bottle, the cork is in place, and the bee has taken his seat on the glass. He tries to taste the honey by licking the bottle. But, just as the bee cannot taste the honey by licking the outside of the glass bottle, the intellect cannot approach the world of spirit. We may think that we have attained it, but that is not possible: a barrier is there, like the glass. Intellectual achievement is not real achievement of higher knowledge. Only through

faith, sincerity, and dedication can we approach that higher realm and become a member. We can enter that higher plane only if they grant us a visa and admit us. Then we can enter that land of divine living.

So, a candidate must have these three qualifications before he can approach the truth which is on the higher plane of Absolute Reality. He can approach the Absolute Truth only with an attitude of humility, sincerity, and dedication. There are similar statements in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Vedas*. In the *Upaniṣads* it is said:

tad vijñānartham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit paniḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham

“Approach a spiritual master. Do not go to him hesitatingly or haphazardly, but with a clear and earnest heart.”

SPIRITUAL LIFE—A ONE WAY TICKET

One should not approach the spiritual master “cutting a return ticket.” Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda used to always say, “You have come here cutting a return ticket.” We must not approach the spiritual master with that attitude. Rather, we should think that we have seen everything, that we have full experience of this mortal world, and that we have nothing to aspire after here. With this clear consciousness, we should

approach the *guru*. That is the only way for us to live. This world is mortal. There is no means, no possibility of living here, and yet the will to live is an innate tendency everywhere.

“I only want to live and to save myself. I am running to the real shelter.” With this earnestness, the disciple will bring his spiritual master the necessary materials for sacrifice. He won’t go to his spiritual master only to trouble the *guru*, but will approach him with his own necessities already supplied. He will go there with his own bed and baggage. Not that he will show some kindness to the spiritual master and give him name and fame by becoming his disciple.

And what will be the spiritual master’s position? He will be well versed in the revealed truth, not in ordinary information. Revelation in many shades has been spread in the world from the upper realm, but the *guru* must have some spacious, graphic knowledge. He must have extensive knowledge about the revealed truth. And he must always be practicing real spiritual life. His activities are all connected with spirit, not with the mundane world. He is concerned with *Brahman*, the plane which can accomodate everything, the fundamental basis of everything (*brahma-niṣṭham*). Not that he is leading his life with any mortal, mundane reference. He always lives in the transcendental plane

and keeps himself in connection with that plane his whole life. Whatever he does, he will do only with that consciousness. This is the version of the *Upaniṣads*.

And in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.21) it is said:

tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta
jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
śabde pare ca niṣṇātaṁ
brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam

Māyā means misconception. We are living in the midst of misconception. Our understanding of the environment is based on a completely misconceived set of ideas and thoughts. We have no proper conception of anything in the absolute sense. Our ideas are all relative. Provincial selfishness has been imposed on the environment, and we are living under that misconception. When one comes to the conclusion that everything around him is mortal and that everything will vanish, then, with that mood, he will feel the necessity of approaching the *guru*, the divine guide and preceptor, with the purpose of inquiry. “What is the highest good for me?” With this inquiry, he will approach the spiritual master.

And who will he approach? One who is not only well-versed in the precepts of the revealed scriptures, but who has also come in contact with the revealed truth. One who is conversant with the very object of



Fifty centuries ago, Śrīla Vyāsa-deva recorded the *Vedic* literatures in the Sanskrit language in his *aśrama* in the Himalayas. All bona fide spiritual masters are considered representatives of Vyāsa-deva.

the scriptures, and who has practical experience, who is established in pure consciousness, is a genuine *guru*. One should approach such a guide for his own relief, to understand what is the highest benefit in the world and how to attain it. This is necessary. It is real. It is not imaginary. At the same time, it is difficult. The Absolute Truth must be sought out through a real process; otherwise we shall go the wrong way and then say, “Oh, there is nothing here; it is not real.” So, only if we follow this real process of understanding the truth will we experience the real nature of divinity.

Initiation Into Transcendental Science

Devotee: Can you explain the real meaning of *dīkṣā*, initiation?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī has explained this in his *Bhakti Sandarbha* :

divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāṁ
kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā
deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ

Experienced scholars have explained the meaning of *dīkṣā*, or spiritual initiation, in this way: *dīkṣā* is the process through which transcendental knowledge is imparted by the preceptor to the disciple. As a result, all the disciple's previous bad tendencies are crushed. Through *dīkṣā*, all previous commitments are cleared and one gets the light of new life in relationship with the transcendental Lord. *Dīkṣā*, or initiation, is a process by which we are given a noble connection with the absolute center and, at the same time, our previous commitments are all finished. It is an inner awakening of life that

brings divine knowledge. That wealth is there within us, but it is suppressed. *Dikṣā* means discovering one's inner wealth, and getting relief from all outward obligations.

With inner awakenment the outward commitments vanish, just as when you reach home all other arrangements you may have contracted for your comforts are all cut off, for at home you find full comfort. When we are in a foreign land we may seek the comforts which are supplied in hotels, but when we reach home, the hotel comforts are discarded; we find no more use for them. Sometimes a minor is kidnapped from home. Later, while visiting his native place he may stay in a hotel, but if he suddenly finds his father's house, and returns home, his parents will recognize him and say, "O, my son! You were stolen from us when you were young. We recognize your face. I am your mother, this is your father, here is your sister." Then the hotel is no longer needed. In a similar way, with the inner awakenment of the soul, when we return back home, back to Godhead, we will find our comfortable home with Krishna. So, to make a connection with our real home and dispense with our outward links is known as *dikṣā*.

MANTRA: THE SPIRITUAL FORMULA

Devotee: What is the difference between *śikṣā*, or spiritual instruction, and *dikṣā*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: *Dikṣā* mainly involves initiation

into the *mantra*, the spiritual formula. Other instructions are necessary to substantiate it, to help it become effective. Certain activities are also helpful. These are all parts and parcels of initiation. So, a general direction is given by *dikṣā*, but how to substantiate that? Details are necessary. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.23-24) it is said:

śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
 smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
 arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam
 sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
 iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau
 bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
 kriyeta bhagavaty addhā
 tan manye 'dhītam uttamam

“Hearing about Krishna, chanting Krishna’s glories, remembering Krishna, serving Krishna’s lotus feet, worshipping Krishna’s transcendental form, offering prayers to Krishna, becoming Krishna’s servant, considering Krishna as one’s best friend, and surrendering everything to Krishna—these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service.” All these things are advised; a thousand details may be necessary.

INITIATION: SPIRITUAL INVASION

If a general plans to invade another country, he must first chalk out his strategy of attack in a broad

way. When he goes to practically execute his plan, so many obstacles appear, and he has to solve them and march on. If one plans to travel, first he conceives of the whole plan in a nutshell: “From this foreign land, I will return home by this route.” But to carry out the plan in practice, so many details are necessary. First it is chalked out in a rough plan, and then he must practically do so many things. First he must hire a taxi, then he has to go to the airport to purchase a ticket for the plane—in this way, so many details are required. So, from partial knowledge we have to develop final knowledge. This detailed knowledge is known as *śikṣā*.

Devotee: What is the position of a devotee who, although not yet fully free from the influence of *māyā*, accepts disciples on the order of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and his spiritual master?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: It is better that a man who begins business with small capital has a connection with a wealthier capitalist. Then he can prosper in his business. In a similar way, as long as one is not completely established in Krishna consciousness, he must have some connection with superior aid. Then he will be safe. If we are to fight face to face with *māyā*, illusion, help from the higher agency should be our only resource.

It is very difficult to control *māyā*. Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14):

daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī
 mama māyā duratyayā
 mām eva ye prapadyante
 māyām etāṁ taranti te

“My illusory energy is impossible to overcome. Only one who surrenders to Me can cross beyond it.” *Māyā* dreads only Krishna, for she has her backing from Him. If you attempt to cross *māyā* alone, it will be impossible. You must have some higher connection. And with the help of that connection you can overcome illusion. *Māyā* will withdraw only when she sees that you have the backing of higher potency. Alone, you cannot fight and gain victory over *māyā*. It is impossible, because wherever you go, you are within the boundary of *māyā*, illusion. It may be more or less intense, but it is all *māyā*. Only when you really come in touch with the plane above *māyā* can you fight against *māyā*; only then will *māyā* withdraw. We must have some shelter beyond *māyā* from where we can fight with illusion. We are advised to take shelter of *sādhus* (saints) and *śāstra* (scriptures). Their help comes from above, and we must accept that help from the inner core of our hearts.

ACCEPTING DISCIPLES AND KARMA

Devotee: It seems that those who accept disciples have to undergo some physical difficulty or suffering because of accepting the *karma* of their disciples.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Physical difficulty should not be considered. And physical success also should not be considered of much value. One should not think that if a *guru* has a large number of disciples he is great.

One may voluntarily accept the responsibility of the spiritual life of so many disciples, but find that their improvement is not satisfactory. As a result, he may experience some disturbance. He may think, “I have taken charge of their lives, but I am not able to give them the desired improvement in their spiritual life.” That is a good symptom. The Vaiṣṇavas have no trouble for themselves, but they are troubled for others (*para-duḥkha duḥkhī*). In his prayer to Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī writes that Sanātana Goswāmī was always distressed upon seeing the distress of others. A Vaiṣṇava has no mental trouble for himself, but he feels mental trouble when he sees the pain of others. It is difficult for a Vaiṣṇava to tolerate. They are always sympathetic to the misery of others. This is the qualification of the intermediate devotee. He has no trouble of his own, but he is troubled by the pain of others. An intermediate devotee cannot ignore these things.

The spiritual master will have to digest some of the responsibility of the bad and undesirable activities of the disciple. He has the responsibility of managing them by his instruction. When a doctor has accepted a patient,

and the patient is in pain, the doctor may feel some trouble in his mind: "I have taken charge of this patient, and I can't remove his difficulty." In this way, he may feel some voluntary responsibility.

The spiritual master may experience different kinds of suffering in different stages. Sometimes a *guru* may feel, "I am doing as much as I can to help this disciple." Such a *guru* does not take so much responsibility for his disciple. He thinks, "I am doing my duty," and treats his disciples with this openness of mind. It is just as in the case of the consulting physician and the family doctor. The family doctor cannot shake off the responsibility of caring for his patients, but a doctor from outside may say, "If you like, you may engage another doctor." The consulting physician is not so much earnest for the patient. He may feel, "I am not perfect; I cannot make him pure immediately. Whether he improves is God's will. I can only do my best." From the beginning of their relationship, just as a doctor may approach his patient with this attitude, the *guru* may approach his disciples. The question of how much responsibility the *guru* takes for the disciple is a question of the attitude he takes towards his disciples in particular cases.

Devotee: Does the disciple's advancement depend more on the *guru* or on his own efforts? How will the disciple make proper advancement in following the principles of his *guru*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: That depends on the stages of realization of the disciple. Exclusive devotion must come from the disciple towards the *guru*. It is said in the *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23):

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanah

“The key to success in spiritual life is unflinching devotion to both the spiritual master and Krishna. To those great souls who have full faith in both Krishna and the spiritual master, the inner meaning of the scriptures is fully revealed.” The *guru* is Krishna’s representative. We are in search of divinity, and so, we must try to concentrate all our energy wherever we find a real connection with divinity. That is the key to success, because Krishna is all-conscious. So, the response to our devotional efforts will come from Krishna according to our attentiveness to Him. He is everywhere. In the conception of infinite, everywhere there is center, nowhere is there circumference. In every point there may be the center. Prahlāda Mahārāj saw the center present everywhere. Hiraṇyakaśipu asked him, “Is your God in this pillar?” Prahlāda replied, “Yes. He is there.” And when Hiraṇyakaśipu demolished the pillar, Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva came out.

GURU—ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE

Devotee: Can you explain this concept of the absolute and relative position of the spiritual master?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: By the special will of Krishna, *gurudeva* is a delegated power. If we look closely within the spiritual master, we will see the delegation of Krishna, and accordingly we should accept him in that way. The spiritual master is a devotee of Krishna and, at the same time, the inspiration of Krishna is within him. These are the two aspects of *gurudeva*. He has his aspect as a Vaiṣṇava, and the inspired side of the Vaiṣṇava is *guru*. On a fast day like *ekādaśī*, he himself does not take any grains. He conducts himself as a Vaiṣṇava, but his disciples offer grains to the picture of their *guru* on the altar. The disciples offer their spiritual master grains even on a fast day.

The disciple is concerned with the delegation of the Lord, the *guru*'s inner self, his inspired side. The inspired side of a Vaiṣṇava is *āchārya*, or *guru*. The disciple marks only the special, inspired portion within the *guru*. He is more concerned with that part of his character. But *gurudeva* himself generally poses as a Vaiṣṇava. So, his dealings towards his disciples and his dealings with other Vaiṣṇavas will be different. This is *acintya-bhedābheda*, inconceivable unity in diversity.

There may be imitation, and there may be deviation. Both are possible. For ulterior motives one may make a

trade of *guruship*, just as in the case of the caste *goswāmīs* and the *sahajīya* imitationists. For some reason or other, one may pose as a *guru*, but the symptoms of a real *guru* are given in the scriptures:

**śābde pare ca niṣṇātaṁ
brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam**

“A bona fide spiritual master must be conversant with the conclusions of the *Vedic* literature, fixed in realization of the Supreme Truth (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.3.21).

SCRIPTURES NEED SAINTS

Anyone can say, “I am *guru*, he is not *guru*.” Imitation is always possible, but the scriptures give the criterion for the selection of a real *guru*, and the real *guru* will extract the meaning of the scripture. *Guru* and *sāstra* are interdependent. One will help another for our edification. The scriptures say we must read the scripture under the guidance of a proper professor, a *Vaiṣṇava guru* (*ācāryavān puruṣo veda*). So, the scripture is dependent on the spiritual master. And who is a spiritual master? The scriptures will explain. So they are interdependent: *sādhu* and *sāstra* are both necessary. They are the active and the passive agents.

Devotee: Can you explain why Krishna appears in so many different *gurus*? Why must Krishna appear again

and again? Can't we learn everything we need to know just by reading *Bhagavad-gītā*? What is the need for constant revelation? Don't the old books contain all the truths we need to know?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Krishna says, "First I transmitted Vedic knowledge to this world through Brahmā." And that was entrusted to his disciples: the four Kumāras, Marīci, Aṅgirā, and other sages. The knowledge was first invested in them and later in books.

First it was presented in the form of sound, not script. Gradually it became fixed in writing. In the beginning, it descended directly through sound from one man to another, from lip to ear. No script or writing was invented at that time, but knowledge was contained in the form of sound. Passing through the ear to mouth, and again to the ear of another, gradually it became lost. In connection with the mediator sometimes it becomes lost and disfigured, distorted; and then again the Lord feels the necessity of appearing in this world (*yadā yadā hi dharmasya*).

Sometimes Krishna comes himself, and sometimes He sends a normal thinking man to reinstate the standard of true religion. Krishna says, "This *karma-yoga* that I have spoken to you, Arjuna, I spoke first to Sūrya, and from Sūrya it was passed down from generation to generation. And so it has become mutilated and disfigured. Again I am speaking that very same

thing to you today.” The enervating plane gradually erodes the truth. The truth is bright when it first appears, but gradually, with the contact of this enervating plane, it becomes weak, disfigured, and demoralized, and so Krishna appears from time to time to rejuvenate it, and bring about a renaissance.

Devotee: Is there any difference between an *āchārya* and a *guru*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: *Guru* and *āchārya* are the same but generally it may be said that an *āchārya* does more extensive work. And also the *āchārya* must have extensive knowledge of the scriptures, whereas the *guru* may not have expressly deep knowledge of scripture, but may have real knowledge of their purport. He may not be able to quote scripture extensively, but feels the meaning of the scriptures. He may be a *guru*. But an *āchārya* is one who preaches widely and is able to extensively quote scriptural evidence.

MARKETPLACE OF GURUS

Devotee: There are so many imitation *gurus* in the guise of Vaiṣṇavas who are simply out to cheat the innocent public. How can we know who is a real *guru* and who is a cheater? How do we know when we are being given real knowledge and when we are being cheated?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: We have to find out what is the source of his knowledge. In the marketplace there may

be imitation gold, but if we are sure that the gold we are purchasing is coming from a particular mine, we can buy it with the assurance that it has not been tampered with on the way. In that way it can be understood; by examining the source.

Once, here in India, Gandhi wanted to revive the *charkā* system of homespun cloth. In the *charkā* system, the poor produce thread with a spinning wheel, and if everyone buys that cloth, called *khadi*, then the money goes to the pockets of the poor. But the Japanese and English cloth factories sent imitation “homespun” *khadi* here. They began manufacturing rough cloth, imitating the ordinary homespun cloth produced here by the poor. Gandhi found himself perplexed, “What is this?” He said, “My need is that the money go to the poorest pocket, but now the capitalists are producing imitation rough cloth abroad, and that is being sold here in India. Instead of money going to the poor here in India, it is going to the foreign capitalists.” Then he founded one association, the *Khadi* association, and told his followers, “You must purchase homespun cloth only from those shops who are connected with this association of mine. Then the money will surely go to the pockets of the poor.” At that time he said, “This is *guru-paramparā*, the system of disciplic succession.” Of course, this is a crude example.

Revealed truth coming uncontaminated through a particular process is *paramparā*. We must connect with

a reliable succession. Only then can we get the genuine thing. The authorized association is necessary, *guru-paramparā* is necessary. So, before we read anyone's book, we shall try to find out who is his *guru*, and from where the substance is coming down. Is it only a facade, or is there any real substance within? If we can understand that he has a relationship with a genuine *sādhū*, then we can give some attention to him.

I often give the example of the homeopathic globule. The mere globule itself has no medicinal value. The potency is within. An ordinary *guru* may give the same *mantra* to his disciple, but what is the potency within the sound? What quality of conception or divine will is contained in that sound? That is all-important. To get the *mantra* from a *sad guru*, a genuine *guru*, means to get the internal good will or real conception about the Lord. The seed of a banyan tree may be a small seed, but the great big banyan tree will come from that seed. The will with which the particular sound is given by the *guru* to the disciple is all-important. We may not trace that at present, but in time, if a favorable environment is there, it will express itself and develop into something great. So, when we go to purchase anything, we must be careful about imitations, or else we may be deceived.

Descent of the Revealed Truth

Krishna consciousness, the spiritual conception of the highest level, descends by flowing down from one level to the next, just as from the peak of a mountain the Ganges flows in a zigzag way, from one peak to another. Sometimes the water of the Ganges mixes with the current of the river Saraswatī. That water is not to be considered Ganges water. When the water of the Saraswatī joins the current of the Ganges, it is considered to be Ganges water. When the two rivers meet, the water that flows away from the Ganges is not the Ganges; but when the Saraswatī's waters enter into the current of the Ganges, it becomes the Ganges. There is a saying that whatever water is deep within the current of the Ganges riverbed is the real Ganges water. That water will purify us, whatever its point of origin may have been.

The purifying potency of the water has nothing to do with the water we can feel and see. What can we see with our physical eyes? The current of the Ganges is

pure. When the spirit and sanction is there, it is a living thing and can purify everyone.

DEAD MANTRAS

So, the very gist of the *guru-paramparā*, the disciplic succession, is *śikṣā*, the spiritual teaching, and wherever it is to be traced, there is *guru*. One who has the transcendental eye, the divine eye, will recognize the *guru* wherever he appears. One who possesses knowledge of absolute divine love in purity—he is *guru*. Otherwise the *guru-paramparā* is only a body *paramparā*: a succession of bodies. Then the caste *brāhmaṇas*, the caste *goswāmīs*, will continue with their trade, because body after body they are getting the *mantra*, but their *mantra* is dead. We are after a living *mantra*, and wherever we can trace the living tendency for a higher type of devotional service we shall find that there is our *guru*. One who has that sort of vision awakened will be able to recognize the *guru* wherever he may appear.

Initiation into the *mantra* means to impart real knowledge and devotional sentiment from one to another. And that must be genuine. Nothing can be known about a homeopathic globule by an outer physical inspection, but the potency is within. So also within the *mantra* the important thing is the type of thought or sentiment which is imparted through that sound. The impersonalists have got the same *mantra*,

and are also chanting the holy name of Krishna, but that sort of name will vanish in the *brahmajyoti*. They won't be able to cross the *Virajā*, the river between the material and spiritual worlds. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that when a *mayāvādī* chants the name of Krishna, his chanting of the name of Krishna is just like thunder to the holy body of Krishna. It does not produce any soothing effect.

The Gauḍīya Maṭh deals with reality, not with the frame. We are trying to understand what is what in the spiritual thought-world. We are not enchanted or captured by the mere form. We are interested in the step-by-step development in spiritual thought. In his *Upadeśāmṛta* (10), Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has said:

**karmibhyaḥ parito hareḥ priyatayā vyaktiṁ yayur jñāninas
tebhyo jñāna-vimukta bhakti-paramāḥ premaika niṣṭhās tataḥ**

“Out of many materialist, one may be a philosopher. Out of many philosophers, one may become liberated and take to devotional service. Out of many devotees, one may attain pure love of Krishna. He is the best of all.” We are interested in understanding this gradation: what is the *Virajā* river, what is the spiritual sky, the planet of Lord Śiva, the Vaikuṇṭha world of Viṣṇu, Lord Rāma's Ayodhyā, and then Krishna in Dwārakā, Mathurā, and Vṛndāvana? We want to know the realistic view of the whole gradation of devotional thought. Krishna

shows this gradation in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.15) where He says:

na tathā me priyatama
 ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
 na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr
 naivātmā ca yathā bhavān

“Neither Brahmā, nor Śiva, nor Saṅkarṣaṇa of Vaikuṇṭha, nor the goddess of fortune Lakṣmīdevī, nor even My own self is as dear to Me as you. You are My favorite, Uddhava.”

We have to follow the spirit; otherwise after Jahnāvā Devī, the wife of Lord Nityānanda, up to Vipina Goswāmī, from whom Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur took initiation, there are so many unknown lady *gurus*. Through them, the *mantra* came to Vipina Goswāmī, and from him Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur received the *mantra*. We accept Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, but should we count all those ladies in our disciplic succession? What was their realization?

SLAVES OF THE TRUTH

We are slaves of the truth. We are beggars for the pure current of truth that is constantly flowing; the fresh current. We are not charmed by any formality. I will bow down my head wherever I find the river of nectar coming down to me. When one is conscious that the

Absolute Truth is descending to him from the highest domain, he will think, “I must surrender myself here.”

Mahāprabhu says to Rāmānanda Rāya:

kibā vipra, kibā myāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva vettā sei guru hay

“Wherever the truth appears, wherever the nectar of divine ecstasy descends, I shall offer myself as a slave. That is my direct concern.” Whatever form it takes doesn’t matter much; the form has some value, but if there is any conflict, the inner spirit of a thing should be given immense value over its external cover. Otherwise, if the spirit has gone away and the bodily connection gets the upper hand, our so-called spiritual life becomes *sahajiyā*, a cheap imitation.

When we are conscious of the real substance of Krishna consciousness, the real wealth we are receiving from our spiritual master, then our spiritual life cannot be *sahajiyāism*, imitationism. We must be aware enough to detect our *guru*’s advice when we find it in another. One who is awake will see, “Here is my *guru*’s advice; I find it here in this man. Somehow or other, it has come here. How, I do not know, but I see my *guru*’s characteristics, his dealings, and behavior in this person.” When we are able to recognize a thing for its intrinsic value, then, wherever we find it, we cannot neglect it.

There is an example of this in an instance regarding Aurobindo Ghosh, of Pondicherry. He was the first leader of the Anarchist Party and practically the founder of the revolutionary movement in Bengal. In 1928, a case against him was proceeding in Calcutta High Court. A famous attorney, Mr. Norton, was in charge of the prosecution. Aurobindo had absconded, and when the case was going on, he was not to be found anywhere. Norton was concerned. How to find him? Aurobindo's English was very good English. He had been educated in England from childhood, and could speak English even better than many Englishmen. Norton began to search through different papers and magazines for Aurobindo's writing. Finally, he found Aurobindo's style of writing in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a Bengali newspaper. "Here is Mr. Ghosh!" he said. The editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was summoned to court to find out whether Aurobindo Ghosh had written the article. Norton examined him:

"This is your paper. You must know who has written this article. You are the editor."

"Yes, I know."

"Do you know this man, Aurobindo Ghosh?"

"Yes, I know him. I consider him to be one of the greatest men in the world."

"As the editor of this newspaper do you know who wrote this article?"

“Yes, I know.”

“Has Mr. Ghosh written this article?”

“I won’t say.”

Norton asked him, “Do you know what is the punishment?”

“Yes. Six months imprisonment.”

“You are ready for that?”

“Yes, I am ready for that.” Holding up the newspaper article, Norton said, “Here is Mr. Ghosh! I rest my case.”

He saw Aurobindo in his writing, and in a similar way we must see, “Here is my *gurudeva*!” Our spiritual master would also sometimes say of one of his disciples who had departed, “Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura came to me, but I could not recognize him.” Those whose divine vision is awakened are always seeing signs of divinity everywhere.

ONE KRISHNA IN MANY GURUS

We must have the vision to recognize the presence of our *guru*’s temperament. Mahāprabhu says, *mādhavendra purīra sambandha dhara jāni*. When Mahāprabhu met the Sānoḍiyā *brāhmaṇa*, upon seeing his movements, He at once detected that this *brāhmaṇa* must have some connection with Mādhavendra Purī. He said, “Without his connection, I could never find such symptoms of transcendental ecstasy. It must



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sāraswatī Ṭhākura always used to say, “I am a servant of the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas.”

come from Mādhavendra Purī.” So, we must know Krishna consciousness in truth. It is said *ācāryam mām vijānīyan*, the spiritual master is not to be differentiated. One thing is coming down from the Supreme Lord, so the oneness of continuity is not to be ignored. *Guru* can be here; *guru* can be in another body also. The

same teacher may come in a different body to inspire us; he may come to give us new hope and higher education. The substance should always be given a higher value than the form.

First understand the degree of purity in Krishna consciousness. The followers of form are only imitators; they want only to exploit Mahāprabhu and not to serve Him. They are our worst enemies. They are traitors; they have taken the garb of Mahāprabhu's *sampradāya* and they are saying something bogus. This is cheap marketing; they are extensively selling adulterated things very cheaply. They have no inner necessity to attain the purest thing (*pūjala rāgapatha gaurava-baṅge*). Although he was such an exalted Vaiṣṇava, our *Guru Mahārāj* never presented himself as a great devotee. He always used to say, "I am a servant of the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas." That was his claim. And he would say, "The higher devotees are my *guru*, they are so exalted." First come and practice all these things, and then you can hope to reach the goal. It is not so easy, or so cheap. "Out of many liberated persons, a pure devotee of Lord Krishna is extremely rare." (*koṭi-mukta-madhye 'durlabha' eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta*).

Krishna consciousness is an internal thing, and those who cannot see the internal truth will make much of the external cover. We do not support that. Rather we are interested in the real spirit. All the

opposing elements who are interested in externals cannot touch us. Dogs may bark, but the barking of a dog has no importance. Because they make so much of the outer thing, they have no real purification of the heart to accept the pure thing, to discriminate what is purity, or what is love of Godhead, *premā*, after which even Brahmā and Mahādeva aspire.

The Original Guru

The original spiritual master is Nityānanda Prabhu. He is the general representation of *guru*. In the spiritual world, he is the *guru-tattva* principle in the four primary mellows of devotion, excluding the conjugal mellow. In *mādhurya-rasa*, Baladeva's representation is Anaṅgā Mañjarī, the sister of Rādhārāṇī.

The position of Nityānanda is greater than that of Baladeva. Why? He is distributing *premā*, divine love. And what is *premā*? It is higher than all other achievements. If one can give divine love, then all others must be subordinate to him. If Krishna is subordinate to Mahāprabhu then, of course, Balarāma is subordinate to Nityānanda. They are similar, but when magnanimity is added, Balarāma becomes Nityānanda. That Balarāma who can distribute divine love, who can perform that higher function, has come here as Nityānanda. Our foundation must be solid and proper. Then the structure should be erected. Otherwise the whole thing will go down (*heno nitāi vine bhāi rādhā kṣṇa pāite nāi*). We can get a solid foundation from Nityānanda Prabhu.



Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu, the original spiritual master and general representation of *guru*.

One day Nityānanda Prabhu came to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's house in Māyāpur. Mahāprabhu's mother, Śacīdevī, and Viṣṇupriyā-devī, His wife, were also there, as well as other devotees. Suddenly Nityānanda arrived, quite naked.

Mahāprabhu managed to give Him some cloth. And perhaps He was concerned that the devotees might have some misconception about Nityānanda Prabhu. So, to prevent this He asked Nityānanda Prabhu for His *kaupīna*, His loincloth. He tore it up and distributed it amongst the householders that were present, instructing them, "Keep a piece of His loincloth, as a *kavaca*, an amulet, and tie that with a thread to your arm or wear it around your neck. Please keep it with you. Then you will be able to achieve sense control very soon."

Nityānanda Prabhu has control of His senses to the extreme degree; He does not know anything of this world. His *vairāgya*, indifference to the world of mundane transaction, is of such a degree that He can appear naked amongst both male and female. So, the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu will construct a firm foundation for us. If there is a firm foundation then we may build a great structure over it. If we have faith in Nityānanda, then that faith can bear any amount of weight. It won't betray us.

So, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda has laid stress amongst the Westerners on devotion to

Nityānanda. First, we must get His mercy. And then, afterwards, we can get the mercy of Rādhā-Krishna. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu means Rādhā-Krishna (*śrī kṛṣṇa chaitanya rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya*). First achieve the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu, and then Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, and then Śrī Rādhā Govinda. In these three stages, we must raise ourselves up.

Devotee: How does one attain the mercy of Lord Nityānanda?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: One who finds more inclination to serve Gaurāṅga and His *dhāma*, His transcendental land, and His servants can get the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu. Nityānanda is very much kind to one who has some special tendency towards Gaura-*līlā*.

“TAKE THE NAME OF GAURĀṄGA”

Nityānanda Prabhu walked from door to door in Bengal, saying, “Take the name of Gaurāṅga! I’ll become your servant. You can purchase Me if you only take the name of Gaurāṅga. I’ll be sold to you without any price or condition.” That was His temperament. When Mahāprabhu was in Purī, He sent Nityānanda Prabhu to Bengal. At that time He said, “Without You I don’t find anyone who can spread the holy name of Krishna, or devotional service to Krishna, in Bengal. They are more engaged in the tantric method and

smṛti. They make too much of these trifling things. They are puffed up, thinking that they have finished all knowledge. So, Bengal is a very hard field for preaching. Without You, no one will be able to awaken the masses. Separate Yourself from the higher castes and approach the masses with the holy name of Krishna. You are the fittest person for this work.”

Nityānanda Prabhu went to Bengal, but without trying to preach the glories of the holy name of Krishna, Nityānanda began to preach the name of Gaurāṅga. Nityānanda Prabhu found that there is some danger of thinking that Krishna’s pastimes are very much akin to the mundane debauchery, lying, and stealing of a degraded soul. Krishna’s pastimes are of a highly confidential nature. It is very difficult for the masses to understand the purity of Krishna-*līlā*. The mass mind cannot accept Krishna-*līlā* as the highest attainment. So, Nityānanda Prabhu found it would be difficult to preach Krishna-*līlā*, but He found it would be easy to preach Gaura-*līlā*, where Krishna has come to distribute Himself to the public with so much capital in His mind. Gaurāṅga means a dynamo which wants to distribute Krishna, surcharged with the most magnanimous, intensified pity and kindness for the ordinary people, with the greatest affection even for the criminals. Nityānanda Prabhu wanted to bring them in connection with Gaurāṅga, for then Krishna-*līlā* would

automatically be within their fist. So, He began to preach about Gaurāṅga, not Rādhā-Krishna, as commanded by Mahāprabhu. So, Nityānanda Prabhu says, *bhaja gaurāṅga kaha gaurāṅga, laha gaurāṅga nāma*, “Worship Gaurāṅga, speak only of Gaurāṅga, and chant the name of Gaurāṅga.”

There is another instance of the relationship between Krishna and Balarāma, and Gaurāṅga and Nityānanda, which is described in the *Chaitanya-bhāgavata*. Śacīdevī had a dream that Krishna and Balarāma were sitting on a throne, and Nityānanda was fighting with Balarāma, “Come down from the throne. It is no longer *Dvāpara yuga*. The age of Kali has come and My master Gaurāṅga must occupy Your position on this throne. You come down!” Balarāma began giving some opposition. “No, no, why should We come down? We have been sitting on this throne for such a long time.” Nityānanda Prabhu began forcibly taking Him down, and Balarāma submitted slightly. Nityānanda Prabhu said, “My master Gaurāṅga wants to take the position now. The age for Him has come.” So Nityānanda is very partial to Gaurāṅga. He says, “Krishna is far off. My Lord is Gaurāṅga.”

So, we must be very grateful to Nityānanda Prabhu, for He is our *guru*. And *guru*’s grace is so important that Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī says, “O, Rādhārāṇī, I want Your grace. Without You, I don’t want Krishna

separately. I never want Krishna without You.” That should be the healthy attitude of a devotee. This has been explained by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, in his *Gurvāṣṭakam*:

yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
 yasyāprasādāt na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
 dhyāyaṁ stuvaṁs tasya yaśas tri-sandhyaṁ
 vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam

“I bow down to the lotus feet of *śrī gurudeva*. By his grace, we achieve the grace of Krishna; without his grace, we are lost. Therefore, we should always meditate on *śrī gurudeva*, and pray for his mercy.”

This is the position of *śrī guru*, by whose grace we can get everything, we can get the grace of Krishna, and without whose grace, we have no other prospect. So, in this way, we must have reverence for he who has given us our first connection with Krishna consciousness.

GURU IS NOT A DOLL

But at the same time we offer reverence to *gurudeva*, we must not conceive that the *guru* is a doll, a lifeless figure. Because we are familiar with a particular figure and accept that as our *guru* we should not become misled. The important thing is what he says, his instructions. That is attracting our inner hearts. I am not this body. I am the inquirer. That thing which is satisfying me,

drawing the inquirer to the inquired—I must try to locate that thing in him. I must not rely on material calculation. I am not this body. Who am I, the disciple? Am I only this body, this figure, this color, this caste? Or am I this temperament, this scholarship and intellectualism? No. I am he who has come to seek. Who is the party within me, and who is the party in *guru*? We must be fully awake to that. What is the inner thing? I Have come for that. We must be awake to our own interest.

There is the relative principle and the absolute principle. We shall have to eliminate the form, ignore the form; we shall always have to keep the spirit. Otherwise, we become form worshipers, idol worshipers.

GURU: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

It is said, of course, that the connection with the spiritual master is eternal (*cakṣudāna dilo yei, janme janme prabhu sei*). But we must not identify our *guru* with the appearance we perceive with our physical senses. Our inner identification of him will be clarified according to the growth of our vision. When our vision increases and takes shape from material to transcendental, his look will also change accordingly.

A man is sometimes known most externally, by his uniform, and then by his body, then by his mind, then by his intelligence. As much as our eye will develop to see things rightly, what we are seeing will also change its

face. Krishna says, *āchāryaṁ mām vijānīyān*, “Ultimately it is I who am the *āchārya*.” It is the function of divinity, and in different stages there may be different forms. Different *āchāryas* may work at the same time.

The knowledge, the ideal, is growing from subtle to gross. And the depth of the vision of the eye will disclose the different figures of the different *āchāryas*. It will go in different *rasas* to the highest position, by a gradual process of realization. Otherwise our knowledge will be based on the material conception. And to force the material conception onto divinity is a crime, it is ignorance, it is erroneous.

We have to free ourselves from the snare of identifying reality with the physical form presented to our senses. The eyes deceive us; they cannot give us the proper form or color. The ears cannot give us the proper sound. The concrete reality is beyond the experience of our senses. So then, what is that thing? Because we are in such a low position, we can gradually go there to the inner world only with the help of our *guru*.

But how can we recognize our *guru*? Sometimes in the winter he wears a particular dress, and in the summer he wears another dress. If we attach so much importance to the external dress then what should we do? Should we think that the dress is indispensable to the body? The *guru* may come to us in a particular body. Suppose the *guru* appears as a young man. When he has

become an old man, and the young form has grown into another form, how are we to recognize him? How are we to differentiate? Again, in one birth he may have come in a particular body, and another time he may appear in a different body. The same *guru* may appear differently at different times. How are we to recognize him? From the external consideration we must go to the internal.

If I am devoid of flesh and blood and I exist only in a subtle body, then I shall also find my *guru* there, in a subtle body. The demigods, *gāndharvas*, and *siddhas*, the perfected beings in the heavenly planets, also have their *gurus*, but they do not have a material body, nor does their *guru* have a material body.

So, by eliminating the external conception we have to enter into the internal, and that will be all-important to a progressive disciple. That does not mean that one should disregard the physical form of our *guru*. But the real importance is within. We must worship the remnants of the *guru*: his coat, his boot, his sandal. But that does not mean that his shoe is superior to his body; we must serve his person. In a similar way, if we are eager to do some physical service for him, if we want to massage his feet, but he does not desire that and says, “No, no, no,” then should we do that? Our internal obedience to him will be higher. In this way we have to make progress from the gross to the subtle.

Who is *guru*? Where is he to be located? What is his ideal? What does he really want me to do? These things must not be dismissed from our ears. We must not give only formal adherence. We want the spiritual way. The spiritual man is going to the spiritual world to have the spiritual realization. It is all a spiritual transaction. And all conceptions of mundane, whether physical, mental, or intellectual, should be eliminated in our journey if we want to go to the inner world of substance.

PROGRESS: ELIMINATION AND ACCEPTANCE

This attitude will decide our real progress, our real design of life. Our fulfilment comes always from the inner side. If one can catch up that thread, then he can go and get things of that higher, spiritual quality. We may appreciate the beautiful figure, style, movement, and intellectual delivery of the spiritual master, and so many other things may be appreciable. But what should be the highest focal point of our realization? What should be our highest aim, for which we will eliminate everything else?

Progress means elimination and acceptance. And our spiritual life must always be a dynamic thing; otherwise we shall be dead. Progress means acceptance and elimination. The scientists also say this in their theory of natural selection, "survival of the fittest." Nature is selecting some and eliminating others. Life is

dynamic; we are living in a dynamic world. Everywhere we find acceptance and elimination. That is progress. And our life must be progressive, not static.

To get the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu, we should try as far as possible to study the character of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, to serve Him, to serve His *dhāma*, and His devotees. That will easily help us attain the grade of Nityānanda Prabhu. And there will always be so many practical dealings in our present stage, but we must always keep the highest ideal over our heads. With this ideal we shall be able to make progress. Our ideal, our highest model—that is our all in all in life. To be acquainted with the conception of the highest ideal and to be on the path of realization of that goal is the greatest wealth in one's life.

Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī prays, “I only aspire after one thing. I cherish the hope that one day I may be welcomed into the plane where Rādhikā and Mādhava are in Their glory, sitting and playing.” That should be our prospect. This is found in Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī's prayer to his *guru*.

He says:

nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭavāṭīm
rādhā-kunḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśāṁ
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī guruṁ taṁ nato 'smi

“I am fully indebted to *śrī gurudeva*. Why? He has given me so many things. He has given me the highest conception of the holy name of Krishna, the highest form of sound which contains the highest form of thought, aspiration, ideal, everything. And next he has given me the *mantra*.” The name is there within the *mantra*. Without the name, the *mantra* is nothing. If the name of Krishna is withdrawn and replaced with another name, the *mantra* will give the opposite result. The name of Krishna is all in all. And within the *mantra*, the name is couched in a particular way as a sort of prayer.

And then he says, “He has given me the service of that great savior, the son of Mother Śacī, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is like a golden mountain standing to show the direction of Krishna-*līlā*. And *gurudeva* has brought me to the lotus feet of Mahāprabhu’s most favorite personal assistant, Svarūpa Dāmodara, who is the representation of Lalitā-devī, the most favorite friend of Rādhikā.

“Then he has brought me in connection with Śrī Rūpa, who was ordered to distribute the highest kinds of devotional love, *rasa*.” *Vaidhī-bhakti*, the worship of the Lord in awe and reverence, is of a lower order. But *rāgānuga-bhakti*, spontaneous love, the hearts innermost dealings, was distributed through Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. Mahāprabhu considered Śrī Rūpa the best to deal with *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Dāsa Goswāmī says, “Then, by his grace, I have achieved the association of Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī, who adjusts our position in relation to *rāgānuga-bhakti*. He explains the path of *vaidhī-bhakti*, and gives us *sambandha-jñāna*: the knowledge of what is what, a proper acquaintance with the environment.” Then he says, “*Gurudeva* has given me Mathurā Maṇḍala, where Rādhā and Govinda have Their pastimes; where the forest, the hills, every creeper, shrub, and grain of sand, everyone is bearing the acquaintance of Rādhā-Krishna *līlā*, and wherever I shall cast my glance they will help me in my remembrance of Rādhā and Govinda. I have received all these things from my *gurudeva*: Vṛndāvana, where the cows and the milkmen have their village constructed. I am becoming acquainted with their association, their nature, and their feelings of love for Krishna.

“By the grace of *gurudeva*, I have become acquainted with Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the favorite place of Rādhā and Govinda for Their pastimes, and this great Govardhana. And lastly he has given me the hope that one day I can get the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava. I have been given all these assurances by my *gurudeva*, so I bow my head with all my respects to his lotus feet.”

So, if we are conscious of all these spiritual matters, then we can think that we have approached our

gurudeva properly. What is our *guru*? What is his mission? It is filled with all these things. Devoid of that, what is our interest?

WHAT IS ISKCON?

Devotee: There are so many visions about the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). But what should the real vision of ISKCON be?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In this verse, Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī gives the real acquaintance of what is ISKCON (*nāmaśreṣṭhaṁ manum api śacī-pūtram atra svarūpaṁ*). ISKCON must not deviate from this line. We have not come here to deceive ourselves, but to fulfill ourselves. ISKCON will fulfill everyone's inner demand, even extending to the vegetables and stones, taking them to the feet of Mahāprabhu and the *goswāmīs*. From village to village, everyone, in every place should be hunted and approached, "Take the name of Krishna! Come under the flag of Mahāprabhu!" This grand world wide mission will thrive like anything; it will touch the heavens and cover the Earth, and other planets also. That was the aim of Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, and we understand and appreciate that.

God Consciousness *vs.* *Society Consciousness*

Student: In the quest for spiritual truth one may join a religious mission to advance towards the ultimate goal of life. After some time, however, sectarian policies may appear to bar the path of progress. He may see that within the society, pragmatic concerns take precedence over spiritual ideals. If one feels the necessity to look elsewhere, his authorities may tell him that there are no higher truths to be found. One may also be warned that if he leaves the society, he will suffer serious repercussions. He may become an outcaste, branded as a heretic for pursuing what he sincerely feels to be the ideal upon which the society was founded. Should he risk leaving the society, ignoring the advice of his immediate authorities, or should he try to remain within the society?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Progress means elimination and new acceptance. So, when there is a clash between the relative and the absolute standpoint, the relative must be left aside, and the absolute should be accepted.

Suppose you are American, but at heart you are a socialist. In your general practices, you will live harmoniously as an American, but when there is a conflict between the capitalists and the socialists, which side will you accept: socialist or capitalist?

Your creed is that of a socialist. You live in a country where the majority are capitalists. When there is no difference between the two parties, there is no conflict, but when there is a clash, which side will you side with? Internally you may identify yourself as a socialist, but for the sake of peace, and for the good of the country, you may not express it externally. But suppose you are an out-and-out socialist. You will try to keep your creed, the purity of your faith for the socialists. You will try to leave the country and join the socialists.

So, the absolute and the relative are two different classes of interest. And we find more importance in the absolute interest. We must be sincere to our own creed. Sometimes we have to leave our paraphernalia if it does not suit us. So also, even in the conception of purity of the Krishna consciousness movement, in the Vaiṣṇava creed there is purity and form. The form is necessary to help me in a general way to maintain my present position. At the same time, my conception of the higher ideal will always goad me to advance, to go forward, and wherever I go, I must follow the greater

model, the greater ideal. Spiritual life is progressive, not stagnant. Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS, AND PURITANS

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: It is progressive. We are in the stage of *sādhana*, spiritual practice, and we want a progressive life. We want to go ahead, not backwards. The formal position will help me to maintain my present status, and my extraordinary affinity for the ideal will goad me towards the front. Just as there are so many progressive parties in so many missions: Progressive Communist, Progressive Christianity. First there were Catholics, then Protestants, again Puritans, in this way Christianity progressed. So, there is development in the right way, and also in the wrong way. The search for Śrī Krishna is dynamic and living, so adjustment and readjustment is always going on. And we should also change our present position accordingly, so that we may not have to sacrifice the high ideal for which we have come.

One is born in a particular land by the arrangement of nature, but his high ideal may sometimes ask him to leave the country. Einstein had to leave Germany and go to America for his high ideal of life. And so many similar instances may be found in the world. The ideal is all in all. The highest ideal in a man is his highest jewel. Our most precious gem is our ideal.

Many things are recommended in the scriptures, but they are meant to promote us towards the truth in an indirect way (*śva-dharme nidhanam śreya*). It is recommended at a certain stage that for the sake of our close friends, we should give up our ideal. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna's final instruction is *sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: "If it is necessary to maintain the highest ideal, you must give up your friends. Surrender to Me. I am the real purport of the scriptures." The highest kind of idealists give up their country, their family, their friends, and everything else, but they can't give up their ideal.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna says, "It is better to die while performing one's own duty than to try to do another's duty." That is one stage of understanding: the relative consideration. The absolute consideration is also given in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*. Krishna says, "Give up everything. Come to Me directly." This is the revolutionary way. This is absolute. And this is relative: "Stick to your own clan. Don't leave them." That is the national conception. There is nation consciousness and God consciousness, society consciousness and God consciousness. God consciousness is absolute. If society consciousness hinders the development of God consciousness, it should be left behind. This is confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.18):

**gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt
 pitā na sa syāj janani na sā syāt
 daivaṁ na tat syān na patiś ca sa syān
 na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum**

“Even a spiritual master, relative, parent, husband, or demigod who cannot save us from repeated birth and death should be abandoned at once.” What to speak of ordinary things, even the *guru* may have to be abandoned. One may even have to give up one’s own spiritual guide, as in the case of Bali Mahārāj, or one’s relatives, as in the case of Vibhiṣana. In the case of Prahāda, his father had to be given up, and in the case of Bharata Mahārāj, it was his mother. In the case of Khatvāṅga Mahārāj, he left the demigods, and in the case of the *yajña-patnīs*, (the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*) they left their husbands in the endeavor to reach the Absolute Personality.

We need society only to help us. If our affinity to the society keeps us down, then that should be given up, and we must march on. There is the absolute consideration and the relative consideration. When they come into clash the relative must be given up, and the absolute should be accepted. If my inner voice, my spiritual conscience, decides that this sort of company cannot really help me, then I will be under painful necessity to give them up, and to run towards my destination, wherever my spiritual conscience guides me.

Any other course will be hypocrisy, and it will check my real progress. If we are sincere in our attempt, then no one in the world can check us or deceive us; we can only deceive ourselves (*na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd durgatīm tāta gacchati*). We must be true to our own selves, and true to the Supreme Lord. We must be sincere.

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE GURU

Student: After the disappearance of the spiritual master, how should the disciples continue his mission?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: You must not neglect your conscience. You may go to fight as a soldier, to save your country, or your people, or your honor. Your environment does not depend on your whim. It may appear extremely perplexing, but you will have to face that. However complex the battlefield may be, as a soldier, you will have to fight. Otherwise you have no faith in your own cause.

There may be disturbances. Rather we say there should be, there may even be fighting amongst devotees, but we should not leave the preaching of Mahāprabhu, despite all differences. Disturbance must come, because our most beloved *guru* has withdrawn from amongst us. Such a great curse has been thrown on our heads; should we like to live peacefully? In its wake disturbances must come, and we must undergo them. Still, we must remain sincere; we must face the difficulty in a proper way. It has

come to train us to go in the right direction.

What we received from our spiritual master we understood only in a rough estimation. Now, things have come in such a way that we have to scrutinize ourselves in every position. We have to analyze ourselves. *Ātma-nikṣepa*, self-analysis has begun. We are under trial. What we received from our spiritual master, in what way have we received it? Properly, or only showingly? The time has come to purify us, to test whether we are real students, real disciples, or his disciples only in face and confession. What is the position of a real disciple? If we live in the society, what is the depth of our creed? In what attitude have we accepted his teachings? How deep-rooted is it within us? The fire has come to test whether we can stand. Is our acceptance real? Or is it a sham, an imitation? This fire will prove that.

SURROUNDED BY KARMA

So, we must not be afraid of any adverse circumstances. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “A happy *kṣatriyā* hankers for the battle you are facing” (*sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pāṁtha labhante yuddham īdṛśam*). Our *karma* has come to face us, to surround us, and we can’t avoid it. These disturbances are a result of our own *karma*; they came from within us. So, we must not quarrel. We must act properly in dealing with that.

We have to scrutinize more accurately what we thought we understood. Everyone must ask himself, “Where am I? What is my real need? And how much am I hankering for the real thing?” All these things will be expressed, and made public. So, this is the real field of *sādhana*, or practice. Our practice, our advancement, needs all these difficulties. Otherwise we may not know what is progress and we will become hypocrites, and give the same adulterated thing to others. So, to purify ourselves it is necessary that so many disturbances come.

And God has no error. He commands the environment. It is not our responsibility. The responsibility of the environment does not rest upon us. Our responsibility is within ourselves alone. The environment is in the hands of the Lord. He has not done any wrong to me. If I am sincere, then I have to adjust myself with this environment and put my faith before Him. By our stand in any circumstances in the battle, our patriotism will be put to the test. We will be tested to see whether we are real soldiers or not.

Anything may come, but we will have to face that. I must not forget my Lord, my *guru*, my Gaurāṅga, my Rādhā-Govinda, under any circumstances. Under all unfavorable circumstances, I must stand with my head erect and say, “Yes! I am a servant of that clan, that *sampradāya*. Everyone may leave me, but I shall stand

alone!" With this attitude we must march on, whatever the circumstances may be. Then the recognition may come in my favor, that "Yes, under such trying circumstances he is still there." Our superiors will be pleased with us.

We must analyze ourselves. How much are we selfish? To what percent are our unwanted bad habits, *anarthas*, still present within our hearts? How much are the impurities of *karma*, *jñāna*, mental desires, and other filthy things mixed with the real faith—that must come out, and that must be eliminated in different ways. If we want real good, no one can hinder us. With this spirit we must move and then we will be able to understand what is what.

JESUS AND JUDAS

Even Christ told his followers, "One of you will betray me." Judas was amongst the twelve. So, Jesus said, "Amongst the twelve of you, there is one who will hand me over to the enemy this very night." Even this may be possible. He said, "Even Peter, you will also deny me thrice before the cock crows." "Oh, no, no, no. I can't deny you." But no pride of a devotee does the Lord tolerate. He wants surrender, complete surrender. "No, no," Peter said, "I am your faithful servant." That kind of ego also must not stand. Peter, who was the leader, was also exposed. So, no pride is tolerated by the Lord.

Devotees are only tools in the hands of the Lord. One Muslim king advertised for a sycophant, a “yes-man.” Previously in the court of the kings, they had a sycophant. Whatever the king will say, he would give ditto to that. He advertised that he wanted a flatterer, and many men came and applied for the job. He began interviewing them: “Do you think you’ll be able to do your duty properly?”

“Yes, I will be able to do.”

“I think you won’t be able to do it properly.”

“No sir, I shall be able to do it.”

They were all dismissed but one. When the king told him: “I think you will not be able to discharge the duty of a flatterer,” the remaining one said, “I also think like that.”

“No, no, no, you will be able, you are the fittest.”

“Yes, I am the fittest.”

“No, no, I doubt.”

“Yes, I also doubt.”

The king said, “This is the man for the job.”

Those that continuously claimed they were fit were all dispersed and rejected. So, our soul must have such flexibility in the service of the Lord. We must have no ego whatsoever. Of course, that is in the external sense for we have our permanent ego within, when the soul enters into that higher domain. The position of that is a separate thing. But this material ego, that

must be dissolved cent-per-cent. When put into the fire, it will be burned into ashes.

And we must be one-pointed in our aim towards the truth. Droṇāchārya was the weapon-master, the *astra-guru* of the Pāṇḍavas. One day while testing the progress of his disciples, he put an artificial bird in the top of a tree. One by one he asked the brothers to come forward and take aim. Yudhiṣṭhira came forward. Droṇāchārya told him, "Prepare yourself to hit that bird. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"What do you see?"

"I see the bird."

"Anything else?"

"Yes. I see all of you."

"Go away." Then another one of the brothers approached. Droṇāchārya told him, "Hit the eye of the bird. That must be marked by your arrow. Take your aim. What do you see?"

"The bird."

"Anything else?"

"Yes. The tree also."

"Oh, go away."

Then Arjuna was taken in. Droṇāchārya told him, "Prepare yourself."

"Yes, my Lord, I have done so."

"Do you see the bird?"

“Yes, I see.”

“The tree?”

“No.”

“The whole of the bird?”

“No.”

“What do you see?”

“Only the head.”

“The whole of the head?”

“No.”

“What do you see?”

“Only the eye.”

“You can see nothing else?”

“I can see nothing else.”

“Yes, my boy! Shoot the arrow!”

We should have that sort of aim in our life—do or die. Whatever circumstances may come to frighten me, I won't be frightened. If my own men seem to be my enemy, that does not matter. My own is only He. And He cannot tolerate that anyone else will be a partner of Him. He is Absolute. He is the Absolute owner of me. He does not tolerate any partnership there. In this way, I must go where my spiritual conscience takes me. By God's will, friends may be converted into foes. Foes may be converted into friends, but I must stick to my ideal. If I am of a progressive nature, then there must be elimination and there must be new beginnings. It can't be avoided in the course of our realization.

When we are in school, all do not pass; some fail and then we have to meet new classmates. Again we advance, and again we have new classmates and old classmates may fall behind. It is quite natural. That does not mean that we are envious of them. We are sympathetic. We shall try our best to help them. But still it may happen. We cannot help it, but this is the nature of spiritual life. So, the absolute and relative principles are always clashing. They will seem to fight with one another, but the absolute should be accepted and the relative should be sacrificed.

MENTAL PRISON

Still, the relative is necessary. A boy must put his whole faith in his primary school teacher, otherwise his progress will be hindered. He should not think that what his teacher teaches him is all false, or of a lower type. When he grows up, he will accept another teacher for higher education, but that does not mean that the primary teacher is neglected or insulted. For our own interest, whatever we find which is akin to what was given to us by our *guru mahārāj*, whatever we find that will enlighten us further, and whatever will help us to understand more clearly what we heard from our *guru mahārāj*, must be accepted.

Otherwise, what have I taken in the prison-house of my mind, through my scholarship? God is not a finite

thing. He is infinite. And as much as in the cell of my brain I have imprisoned Him, shall I stick only to that? What is this? Is my realization a living thing, or is it dead? Is there any growth? What I have received from my spiritual master—can it grow? Or is it finished? Have I reached the infinite standard where I can progress no further?

If someone says that he has reached that standard, and that there is nothing further to be realized, then we offer our obeisances to him from far away. We are not worshipers of that. If one thinks that he is finished, that he has attained perfection—we hate it! Even an *āchārya* should consider that he is a student, and not a finished professor who has everything. One should always think of himself as a bona fide student. We have come to realize the infinite, not a finite thing. So, this fight between finite and infinite knowledge will continue always.

Should we think, “What I have understood is absolute?” No! We have not finished with knowledge. Still, we must know. Brahmā himself says, “I am fully deceived by Your power, Master. I am nowhere.” Anyone who has come in connection with the infinite cannot but say this: “I am nothing.” That should be the salient point. The propounder of the greatest scripture in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, Śrīla Krishnādāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī says: *purīṣera kīṭa haite muṇi se laghiṣṭha*, “I

am lower than a worm in stool.” This is his statement, and he is saying so sincerely. Should we be ashamed to express our negative character, our negative development, which is the real wealth for a disciple? So, because such a negative character is shown by him, we fall at his feet. And if someone says, “I have finished all knowledge. God, Chaitanya, is my disciple,” he should be shot down as the greatest enemy ever found in the world!



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “I command you. Don’t be afraid; take the position of *guru*, the giver, and give Krishna to everyone.”

“I Command You —Become Guru!”

It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.31.9):

tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad-ātataṁ
bhuvi grṇanti te bhūri-dā janāḥ

“O, Krishna, the nectar of Your words and the narrations of Your pastimes give life to us, who are always suffering in this material world. This nectar is broadcast all over the world by great souls, and it removes all sinful reactions. It is all-auspicious and filled with spiritual power. Those who spread this message of Godhead are certainly doing the greatest relief work for human society and are the most magnanimous welfare workers.”

This is what is necessary and this is what is universal. Everyone can be satisfied to the highest degree in their hearts only by the nectar of Krishna’s words and the nectarine descriptions of His activities. This is because Krishna is *raso vai saḥ*, the reservoir of all pleasure, and *akhila rasāmṛta murtiḥ*, ecstasy Himself.

Krishna's very nature is sweet:

madhuram madhuram vapur asya vibhor
 madhuram madhuram vadanam madhuram
 madhu-gandhi mṛdu smitam etad aho
 madhuram madhuram madhuram madhuram

“O, Lord Krishna! The beauty of Your transcendental form is sweet, but Your beautiful face is even sweeter. The sweet smile on Your face, which is like the sweet aroma of honey, is sweeter still.”

“I’M BEING NECTARIZED!”

This verse is found in Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura's *Krishna Karṇāmṛtam* (92). He says, “Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweetness. Krishna is sweetness personified. At my first sight, I thought Krishna was Cupid, who can capture everyone. But then I saw, ‘No, this is not like lust personified, which can be experienced only in the material world. This is *cinmaya*, spiritual substance. I see that this sweetness is spiritual in characteristic. I feel it. It is the very gist of all sweetness. What is this? My eyesight is being nectarized. I am experiencing nectar pouring on my eyes. Oh, Krishna has already conquered my heart. I am captured, I am captivated by sweetness personified.”

māraḥ svayaṁ nu madhura-dyuti-maṇḍalaṁ nu
 mādhyam eva nu mano-nayanāmṛtaṁ nu



“O Lord Krishna! The beauty of Your transcendental form is sweet, but Your face is even sweeter. The sweet smile on Your face is sweeter still.”

venī-mṛjo nu mama jīvita-vallabho nu
bālo 'yam abhyudayate mama locanāya

“My dear friends, where is Krishna, who is Cupid personified, brilliant as a *kadamba* flower? Where is

Krishna, sweetness Himself, the sweetest nectar for my eyes and mind? Where is Krishna, who loosens the hair of the *gopīs*? He is the supreme source of divine bliss. He is my life and soul. Has He come before my eyes again?"

This is Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura's statement (*Krishna Karṇāmṛtam* 68).

Whatever type of sorrow or affliction there may be, all different layers of painfulness will be removed. This nectar of the words and pastimes of Krishna gives us life. It gives us hope that we can live a higher life, that we were not created only to suffer in this mortal world, but to live a life which can soar up and transcend this painful life of mortality. We have that sort of life of vitality in our own intrinsic form. The speculationists say that Krishna consciousness only does away with all sinfulness, but their's is only an external acquaintance with Krishna consciousness. Sin is nothing in comparison with His purifying capacity. As soon as we come in contact with Krishna, even in the form of mere sound through the ear, our real welfare begins to awaken: *śreyah kairava candrikā vitaranam*. Krishna consciousness is infinitely surcharged with all the resources of our welfare. And those who can distribute Krishna consciousness to the world are really benevolent and kindhearted. They give the most who give Krishna to those who are helpless and disappointed. Only this sort of transaction

should be continued in the world, to save these souls suffering from the disease of mortal connection.

DIVINE NECTAR

The descriptions about Krishna are like divine nectar. So, go on with this transaction, always giving Krishna consciousness, and if you give Krishna consciousness you will have an ample supply of Krishna consciousness. That will descend from the higher position. If you are sincere to distribute Krishna consciousness, you will have no want in your own capital. New capital will be supplied to you as much as you can give it to others. It will have connection with the infinite source. So go on. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says:

yāre dekha, tāre kaha ‘kṛṣṇa’-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra’ ei deśa

“Whomever you find, talk with him only about Krishna. We have no other engagement. Whomever you find, any soul you come across, try to save him from this desert of mortality. I command you. Don’t be afraid; take the position of *guru*, the giver, and give it to everyone.”

Then, Mahāprabhu says:

kabhu nā vādhibe tomāra viṣaya-taraṅga
punarapi ei ṭhāñi pābe mora saṅga

“And in this transaction, you will find my backing. If you obey my command for distribution to one and all, then you will find that I am there, backing you in this work.” So, your great master has engaged you all like so many dedicated soldiers. Now you must do relief work in this world of mortality and death. Do relief work. Somehow we have to get Krishna consciousness for ourselves and also carry this news to our neighbors. Mahāprabhu says, “Whomever you meet, tell him about Krishna, and in this way, save the people.” They are all under the influence of eternal mortality. Only this path is relevant to their condition; all other talks are irrelevant.

JAWS OF DEATH

Everyone is rushing into the jaws of death. This is the sum total of the news of this world; it is the only news. Every second, everyone is entering the jaws of death. This is the real problem—nothing else. The whole problem, if summarized, will come to this, that every second, every atom here is entering into the jaws of death. This is the great and only danger in the world. So, all other talks are irrelevant to the real problem of life; try to help them from entering into the jaws of death. This is the only problem in the whole world.

Go forth and tell everyone about Krishna. Whatever you do, make them talk about Krishna, Krishna,

Krishna. Save yourself, and prepare yourself for the highest goal. Whenever you meet anyone, wherever you meet anyone, only talk of Krishna. All other talks are irrelevant and redundant.

Mahāprabhu says, “It is my command. Don’t think that if you do this and take the position of *guru*, when the people come to honor you, you will forget your own ordinary position, become puffed up with pride, and go to hell. No, no, no! I order you, ‘Go on!’ The relief work is there. You can’t stand idle as an onlooker. So I say, ‘Jump! Start relief work.’ I order you to do so. And I shall take whatever responsibility is there. The whole world is dying. So, always, at every second, the real need is *Krishna-kathā*. You will get My association only by obeying My orders and discharging the duty that I am entrusting with you. You will find Me there in your obedience of My order, in the discharge of the duty I impose on you.”

Is it reasonable or not? Every one of us can judge. What will be the relief work to save those in the mortal world? What will give real help to the people? Not clothing them or feeding them, nothing of the kind. Everyone is dropping down dead. Once, when I was in the Madras Maṭh, someone came and criticized us saying, “Oh, you are only talking about Krishna, and people are dying without food. Don’t you mind?” I said, “No.” He told me, “The Ramkrishna Mission is doing



Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu created such a fine vibration that the elephants, deer, and tigers were all chanting, “Krishna! Krishna!” and dancing.

real relief by feeding so many. If a man dies of starvation, how will he hear you? Where will you get a listener if he dies? First make them live, feed them, and then you can tell him about Krishna.”

I told him, “Suppose there is a famine. I have some food. I am distributing that to so many people. There is a great crowd before me. If, while I am distributing food, someone from the crowd flees, what should I do? Should I distribute the food, or run to catch him?” He said, “You must distribute the food; that is natural.” I said, “The

crowd is always ready to hear from me about Krishna. Why should I waste my time running after one man? So many people are coming to hear from me about Krishna and I cannot attend them all. Why should I stop distribution of the nectar, and run to catch one man? This is a foolish attempt.”

We are interested in helping people by distributing Krishna-*kathā*, and we pay no attention to any so-called danger. All are in need of this guidance. You must only engage yourself in Krishna-*kathā*. Go on talking about Krishna, and continue with that vibration.

When Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was going from Purī to Vṛndāvana through the jungle path, the elephants, deer, and tigers were chanting, “Krishna! Krishna!” and dancing. How? His Krishna-*kathā* created such a fine vibration that it entered into the ears of the tigers, deer and elephants and awakened their hearts. And they began to chant, “Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!” and dance. Mahāprabhu’s vibration of Krishna’s name was so fine and surcharged with force that the sound entered within the animals, and aroused in their hearts the innermost plane which was covered by the elephant’s or tiger’s body. Just like electricity, the finest current of the holy name of Krishna entered into the hearts of all the animals, and their souls were aroused. And when their souls were awakened, then they began to chant “Krishna! Krishna!”

Everywhere the environment is full of animation, and just as a ray of light penetrates the darkness, in a similar way the vibration of Krishna-*kathā* will strike a chord within the soul and create some inspiration there towards Krishna consciousness. So continue preaching Krishna consciousness. We have no other duty, no other work. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda went the length and breadth of the world with Krishna consciousness. The fact that you have all come here is due to his earnestness. He has gone to the upper world, and so, in his name we are going on with some sort of transaction.

The Initiating Spiritual Master

The spiritual master always performs his function from the platform of an intermediate devotee, whether he comes down from the position of a first class devotee to do the work of *guru*, or does so as a bona fide intermediate devotee. Because the work of *guru* is enacted from the intermediate stage, it is the duty of the *madhyama-adhikārī* to initiate disciples.

A spiritual master may be one of three kinds. The first class *guru* extends one foot from the spiritual world into the material world and takes souls from here to there. The *guru* in the intermediate stage is situated here, but he has extended one foot there and he is taking souls to the spiritual world. The lowest class of *guru* has both feet here, but he clearly sees the highest plane and is trying to take the souls from here to that plane. In this way, we may roughly conceive of three kinds of *guru*.

These are not three stages of Vaiṣṇava, but three stages of *guru*. A first class devotee takes the position of an intermediate devotee when he descends to play the role of an *ācārya*, one who teaches by example. He has one leg there in the spiritual world, and by the

order of Krishna, he extends another leg here in the material world to do the duty of an *āchārya*. The *guru* who has one leg here in the material world and extends another leg into the spiritual world is a *madhyama-adhikārī*, or intermediate devotee. He also discharges the duty of an *āchārya*. The lowest class of *āchārya* has both legs here in the material world, but his vision is towards the spiritual world. He may also do the duty of *āchārya*. These are the gradations of *āchāryas*, and the different stages of Vaiṣṇavas are another thing. They are mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.45-47):

THREE KINDS OF DEVOTEES

arcāyām eva haraye
pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

“A devotee who faithfully worships the Deity, but does not properly respect the Vaiṣṇavas or the people in general is called a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position of devotional service.” This is the lowest class of Vaiṣṇava. The second class of devotees is given also:

īśvare tad-adhīneṣu
bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā
yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ

“The devotee in the intermediate stage of devotional service is called a *madhyama-adhikārī*. He loves the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to the innocent and disregards the envious.” The highest stage of Vaiṣṇavism according to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is described as follows:

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

“The first class devotee sees Krishna in everything, and everything within Krishna.” These are three stages of devotees. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu explains these three stages in terms of those devotees who chant the holy name of Krishna. One who has even once heard or uttered the holy name of the Lord may be considered a third class devotee. One who always chants the name with faith is an intermediate devotee. And the first class devotee is so powerful that whoever sees him will feel the tendency to chant the holy name of Krishna. That is the nature of the highest kind of devotee.

The second class devotee may have some mundane touch, but he deprecates this completely and fully attends to his spiritual realization. He is fully engrossed in spiritual life. His attraction for Godhead is there,

but he has not fully escaped from the influence of *māyā*, or illusion. Although he is weak, still his attempt to help others is laudable. He has not completely disassociated himself from his mundane nature, but he is conquering it gradually. He is gaining battle after battle and moving towards Krishna consciousness. He has good will. He is a preacher. He has reached the stage just before he finally disassociates himself from this world, takes his final leave, and enters the spiritual world.

The neophyte devotee may go to the temple and worship there, strictly following the rules of the scriptures, but as soon as he is outside the temple, he may do anything and everything. In his relations with others he may not deal in a spiritual way; scriptural dictations have only a partial influence over him. In his dealings with others he may have no spiritual principles at all. But the intermediate devotee applies the principles of the scriptures in his ordinary life. From the point of view of the scriptures he considers who he should make friends with, what sort of trade he should accept for his livelihood, and how he should select his friends.

FIGHT AGAINST MĀYĀ

When a devotee's social life is also affected and controlled by his spiritual principles, he becomes a second class devotee. When he adopts such a form of life, he is fit to help others. He won't be affected by

foreign, unfavorable association, and because he has already practiced and is settled in that form of life, he knows how to deal with others and keep up his spiritual vitality. Because he has practiced in that way, he can be eligible to initiate disciples. He is qualified to help others because he has already transformed himself in his dealings with the outside environment. He can keep up his standard by fighting with the agents of *māyā*. He has already proved that he has kept up his spiritual position, so he can be relied upon and entrusted with the power of *āchārya*.

There is still another standpoint by which the qualifications of a devotee have been expressed to us in the revealed scriptures. One whose reliance, regard, and faith is in the *śāstra*; who attentively observes all the rules and regulations and practices that are found in the scriptures; whose practices and social activities are colored by his faith in God, is an intermediate devotee. And one who acts according to his faith in Krishna in every stage, whatever circumstances there may be, is a first class devotee. His faith in Krishna is his main guidance. In whatever circumstances he may be in—with body, mind, and soul; in thought, word, and deed; in everyway—he does everything for the service of Krishna. He is the topmost devotee of Krishna. So, from these different standpoints the stages of a devotee, a servant of Krishna, have been expressed to us in the scriptures.

HOW TO SEE ŚRĪ GURU

Devotee: Should the disciple conceive of his *gurudeva* as an *uttama-adhikārī* situated on the topmost level of devotional service?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, and not only should he see his *gurudeva* as an *uttama-adhikārī*, a devotee of the highest order, but he will even see *gurudeva* as the special delegation of the Lord Himself, or of His supreme potency. In the *mādhurya-rasa*, he will ultimately see his *gurudeva* as Rādhārāṇī's delegation, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī.

In this way, there are different visions of our spiritual master. Our vision of our spiritual master varies according to our gradual progress in Krishna consciousness. In the primary stage of devotional service the order is given to the disciple to see the *guru* as, Krishna Himself (*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta śāstrair*). Then he will see the *guru* as the potency of Krishna, and finally he will see him as a specific kind of potency of Krishna, according to his inner demand. He will find his spiritual master situated in a particular mood of devotion, either in servitude, friendship, parenthood, or conjugal love. This differentiation will continue until one will see Krishna Himself with the internal energy (*svarūpa-śakti*) within Krishna.

Devotee: Some people think that one must be a devotee

of the highest order who has descended into this world to act on the second class platform in order to initiate disciples. They do not accept any gradation of *gurus*. According to them, one must seek out and take initiation only from the highest kind of *guru*.

KRISHNA'S HEADACHE

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I also had such an idea at first, but my understanding underwent some transformation and my conception changed. I did not venture to make disciples myself in the beginning, after the departure of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda, but I had some transformation through three events. Then I came to take up this work humbly, modestly. The other day this same question was put to me by one devotee. I told him the story of Krishna's headache. Perhaps you know the story.

Once, when Krishna was in Dvārakā, He told Nārada Muni that He had been attacked with a severe headache, and the only cure was the feet-dust of His devotees. Nārada went to so many devotees in Dvārakā, but no one came forward to give him any feet-dust. They said, "Oh, it is impossible. We can't do that, we can't go to hell."

Frustrated, Nārada returned to Krishna. Krishna said, "Oh, I am suffering very severely now. Have you got any feet-dust." "No, sir, no one was prepared to

give feet-dust.” Nārada was benumbed. Krishna told him, “You may try it in Vṛndāvana.”

At once, Nārada intimated everything to the *gopīs*, and the *gopīs* immediately came with feet-dust. They said, “Krishna is suffering? He needs feet-dust? Please take our feet-dust and go immediately.” Nārada was astounded. “What is the matter?” he thought. “No devotees would offer Krishna any dust from their feet, but these people are doing it.” He told them, “Do you know what is the consequence of your actions?” The *gopīs* replied “Yes. Eternal hell. We don’t care for that! If slight relief is there for our Lord, that is our only concern.”

This is one point that came to my mind at that time. And another was this: Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, *amāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra ei deśa*. “On my order, become *guru*, and deliver the land.” So, we should think, “I am fallible, but I am confident that what my *guru* has given to me is an uncommon, vital, and nectarine thing. And he has asked me to give it to others. It does not matter. I shall take the risk. He has ordered me. I am his servant. He will look after me.” With this spirit of risk, the disciple will approach the responsibility thinking, “I may go to hell, but I must carry out the order of my *gurudeva*. I may die, but I must carry out the order of my commander.” With this spirit he is to approach the task, and there will be no danger if this consciousness is maintained; but if he deviates from

that connection and goes self-seeking for a mundane purpose, he'll be doomed. Otherwise, no destruction can touch him.

This internal spirit should be maintained, and that is the real qualification of a disciple: "Yes, I am ready to die to carry out the order of my *gurudeva*. I feel that this is nectar, and I must distribute it to others to save them."

RĀMĀNUJA'S SECRET MANTRA

There is another example of this spirit of risk, in Rāmānuja's case. There was an *alwar*, a South Indian *guru* who had the highest type of *mantra*. Rāmānuja wanted that *mantra* from him. The *alwar* told Rāmānuja, "If you don't disclose this *mantra* to anyone, then I shall reveal it to you." Rāmānuja agreed, and with this pledge, Rāmānuja approached him and received the *mantra*. It had already been announced to the public that Rāmānuja was receiving that *mantra*, and so many people were standing outside waiting. They had heard that Rāmānuja had accepted this condition and received the *mantra* from that *guru*. As soon as Rāmānuja came out, the mob that was waiting there impatiently began asking him, "What kind of *mantra* has he given you? What is the *mantra*? Is it of the highest order that will deliver us all?"

"Yes."

"Then what is it?"

"This is the *mantra*."

He gave it out, and his *guru* chastised him. “What have you done? Don’t you know what is the result?”

“Yes, I know: eternal hell, but your *mantra* cannot but be fruitful, so they will be saved, although I may go to hell.” If you can take this sort of risk, your *guru* will bless you, and you cannot be doomed. This sort of risk should be taken by the disciple and only on the force, on the basis of that spiritual inspiration. If he does so, he can never be doomed. The eye of the Lord is there. God is there. *Guru* is there. He cannot but be saved. They cannot leave him in danger and relish thinking, “The person who is carrying out our orders is going to hell.” Can they tolerate such a thing? Are our guardians living or are they dead?

We must be so much selfless that we can think, “I may go to hell, but I must carry out my *guru*’s order. So, through me, the work may go on. This sort of conviction in the process, in the *mantra*, gives us the strength to carry out the work of *āchārya*. If I think, “This medicine is helping me; I am in the curing process, and this medicine is helping me,” then, if I see a similar case, I may hand the medicine over to him.

Jīva Goswāmī says *jñāna śāṭhya vitta śāṭhya*. If I have some money and another person is suffering with no money, if I keep tight my money, and he lies fasting without food, then I’ll be responsible for his suffering. So, if I have some knowledge, if I can help my neighbor,

but don't do that, I'll be responsible. By not helping him, I commit an offense against society.

Once I asked one doctor, "Do you know about disease perfectly? Then why do you venture to treat a patient? You have meager knowledge. You don't know his body fully. You treat him, and you are wrong." The doctor submitted to me. But an answer came in my mind that if we require every doctor to perfectly know everything about disease, then the whole method of treatment will vanish. Because they are all half-knowing and there is not anyone to be found in full knowledge, should this curing process be abolished? It is not possible.

In good faith, with whatever knowledge we have, we must sincerely help others. In that spirit one may take up the work of *āchārya*; otherwise he will be blamed. But we must be careful that whenever a *guru* of superior quality is there, we must help others to accept him. We must not be a trespasser. It is also mentioned in the *Hari Bhakti Vilāsa* that when a greater person is available, those of a lower type should not venture to make disciples. Suppose a farmer has fertile land and two kinds of seed. The good seed should be planted first. If the better seed is not available, then ordinary seeds may be sown. For the sake of the harvest, the better seed should be given the first chance. If we are detached, if we are pure in heart, and if we are selfless, the better

seed should always be sown first. The lower kind of seed should be withdrawn. So, when a higher type of *guru* is available to any circle, the lower type of *guru* should not interfere.

LOWEST OF THE LOW

Devotee: But a devotee always thinks of himself as the lowest, so he will always want to take someone to the higher *guru*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The degree of devotion to Krishna will take us to the point of thinking, “I am nothing, I am the lowest of the low.” But when the inspiration to act as *guru* will flow, the necessity to teach will come to us through the order of Krishna: “You have to do it.” In that case, Krishna wants to do it. It is His flow. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Sanātana, Krishna’s grace is flowing through Me to you; it is passing through Me, but I don’t understand all these words.” I feel something like that. I am carrying out my *āchārya*’s order. Being so low, still I have accepted this duty as I have been ordered by my *āchārya* to do. With this necessity within, one may do the work of an *āchārya*.

It is not only external, but internal also. The *āchārya* has asked us, “Go on with the preaching; you are qualified. If you don’t do so, then why did I give it to you? As I spread this message, you must also spread it.” If one

feels such a sincere urge within his heart, he must do that work. If we do not serve society with whatever we have imbibed from him, then we will be responsible to our *guru*. He will chastise us saying, “You have taken so much energy from me, and now you are keeping it within you? You must let this loose to help others.” If one gets this sort of inspiration he should try to fulfill the order, but still, difficulty is there. To become a *guru*, to capture the position of a *guru*, the respect of *guru*, that is one thing; to discharge the duty is another. Sincerity is necessary. This is of course difficult. There is no doubt that it is difficult; if one is unsuccessful, he will be lost, and others will also be lost. In the name of helping others he will deceive others, if he himself is full of deceit. So, we must be careful about what we have received from our *guru*, and we must also take care to see whether we are eligible to discharge this duty, whether we are eligible to do good to others.

THE TRAP TO CAPTURE GURU

Devotee: You can give spiritual guidance without giving initiation. You can explain what you heard from your spiritual master to others. So, what is the necessity of giving initiation?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: That is also a trap to catch the *guru*. You give instructions on spiritual life to others,

and those that take your instructions will say, “I cannot go to anyone else. I can accept only what I have heard from you, I cannot accept anyone to be *guru* other than you.”

Devotee: But you can say, “If you accept me, then I tell you to accept him.”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: If he sincerely feels so, he can say, “If you have real faith in me, then I tell you to go to that gentleman.” He may say this, if he sincerely believes that another person is superior to him. But if he sees that within the society, the constitutional *āchārya* is going down, he will think, “How can I recommend this sincere gentleman to connect with him?” At that time, he will have to come down himself and take the responsibility of continuing the work of his *guru*. It all depends on sincere realization.

Separation from Śrī Guru

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda advised his senior disciples that if the need arose to consult higher spiritual authority after his disappearance, his senior godbrother, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, should be consulted. On more than one occasion he said, “I consider Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj to be my śikṣā-guru, instructing spiritual master, so what to speak of the benefit that others can have from his association.” Just after his disappearance, his senior disciples approached Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj and asked his advice on how to guide the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. The following is an excerpt of their conversations.

Devotee: After the departure of our beloved spiritual master, we have come here to offer our respects to you as well as to hear your highly esteemed advice on certain matters, if you’d be kind enough.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The disappearance of the spiritual master is mentioned in the *śāstra* with an example.



Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj (left) with Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda (right). Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda on more than one occasion, said of him, “I accept Śrīdhar Mahārāj as my *śikṣa-guru*, so what to speak of the benefit that others will have by his association.”

The disciple is like a lotus. The spiritual master is like the water around the lotus, just as in a pond or a lake. Your late *gurudeva*'s position is like water and Krishna is like the sun. As long as the lotus is floating on the water, the sun will nourish the lotus. But if the water vanishes, that very sun will burn the lotus. Without water, the Krishna sun will burn the lotus. Without the help of the *guru*, the disciple is nowhere.

WITHOUT GURU, ALL IS VOID

Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī has said, "In the absence of my *gurudeva*, Govardhana hill, the representation of Krishna Himself, seems to me just like a big python coming to devour me. And Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the holiest place of divinity of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya*, seems like a tiger's mouth coming to devour me. They are giving me so much excitement in the absence of my *gurudeva*, my dearest and highest spiritual guardian. My *gurudeva*, who has the most intense affection for me, is not here? How can it be? Everything is void. All has vanished with his departure." Such a deep sense of separation will come in the heart of a sincere disciple.

Once, one of your devotees said in his lecture that separation is the highest realization. I was very happy to hear from his lips that separation (*vipralambha*) is the highest attainment. Without separation, nothing else can come to us. The anticipation of meeting Krishna

will appear to us as *vipralambha*, so *vipralambha* is the most auspicious thing pertaining to Krishna consciousness. And we can have Krishna's connection also in that separation. So, the safest and most fearless position is *vipralambha*. If we can stand firm and retain the memory of *gurudeva* in his separation, then we will have passed the highest test.

Devotee: In our spiritual master's lifetime he was seen as the absolute authority above all, including our governing body commission. How should we understand the position of the new spiritual masters and their relationships with their godbrothers and disciples?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: The position of the *ācārya* with his disciples must be absolute; with his disciples, he will have absolute authority. Still, he must be careful not to become mad with authority. Authority is a part of *pratiṣṭhā*, name and fame. There is also another tendency. When a *guru* comes in connection with *vātsalya-rasa*, the mood of guardianship over his disciples, his friendly relation with the godbrothers decreases, some special discrimination arises and stealthily he is drawn to his disciples, indifferently neglecting his connection with his godbrothers. This tendency is sure to come, and it is difficult to keep up the balance. So, the brothers are neglected, and the sons get more attention. In this way the *guru* becomes partial. When he comes in close connection with his disciples, he has

freedom; he is given an opportunity of absolute mastership. In that position it is very difficult to keep up his purity because of that temptation; there is the possibility of going down from the plane of *āchārya*.

GURU IS ALL IN ALL

Autocracy and democracy do not go well together. Our system is autocratic. *Guru* is all in all. Our submission to *guru* is unconditional. If a disciple sees that his *guru*'s powers are being restricted by other Vaiṣṇavas, it will create a great disturbance in his mind, a disturbance to his absolute faith in his *guru*. This is where the Krishna conception of Godhead comes to our relief. He whom we think to be supreme-most—Krishna—Yaśoda is whipping Him. He is carrying Nanda's shoes on his head, and He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way we can adjust everything. Both the absolute faith and the relative position of the non-absolute—these two things should be harmonized.

The *guru* should be recognized by impartial judgment. Everyone thinks that his own mother is the most affectionate. But when a comparison is drawn between two mothers to see who is more affectionate, an impartial criterion will be applied. This is called *tatastha-vicār*: an impartial comparison of relative and absolute considerations. When the two are weighed, the absolute calculation will always have the greater value.

The position of *āchārya* is very intricate. It is very difficult to bring an *āchārya* under rule. You see, that is our practical experience. You please hear and note this. The position of *āchārya* is a relative thing, and the position of the disciple is also relative, just like the relationship between mother and child, father and son, wife and husband. Although to his godbrothers a *guru* will be seen in a relative position to his disciple, the *guru* is absolute. So to adjust between the relative and absolute is a difficult thing; it is an eternal problem. Even in *Krishna-līlā* there is enmity between *mādhurya-rasa* and *vātsalya-rasa*, but when the absolute consideration comes, both *rasas* must be included within the fold.

GURU: MORE THAN GOD

To a disciple, his *guru*'s position is Supreme, even more than God. This is said in the scriptures. The *guru* is more near and dear to us than God Himself. God has many things to deal with, but *guru* is concerned only with my welfare. The *guru*'s position is more helpful to the disciple than God. If within your society, you want a natural growth of the disciple's regard for the *guru* and the Absolute Truth, such room must be allowed in your constitution, if the constitution is to live at all.

Law is not everything. The law of your society should be accommodating to nurture divine sentiment, otherwise it is no law. Law should promote faith. *Śāstra*'s jurisdiction

is limited. It is meant only to promote love, and when love comes, it will be free; smooth, harmonious working is possible only in the area of love. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī says that *vaidhī-bhakti*, devotion under the guidance of *śāstra*, or laws and rules, is helpful only to a certain extent. It will help the inner awakening of love and affection and then retire. Law will retire, giving room to the spontaneous flow of love. Law is necessary, especially in the lower stages, but it should make room for free movement in the relationship. Freedom is the highest thing. Free service is *rāga-marga*, and that is service proper, not service that is regulated and coerced and pressed by law. That is not service. Our aim is Vṛndāvana. So, we want free service. Without freedom, service is not valuable. Forced labor is no labor; a labor of love is required. And that is the thing for which all are out. Let us essentially think that we are all out not only for the constitution, but the thing for which the constitution has been made; we are out for that high object of life: divine love. The constitution should promote that aim. With this feeling we should go on. Newcomers are coming with their faith, and their faith should be encouraged and also adjusted so that the faith of one person may not disturb another.

MESSIAHS OF FREE FAITH

No law should go to limit or control the *āchārya*, for then the *śraddhā* of the disciple will vanish, and all

will be a mechanized machine. Rather the whole thing will be reduced to matter. We are the messiahs of developing free internal faith in the Lord. Faith, that is to be nurtured. That sort of creeper should be planted in the garden of the heart and watered and nourished. The very characteristic of faith must not be lost by infringement, by over-pressure of the laws and rules. The free flow of the heart must be kept. The movement of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is more of heart than of intellect. We should always consider this. The intellect must not check the free flow of the heart. We must always remember that. Free love and free faith are the only things, the most valuable things for which we have come out of our own house and joined the mission. This purity of purpose should always be kept intact. Of course, some help from law and regulation is necessary, but not so much as to check the growth of our vitality. We must promote vitality. The real spirit, the real purpose of the mission should be given first hand. And lenient dealings are necessary amongst you. It is said, "If the tongue is cut by the tooth, should I pull out the tooth?" You are one organic whole; your dealings should not be such that the forgiveness of love is forgotten. The giving of love will conquer more than the giving of law. What is the need of so much formality and fashion, when ultimately we are all servants of the Lord?

The *āchārya* faces two dangers. The first is partiality. Partiality means full freedom with his disciples. This relationship is also more attractive to him. The second danger is deviation. So, deviation and partiality—these two things can take down the *āchārya*. These are the two enemies of an *āchārya*. And one who takes that position must be particularly careful about these things. The position of an *āchārya* is dangerous. It is full of temptations. Therefore, a strong, sincere indomitable desire for the upper aspirations of Krishna consciousness is the indispensable necessity in an *āchārya*. Otherwise, he can't maintain his position. He will go down. He has become master and will think, "I am the master of all I survey." In a particular circle, he is monarch. And monarchy can bring madness. That is a great temptation. If one is not sufficiently conscious of this fact, he will not be able to maintain his position. For one who has monarchy over men and money, it is very difficult to maintain a position as a servitor. The ego of mastership which is generally found within all of us comes to attack the *guru*. After all, we are wandering in the land of exploitation. Therefore, we should be very wakeful and scrutinizing in our self-analysis. The general symptom of health is that the more one will go up, the more he will think, "I am going down." This indirect method of measurement may be applied to measure our internal advancement. Externally one may

maintain a superior position, but internally he should always be thinking, “O my Lord! I am in want. Give more grace to me! I can’t maintain my position.”

MONEY, WOMEN, AND FAME

It is a great misfortune if a Vaiṣṇava *guru* strays from the line. It is rare, but occasionally it may be found. Generally the symptoms of deviation fall into three different classes: *kanaka*, *kāminī*, and *pratiṣṭhā*: money, women, and reputation. First, *guru* loses his attraction for his own *guru* and *śāstra-upadeśa*, the advice of the *śāstra*. Then, what he previously expressed, quoting the scriptures and the words of his own *guru*, gradually becomes absent in him. His attraction for the higher thing fades. That is *pratiṣṭhā*, prestige. *Kanaka*, *kāminī*, *pratiṣṭhā*: money, women, and name and fame—these are the three tests to be put everywhere to see whether one is a *sādhū* or not, or what degree of *sādhū* he is. The first thing is deviation from his higher *gurus*. That should be detected. That is *pratiṣṭhā*, pride.

Then, he will show more tendency to amass money and not to spend it. Money may be collected, but that must be distributed for the service of the *sampradāya*, for the service of the Vaiṣṇavas. But amassing money—this is the second sign of deviation. The third is attraction towards the ladies. Of course, he may come in connection with money and women and also with the

honor from his disciples. That is also necessary, but only for the purpose of the divine object, divine aim, not for himself. But if we can detect that he is utilizing all these things for his personal interest and not for the cause of the *sampradāya*, then we should be careful.

In the beginning, we may neglect some occasional problems; some instances of these kinds of deviations may be ignored. But if we find that they are becoming more prevalent, then we must inspect the situation carefully. And we are to bring it to persons similar to my position. And after consultation, we can take the matter to higher sources and consult other *āchāryas* who are reliable. When we find that what appeared to us first in a small way is real, injurious, and of a big magnitude, and that our spiritual master is going down, then we must act to save ourselves. We must try to take steps which may save us from that epidemic contamination. We must try to save ourselves. And we must also try to save others who might fall prey to the same exploitation as us. That must be done in all sincerity. There is the possibility; it is mentioned in the *śāstras* and so many practical examples are also there. So, we must not make progress in a slumber, but we must go forward with our eyes always opened.

ABANDONING BOGUS GURUS

Devotee: If the initiating *guru* falls down from the path, what should the disciple do?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: He may take shelter of the holy name of Krishna again and wait for some time. If the *guru* was at first a sincere disciple of his spiritual master, and now as a result of some offenses he is being neglected by his *guru*, he may be led astray for some time. But he may return to the standard again. Still, it is said in the *Mahābhārata* (*Ūdyoga-parva* 179.25):

guror apy avaliptasya
kāryākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya
parityāgo vidhīyate

“A *guru* who does not know what is to be done and what is not to be done, who has left the path of devotional service, should be abandoned.” This is found in Bhiṣma’s statement in the *Mahābhārata*. Bhiṣma is one of the twelve *mahājanas*, and this is his statement to his *astra-guru*, Paraśurāma.

Jīva Goswāmī says that if the *guru* goes astray he should be abandoned, but there may be circumstances where, by the inconceivable desire of Krishna, the *guru* may go astray for a time and then come back again. In that case, the disciple should wait for some time. It is very unfortunate for the disciple when such things happen. You will find this elaborately dealt with in the *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. If a son leaves home and disobeys his father, the father

may be indifferent to him; he may exclude him from the will. If, however, the son returns after some time and is again obedient, then he may collect his inheritance. In a similar way, a spiritual master may disobey his *guru*, and then his *guru* may be indifferent to him for some time, but again if he sets himself right, he will not be disinherited. This is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (*api cet sudurācāro*). So we should not deal very abruptly with these unfortunate incidents, but we should wait and see. Everything must be done judiciously.

In trying to understand the relationships between *guru* and godbrother, and *guru* and disciple, we will find very subtle points of sentiment. Just as when Krishna entered into the arena of Kāṁsa he appeared differently to different persons, the disciples will have one view of their *guru*, and his godbrothers will have another view and disposition. The disciples of a genuine *guru* will see their *guru* as being with Krishna, but that may not be seen by his godbrothers. In *mādhurya-rasa*, Krishna is seen in one way, and in *vātsalya-rasa*, Mother Yaśoda sees Him in another way. The servants see Him in another way. The *ṛṣis* like Gargamuni will see Him in another way. As Krishna likes to show Himself, He will be seen.

You may see the *guru* in your own way, but still, you'll have to behave in such a way that the newcomer's faith will not be disturbed. The newcomers should always be encouraged, because it is very difficult for a

fallen soul to collect his faith and regard and offer it to the *guru*. It should be our concern that they collect their maximum regard and offer it to the *guru*. On the other hand, I may have my own conception about my godbrother. I may foster that within my heart. As much as possible I should try not to disturb his disciples. If, unfortunately, an *āchārya* falls, and proves himself to be lacking in that capacity, then if that comes to a sufficient degree, some steps may be taken; we may have to take some unhappy action. But let God save us from that disastrous condition. That should be our feeling.

Otherwise, as long as possible, the rank should be respected. Both the relative and absolute consideration go side by side. The disciples should be encouraged by the relative consideration mostly. And the godbrothers will have more feel for the absolute consideration. But still, they shouldn't disturb the newcomers in their premier position. Even if you think that the person performing the function of *āchārya* is lower in qualification, *adhikāra*, than you, still you should formally give some special honor to him because he is in that position. The son may be the judge, and the father may be the lawyer, but the father must give respect to the son. He must give respect to the chair. So that kind of adjustment should be kept in the mission. When you are alone, the *āchārya* brother and his non-*āchārya* brother can mix freely. You can give a slap to his face. But when

publicly amongst his disciples, you must show that sort of behavior. Respectful conduct should be publicly maintained to keep up the peace of the mission.

VYĀSA...MAY NOT KNOW

Devotee: Although the disciple should regard the *guru* as absolute and of the highest level of spiritual attainment, how should the *guru* view his own position?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Śrīdhara Swami wrote a commentary on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It was a little different from the previous commentaries, so the scholars, especially the Śāṅkarites, refused to accept that commentary as universal. They put it to the test. They left the commentary in the temple of Viśvanātha, Lord Śiva, and agreed that if he accepted the commentary, they would all accept. Then, from the Śiva temple, this verse was revealed:

aham̐ vedmi śuko vetti

vyāso vetti na vetti vā

(*Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, *Madhya* 24.313)

“The real purpose of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is very difficult to conceive,” Lord Śiva says. “I know the true purpose of *Bhāgavatam*; Śukadeva, the son and disciple of Vyāsadeva, knows it thoroughly, and the author of the *Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, may or may not know the meaning.

When teaching Sanātana Goswāmī, Mahāprabhu said, “Sanātana, Krishna is going to give His kindness to you through Me. I am talking to you like a madman. I feel many things are passing through Me to you. But I do not know that I Myself have that thing.” It is possible. It is wonderful, but still we find it there. It is not unreasonable, although it is not understandable.

You see, when the Second World War broke out, in Dalhousie Square in Calcutta, there was a popular government poster. A military uniform was painted on the wall. Beneath it was a saying, “Just wear this uniform, and the uniform will show you what you must do.” So, when a sincere man has taken a particular charge, he will somehow find out what are the duties of his post. He is sincere. And God will help. God helps those who help themselves. You have taken the charge, and that charge has come only as a chance, but there is some underground link. Then if you try to go on, help will come to you. He’s not a cheat. You have sincerely taken this responsibility, as given to you by your master, and the master is not a cheat. He will come to help you with all his might, saying, “Do this. I’m helping; I am at your back.” When we are all sincere, things will happen like this.

Nama Guru and Mantra Guru

Student: I have heard that one has an eternal connection with the spiritual master who first initiates one into the chanting of the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra* (*harināma-guru*). Does he have a similar connection with the *mantra-guru*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes. We may see it as similar, with a slight difference.

Student: Some devotees who took *harināma* initiation from Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda later took their *gāyatrī mantra* initiation from one of his disciples. Can you explain the distinction between the two initiations and how a disciple should view his relationship with two different spiritual masters?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The first importance should be given to the *nāma-guru*, or the *guru* who initiates one into the chanting of the holy name of Krishna, and second to the *guru* who gives initiation into the *gāyatrī mantra*. The *dīkṣā-guru*, initiating spiritual master, must be shown respect, and then all the other disciples of Bhaktivedānta

Swāmī Prabhupāda. First, honor must be shown to Prabhupāda, who is the *nāma-guru*, the *guru* of *guru*, the second honor will go to the *dīkṣā-guru*, and then to the rest, accommodating all. They should all be recognized according to their status.

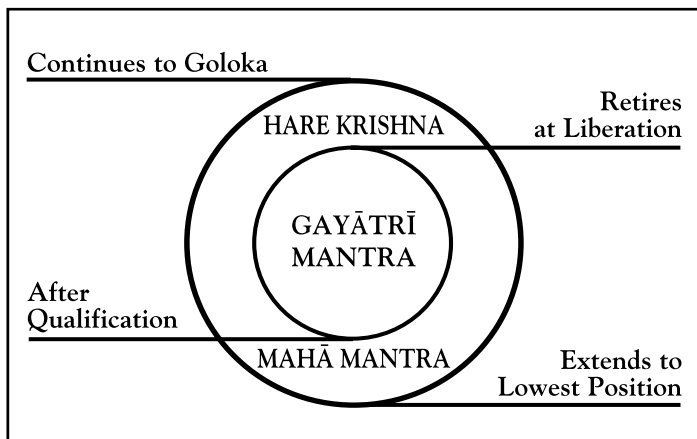
MANTRA: CIRCLE WITHIN A CIRCLE

Jīva Goswāmī has written that the name of Krishna is the principle thing in the *gāyatrī mantra*. Within the *mantra*, there are also so many other words, but the name is the most important. If the name of Krishna is taken away, and replaced with some other name, the whole thing will be rotten. This is the decision of Jīva Goswāmī. The holy name of Krishna is all in all. The holy name of Krishna is there in the *gāyatrī mantra*, and so many other words are couched there. But if Krishna's name is taken away and replaced with the name of Śiva, then the whole thing will go to Śiva. The holy name is the all-important factor.

The holy name of Krishna is so important that even the *gāyatrī mantra* may not be necessary. It is said:

no dīkṣāṁ na ca sat-kriyāṁ na ca puraścaryāṁ manāg ikṣate
 mantro 'yaṁ rasanā-sprṅg eva phalati śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakaḥ
 (Padyāvalī 29)

“One need not undergo all the purificatory processes, or follow the six ritualistic ceremonies mentioned in



the *Vedas* for pious life; one need not even take initiation into the *gāyatrī mantra*. If one simply chants the holy name of Krishna without offense, everything will be successful.” The holy name of Krishna is the most important consideration. The *gāyatrī mantra* may not even be necessary.

We accept the *mantra* only to help the *nāma-bhajana*, the worship of the holy name. Otherwise, it may not be necessary at all. It has been judged in such a way. The name alone can do everything for a person. It is full and complete. The *mantra* helps us to do away with the *aparādhas*, offenses, and the *ābhāsa*, or hazy conceptions in our *bhajana*. The *mantra* comes to help us only so far.

An example is given of larger and smaller circles. The holy name of Krishna is the larger circle. It extends

from the highest to the lowest. The *mantra* circle is a smaller circle within the larger circle. The *mantra* cannot reach to the lowest point. The holy name can extend itself down to the lowest position. The *mantra* gives us entrance into liberation, and then the name carries us further. This is the nature of our connection with the *mantra* and the name.

The name extends to the lowest position, to the *caṇḍālas* and *yavanas*. Everyone can receive the name. But everyone is not eligible for the *gāyatrī mantra*. Only after one has reached a developed stage can the *mantra* be conferred upon him. And the *mantra*'s jurisdiction will be finished when liberation is attained. In the *Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* (Ādi. 7.73):

**kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra mocana
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa**

“The Krishna *gāyātri mantra* liberates one from repeated birth and death in this world; the holy name of Krishna gives one shelter at the lotus feet of Krishna.” The *gāyatrī mantra* helps us achieve liberation, and then the *mantra* retires. After giving us liberation, the *mantra* is finished. But the name will continue all along, from the lowest to the highest. In chanting the name, there is no mention of any petition—it is an address only. We should not chant with the mentality that, “I want this.” We must simply chant the name spontaneously. That

will encourage good will in us. So, because the function of the *mantra* is limited, but the name is all-important, the *nāma-guru* will be honored first, and next, the *mantra-guru*, and then the other Vaiṣṇavas.

GODBROTHER GURUS

Student: How should a devotee who has taken second initiation from a godbrother regard his godbrother—as godbrother or *guru*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: It is inconceivably, simultaneously, one and different. Generally that godbrother will be seen as *guru*, according to the disciple's present stage, but if the disciple transcends and goes to his previous history, then he will see him more as a godbrother. But generally, in his present stage, he will see him as *guru*, and in the background, godbrother.

Student: You said the *harināma* continues after the liberated condition. So, does the *gāyatrī-mantra guru* continue any activity with the devotee beyond the point of liberation?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: When he returns to the spiritual world, even the chanting of the holy name will be in the background, and the function of performing other services will come in the foreground. When one enters the Lord's domain, he will be given some function there in the service of Krishna, and that will

be very conspicuous and prominent. At that time, the name will be in the background. When one goes to a particular group in a particular *rasa*, like *sakhyarasa*, then he will be given a specific duty under a group-leader like Subala, or Baladeva. His service will have the first importance, and the name will be in the background, helping, energizing. And there all will be seen as *guru* but still, there is a hierarchy. It is a family life. The *guru's guru* is there but the disciple will work under his own boss who has his boss. He will receive direction from his immediate superior. In this way the hierarchy is there and the disciple will gradually be transformed by that sort of function. Everyone is under some servitor, and their immediate duty will be to attend that servitor and his orders.

Student: Many devotees cannot understand how it is that someone can have two *gurus*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: That is because they are situated in a formal position, but when they enter into the substantial spiritual realization, they will not have such a grievance because they will see what is *guru*. *Guru* means one who has come to give Krishna consciousness. The formal difference will be reduced when one can catch the very substance of the teachings for which the *guru* is respected. When one is intimately connected with the thread of divine love which the *guru*

comes to impart to us, he will accept it, wherever it comes from. He will see it as a friendly relation, not antagonistic, but cooperative.

Although separate in figure, at heart both of the *gurus* are the same because they have a common cause. They have not come to fight with one another; they have come to fight only with the agents of Satan. If we can recognize the real thing for which we are approaching the *guru*, then we will understand how to make the adjustment in our relationship with the *śikṣā-guru*, *dīkṣā-guru*, and *vartma-pradarśaka-guru*.

We are infinitely indebted to all our *gurus*. We are helpless. What can we do? They are benevolent, they are infinitely gracious, they are my guardians. I may have many guardians; they are to look after my welfare, they have not come to destroy me.

Student: Krishna descends with his associates, friends, and paraphernalia. Is this true of the *guru* also?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, but his associates were mostly recruited; very few may be his eternal company.

SELF-EFFULGENT AND SELF-EVIDENT

Student: How will we recognize the *guru* if he appears before us in another form or in a different body?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya argued that Śrī Chaitanya-deva could not have been

an incarnation. Gopīnath Āchārya told him, “You do not know the *śāstra*.”

“No, no,” Sārvabhauma said. “In the scriptures it is mentioned that the Lord does not appear in *Kali-yuga*, but only in three ages and is therefore known as *Triyuga*.”

Gopīnath Āchārya replied, “You think that you know so much about *śāstra*, but in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Mahābhārata*, there is direct mention of the *avatār* of *Kali-yuga*. Have you no knowledge, no recognition of that?”

Sārvabhauma, apparently defeated, said, “You go and take *prasādam*, and afterwards come and teach me.”

Then Gopīnath said, “Not by the dint of one’s study or intelligence can one understand God, but only through his grace.”

**athāpi te deva padāmbhuja-dvaya-
prasāda leśānugṛhīta eva hi**

(Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, Madhya 6.84)

Then Sārvabhauma said, “You say that you have that grace, and I do not? What is your reasoning behind this? You say that you have the grace of the Lord, because you say that he is an incarnation. And because I can’t give recognition to that, I have no grace? What is the proof of this?”

Gopīnath Āchārya replied:

**ācārya kahe,—“vastu-viṣaye haya vastu-jñāna
vastu-tattva-jñāna haya kṛpāte pramāṇa”**

(*Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, *Madhya* 6.89)

“It is evident that I have the grace of the Lord, because I know Him, and that you have not, because you deny Him.”

The answer to your question is given here. Our own inner experience, our internal satisfaction, our connection or acquaintance with reality is the real evidence; nothing external can give any real proof.

Our *guru mahārāj* gave the example that if one is born in the darkness of a dungeon, and someone proposes, “Let us go see the sun,” then the prisoner will carry a lantern in his hand saying, “Oh, you will show me the sun?”

“Yes. Come with me. Leave your lantern behind. No light is necessary to see the sun.”

“Are you trying to fool me? Nothing can be seen without the help of a light.”

His friend will catch him and forcibly take the prisoner into the sunlight. “Do you see the sun?” And the prisoner will say, “Oh, *this* is the sun! By sunlight alone we can see the sun.” One will have that sort of experience when he comes in connection with the truth. Neither calculation, nor evidence, nor witness, but only direct experience is proof that Krishna is there, like the sun.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said, *ātmāparijñāna-mayo*: what to speak of Krishna, even the conscious unit is self-effulgent. A certain section says, “There is God. Surely He exists.” Others say, “No, there is no God, He never existed.” This quarrel is useless; still it will continue. In a particular section this argument will have no end. Those who have no eyes will be unable to see the sun. They will say there is no sun.

**ātmāparijñāna-mayo vivādo
hy astīti nāstīti bhidārtha-niṣṭhaḥ
vyartho 'pi naivoparameta puṁsām
mattaḥ parāvṛtta-dhiyām sva-lokāt**
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.22.34)

[Persons without knowledge of the Supreme will argue whether this world is real or not. Their focus is always aimed at trying to understand the dualities of this material nature. Although such discussions are meaningless, for those who have turned away from Me, these arguments will never end.]

This misconception will continue for those who deny the existence of both the soul and the Supreme soul. For those who have direct experience, however, there is no question: it exists! But for the owl section who cannot admit the existence of the sun; the sun does not exist. It is something like that. Our own realization of a thing will be the greatest proof of its existence: *vastu-tattva-jñāna haya kṛpāte pramāṇa*.

One may be born blind, but if somehow or other his eyes are opened, he will be astonished to see the particular aspects of the environment. But if one has no vision, he can see no color or figure. Those who have vision will feel, "How can I deny the fact? I have seen it. I am feeling it, it is so magnanimous, so great and so benevolent; I can't deny all these things. You are unfortunate; you cannot see." Some see, some cannot see. In the same place, one can see, another cannot. Those to whom Krishna wishes to reveal Himself can see Him; others cannot.

THE UNIVERSAL FORM

In the assembly of the Kurus, when Krishna went to Duryodhana's party with a proposal for peace between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, Duryodhana thought, "Now we have our golden chance. If I can put Krishna in the prison-house now, then the Pāṇḍavas will die broken-hearted, and there will be no question of fighting with them." The Kauravas also joined in the scheme, and they told Duḥśāsana, "Go and bind Krishna with this rope." Duḥśāsana came with the rope in his hand and tried to bind Krishna. Sātyaki, Krishna's attendant, was there, and he furiously came at Duḥśāsana with a sword. Krishna peacefully caught hold of his hand, and began to manifest Himself in such a way that it perplexed Duḥśāsana.

When Duḥśāsana saw the universal form displayed by Krishna, he thought, “So many figures appear before me. On whom shall I put the rope? Who shall I bind down?” So many figures were displayed by Krishna in his universal form. On one side there was Baladeva and on another side stood Arjuna, and so many revered ṛṣis, chanting Krishna’s name. Duḥśāsana was perplexed. And Bhīṣma and Droṇa began to sing in praise of Krishna. Everyone thought, “What is this? This is a magnificent vision, with so many faces!” The whole atmosphere was filled with the divine spirit. Then, Devaṛṣi Nārada and so many ṛṣis began to chant in praise of Krishna. And in this way Krishna manifested His universal form before the assembly.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind, but he could hear them all praising Krishna and thought to himself, “Some sort of wonderful thing is happening around me, but I can’t see.” And so, he prayed to Krishna. “O Lord, for the moment please remove my blindness. I would like to see your great manifestation. Afterwards, you can make me blind again, but at least for the time being, remove my blindness.” Krishna told him, “There is no necessity of removing your blindness. I say that you can see, and you can see.” By the Lord’s will alone, even physical blindness was no bar to seeing that great manifestation of Krishna. So, the physical eye can’t see God; only the divine eye can see Him. And by the will of

Krishna, the divine eye was temporarily given to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. His blindness did not stand in the way of his vision, and he could see Krishna.

ULTRASONIC SOUND

The ability to recognize divinity descends from above. We cannot see God with our mundane senses. What to speak of being able to see the infinite, our senses are so limited that our ears can only hear sound of a particular wavelength. We are told that the sun, the moon, and all the stars and planets are all revolving and creating a huge sound, but our ears cannot hear that high degree of ultrasonic sound. Nor can we hear subsonic sound with our ears. Our eyes are designed to catch only a particular wavelength of light. We cannot see either ultraviolet or infrared light. Our material senses are limited to a particular plane of perception.

Student: The *guru* accepts the responsibility to take his disciples back to godhead. So, when the *guru* departs, how does the disciple maintain contact with the *guru*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: You see, it comes to the same point. Who is *guru*? And why is he *guru*? *Guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū* are one and the same thing, and we have to appreciate that. Otherwise, should we think that our onward march will be guaranteed only by the vision

of our eyes? The photo of our spiritual master is not our *guru*, although the photo has some connection with the real *guru*. The eye experience and the ear experience of a person is not the whole experience. The real experience is through the words, the idea that the *guru* has given. That is Krishna consciousness.

If I have a real interest in Krishna consciousness, I have to adjust all other things accordingly. Otherwise, If I miss the real thing that the *guru* came to give me, everything will be dull idol worship. To follow the form alone will be idolatry. There are so many human figures; why is he *guru*? Because he is a mediator, a medium of divine knowledge. That is the criterion to be tested everywhere. Put this test anywhere and everywhere. What is the interest for which we came to Krishna consciousness? And what is Krishna consciousness? There is your *guru*. He is *guru* only because he is in Krishna consciousness, and there are different degrees of Krishna consciousness. So, we must not make much about the form.

A RELIGIOUS JUNGLE

Student: Why are there so many different religions in the world?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Uddhava posed this same question, “Why in the name

of religion are there so many 'isms' in the world. Will every 'ism' that is found here independently take me to the goal? Or is there any gradation?" Krishna told him, "When the creation began, I transmitted the truths of religion into the heart of Brahmā, the creator, and from Brahmā, that came to his disciples. But according to the different capacity of those disciples, what they received was a little changed when they delivered it to others. When I gave it to Brahmā, that knowledge was one. Brahmā told his disciples, and when they received it in the soil of their heart, it entered, but with some modification. Again, when they gave delivery to their disciples there was more modification." It became lost due to the vitiating nature of the mundane plane. One point is the difference in the receiver and another, in the succession.

So, gradually the truth was modified, and now we see that the religious world is a jungle. Some give stress on penance, some on charity, some this, some that. So many branches of religion have sprung up. And antagonistic, ascending opinions like atheism have also grown from the human mind to oppose those modified descending opinions. So, now we find there is a jungle.

Krishna appears now and then to reestablish the principles of religion: *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati*. When religion becomes extremely degraded,

Krishna comes again, or sends his representative, telling him, "Go and set it right."

There must be religious differences, but one who can catch the real internal meaning of the truth will be saved. Others will be misguided, and it will be a long time before they are delivered. Once having a real connection with a bona fide *guru*, he won't be lost. In this way Krishna answered Uddhava's question in the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and it is quite intelligible. It is neither unreasonable nor dogmatic. If we are sincere, we won't be lost.

THE LADY AND THE MULLAH

Every disciple cannot catch the real spirit of the advice of the *guru*. There is a story. A Mohammedan *mullah* used to explain the *Koran* regularly. In his audience one old lady used to take her seat in the corner, and as long as the *mullah* read the *Koran*, the lady would weep. Tears would run down her cheeks profusely, so much so that one day the *mullah* met that lady and asked her, "What do you find in my lectures that you are so much impressed with? Whenever I cast my glance at you, I find your eyes are shedding tears profusely. What do you find in my lectures that moves you so?"

To this, the old lady answered, "I had one she-goat, and her beard was just like yours. When she took her food, she would move her head on the grass just as you

move your head. You remind me of my dear she-goat. She was very affectionate to me. I can't stand to think of her without shedding tears, and for that purpose, I come to see your lecture."

Krishna Himself came and went unrecognized by many. In the case of Jesus also, we find that Judas, one of His twelve disciples, was a traitor. Jesus said, disappointed, "The one who will betray me is amongst the twelve of you." So, should we think that because we have come to a great man, now we have attained everything, devoured everything? It is not such an easy thing. We have only a slight connection with the infinite and we have to progress with that capital. To think that we have attained everything is rather the opposite feeling. One who is approaching towards the infinite will see, more and more, that he is nowhere. The symptoms will be the opposite. Still, of course, sometimes it is necessary to assert ourselves with courage, on the strength of our faith: "What I say is true."

Newton was told by his contemporaries, "You have reached the highest zenith of knowledge." He made such a marvelous discovery that the people in his time thought that he was *sarvajña*, a knower of everything. They thought that he had finished the whole world of knowledge. But Newton said, "I know better than you, because I conceive that I am just collecting pebbles at the shore of the ocean of knowledge. I see that I am more

learned than all of you because you say that I have finished all knowledge, but I know that the vast ocean of knowledge cannot be finished. I have only touched its shore. This much I know.” So, that is also an assertion, that I know more than you, because I know that knowledge cannot be finished, and you say that knowledge is finished.

This is the nature of the infinite. One who is going to deal with the infinite must always be conscious of his weakness. Then only will he be able to draw light from the infinite. To understand the words of *gurudeva* is not very easy. *Gurudeva* is infinite. In his words, he also deals with the infinite. We can't put it under limitation, thinking that we have finished what he wanted to give us. We are students, and we shall remain students forever.

The Disciplic Succession

Brahmā-Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

Bhagavān Śrī Krishna

|
Brahmā

|
Nārada

|
Vyāsadeva

|
Madhvācharya

|
Padmanābha

|
Nṛhari

|
Mādhava

|
Akṣobhya

|
Jayatīrtha

|
Jñanasindhu

|
Dayānidhi

|
Vidyānidhi

|
Rājendra

|
Jayadharma

|

Continued on next page

Puruṣottama
|
Brahmaṇyatīrtha
|
Vyāsatīrtha
|
Lakṣmīpati
|
Mādhavendra Purī
|
Īśvara Purī (Nityānanda, Advaita)
|
Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu
|
Rūpa Goswāmī (Svarūpa Dāmodara, Sanātana Goswāmī)
|
Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Jīva Goswāmī
|
Krishnadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī
|
Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura
|
(Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa) Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī
|
Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
|
Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī
|
Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
|
├── B.R. Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī
│ │
│ └── B.S. Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāja
└── A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī

Instructing Spiritual Masters

Devotee: Can you explain how the principle of disciplic succession works? I was under the impression that in your teaching there must be an unbroken chain of disciplic succession beginning with God Himself, in order for the knowledge to be properly understood. But when I read Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, I found that the disciplic succession contained only thirty-eight names, although it says that the system is fifty centuries old. Is this a complete list, or are some names left out? How are we to understand these apparent historical discrepancies?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Our *guru-paramparā*, disciplic succession, follows the ideal, not the body; it is a succession of instructing spiritual masters, not formal initiating spiritual masters. In a song about our *guru-paramparā* written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, it is mentioned:

**mahāprabhu śrī chaitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya
rūpānuga janera jīvana**

The highest truth of Krishna consciousness comes down through the channel of *śikṣā-gurus*, instructing spiritual masters. Those who have the standard of realization in the proper line have been accepted in the list of our disciplic succession. It is not a *dīkṣā-guru paramparā*, a succession of formal initiating *gurus*.

Dīkṣā, or initiation is more or less a formal thing; the substantial thing is *śikṣā*, or spiritual instruction. And if our *śikṣā* and *dīkṣā-gurus*, or instructing and initiating spiritual masters, are congruent, then we are most fortunate. There are different gradations of spiritual masters. In the scriptures, the symptoms of the *guru* and the symptoms of the disciple have been described; the *guru* must be qualified in so many ways, and the disciple must also be qualified. Then when they come in connection, the desired result will be produced.

We are concerned with Krishna consciousness, wherever it is available. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* and especially in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Krishna says, “I start the Krishna consciousness movement, but gradually by the enervating influence of the material world, it weakens. When I find that it has diminished considerably, I return and begin a fresh movement. Again, when I find that it is becoming degraded by the adverse influence of the environment, I send one of My representatives to clear the path and give some fresh energy, invest some fresh capital in My Krishna consciousness movement.”

What is Krishna consciousness? We must examine the standard of knowledge. The *guru* should try to impart to his disciple the capacity of reading what Krishna consciousness really is. Krishna consciousness is not a trade; it is not anyone's monopoly. The sincere souls must thank their lucky stars that they can appreciate what Krishna consciousness is, wherever it may be.

Devotee: How are we to understand that in the history of our disciplic succession, it appears that there are gaps where there was no initiating *guru* present to formally accept disciples?

SPIRITUAL LIGHT YEARS

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: We are not concerned with a material connection. The mediator is not this flesh and body as we generally think. In studying the development of scientific thought, we may connect Newton to Einstein, leaving aside many unimportant scientists. We may trace the development of science from Galileo to Newton, and then to Einstein, neglecting the middle points. If *their* contributions are taken into account, then the whole thing is taken into account, and lesser scientists may be omitted. When a long distance is to be surveyed, the nearest posts may be neglected. Between one planet and another, the unit of measurement is the light year; distance is calculated in light

years and not from mile to mile, or meter to meter. In the disciplic succession, only the great stalwarts in our line are considered important.

Devotee: There was one question still in my mind on *guru-paramparā* which was not clarified. Between Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī is a gap of almost a hundred years. How is it that between the two of them no one is listed in our *guru-paramparā*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We have to forget material considerations when we consider the spiritual line. Here in this plane, the spiritual current is always being disturbed and interrupted by material obstructions. Whenever truth is interrupted by a material flow and becomes mixed or tampered with, Krishna appears to again reinstate the truth in its former position of purity (*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata*). That attempt is always being made by the Lord and His devotees.

The flow of spiritual truth is a living thing, not a dead thing. The vigilant eye of the Lord is always over our heads, and whenever it is necessary to keep the current pure and flowing in full force, help descends from above. Krishna says to Arjuna, “What I say to you today, I spoke to Vivasvān many, many years ago. Now, by the influence of material conception, that very truth has become contaminated, and so again I say the same thing to you today.”

RELIGIOUS MUTATIONS

Here in the material world, the material consideration is always tampering with the spiritual current; the purity of the truth is always being disturbed. So, sometimes Krishna has to come Himself, and sometimes He sends His personal representative to again reestablish the truth in its former and pure state.

When the truth is sufficiently covered, disturbed, and mutilated by the influence of *māyā*, the illusory energy, then an attempt is made by the devotees of the Lord, or by the Lord Himself, to rejuvenate it and return it to the previous standard of purity. We cannot expect truth to continue here in this world of misunderstanding without any tampering or interruption. It is not possible.

The intelligent will understand how to apply these principles practically. Suppose we are writing a history: we will note the main figures in the history, set aside those who are not so qualified, and begin the dynasty in order of their importance. Those who are negligible will not be mentioned. In a similar way, those who are really thirsty for spiritual truth like to see the line of pure spiritual heritage. They search out where it is to be found, connect the dynasty of stalwart teachers together, and say, "This is our line."

The disciplic succession is not a bodily succession. Sometimes it is present, and sometimes it is lost and



Śrī Rāmānujāchārya



Śrī Madhvāchārya

only appears again after two or three generations, just as with Prahlāda Mahārāj. He was a great devotee, but his son was a demon; then again his grandson was a devotee. Even in the physical line we see such interruptions. In the spiritual line we also see the channel of truth affected by the influence of *māyā*, or misconception. So, the experts will seek out the important personages in the line.

COPERNICUS, GALILEO, NEWTON AND EINSTEIN

Suppose a scientist researches some truth. After a few generations, another scientist comes and takes up that thread and continues his research. Then after a few more generations, another comes and takes up that thread and goes on. If we are to understand the real channel through which the particular research is



Śrī Nimbārkāchārya



Śrī Viṣṇuswāmī

progressing, we will have to study the important thinkers who helped bring it out.

We see that Copernicus has contributed something before Galileo began, then Newton came. Then there may be a gap for some time, and from Newton, we find that Einstein took it up. In this way, there may be a gap, but still that thread is continued. An intelligent man will see that it began with a particular person, and then it came to another, and then came here. That will be the proper line of research. So, in the spiritual line this also holds true.

Those who cannot understand this simple point are guided by physical considerations. They do not understand what is real spiritual truth. For them, the physical continuation is the *guru-paramparā*. But those who have their spiritual eyes awakened say, “No. What was there

in the first *āchārya* is not found in the second or the third. But again we find the same standard of purity in the fourth *āchārya*.” The *Gauḍīya Sampradāya* of Mahāprabhu is one, and whoever contributes to that real line will be accepted.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s contribution to the *sampradāya* is no less important than that of the other great stalwarts in the line. He may be a member of another line, the *Madhvā sampradāya*, in the physical sense, but his contribution, especially in attracting people to *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism* with his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, cannot be neglected by

the students of posterity. So, his contribution has been utilized by our *āchāryas*, considering the degree, the essence and the purity of his thought in our spiritual line.

Śāstra-guru, *śikṣā-guru*, *dīkṣā-guru*, and *nāma-guru* are all taken together; in this way a real channel has been given to save us, to keep up the flow of the highest truth from that world to this world. This policy has



Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa presented the *Govindabhāṣya* commentary on Vedānta philosophy. His enlightened thought is a valuable contribution to our *sampradāya*.

been adopted by the *āchāryas*. Wherever we have found any contribution that is, by the will of Krishna, the highest contribution to the line, we have accepted it. So, we accept *śāstra-guru*, *śikṣā-guru*, *dīkṣā-guru*, *mantra-guru*, *nāma-guru*—we accept them all as our *guru*.

We give respect to Rāmānuja, who is the head of another school of Vaiṣṇavas, but we do not give respect to a *sahajiyā*, an imitationist who is in the line of Mahāprabhu only in the physical sense, but who is mutilating and tampering with the real teachings of Mahāprabhu. The imitationists are not considered. Although in a physical sense they are in the line of Mahāprabhu and Rūpa and Sanātana, when we go to judge the very spirit of the line we see that they are nowhere. Their connection with Mahāprabhu is only a physical imitation.

On the other hand, we find that Rāmānuja has made a substantial contribution to Vaiṣṇavism, Madhvāchārya has given a sufficient contribution to Vaiṣṇavism, and Nimbārka has also made his contribution, so we accept them, according to our necessity. But we reject the physical so-called current-keepers because what is found there is all mutilated and tampered with.

There is a proverb. “Which is more useful: the nose or the breath?” The intelligent will say that the breath is more essential than the nose. To sustain the

life the nose may be cut off, but if the breath continues, one may live. We consider the breath to have more importance than the nose. The physical form will misguide people to go away from the truth and follow a different direction.

We don't consider the body connection important in the *āchāryaship*. It is spiritual current, and not a body current. The disciple of a true devotee may even be a nondevotee. We admit that, because we see it, and the Lord Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.2):

sa kāleneha mahatā
yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa

“The current is damaged by the influence of this material world.” In the line, some are affected, go astray, and may even become nondevotees. So, the continuation through the physical succession is not a safe criterion to be accepted. We must trace only the current of spiritual knowledge.

Wherever we can get that, we must accept it, even if it comes from the Rāmānuja, Madhvā, or Nimbārka *sampradāya*. As much as we get from them substantially, we accept, and we reject the so-called followers of our own tradition if they are mere imitationists. The son of a political leader may not be a political leader. A political leader may also have a political succession, and his own son, although brought up in a favorable

environment, may be rejected. A doctor's son may not be a doctor. In the disciplic order also, we admit the possibility that they may not all come up to the same standard. Those who do not, should be rejected.

And if the truth is found in a substantial way somewhere else, that should be accepted. Wherever there is devotion and the correct consideration about Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, our *guru* is there. Who is our *guru*? He is not to be found in the physical form; our *guru* is to be traced wherever we find the embodiment of the pure thought and understanding which Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu imparted to save us.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was very akin to the Madhvā *sampradāya*. But when he came in connection with Visvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura, he showed great interest in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism*. He has also commented on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Jīva Goswāmī's *Ṣaṭ-Sandarbhā*. And that enlightened thought is a valuable contribution to our *sampradāya*. We cannot dismiss him. He is our *guru*.

At the same time, if my own relatives do not give recognition to my *guru* or to the service of Mahāprabhu, I must eliminate them. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda has explained the *śikṣā-guru paramparā* in this way. Wherever we find the extraordinary line of the flow of love of God, and support for the same, we must bow down. That line may appear in a zigzag way, but

still, that is the line of my *gurudeva*. In this way it is accepted. We want the substance, not the form.

THE ZIGZAG LINE OF TRUTH

We have left all social concerns and so many other shackles. For what? For the Absolute Truth. And wherever I shall find that, I must bow down my head. And if a great soul shows us, "This is the path to where you will find your thirst quenched. The line is in this zigzag way," we must accept that for our own interest. We are worshipers not of form, but of substance. If the current of spiritual substance comes another way, but I think that I must try to go this way to reach my goal, it is only jealousy, blind tenacity to stick to the physical thing. We must free ourselves from this material contamination and try to understand the value of spiritual truth. We should always be prepared for that. We must follow what is necessary, for our own interest.

I am not a servant of A,B,C, or D. I am a servant of Mahāprabhu. I may have to turn this way or that way, or whatever way will be favorable to reach my Lord. Wherever I feel the presence of my Lord in an intense form, I must be attracted to that side. We are out for that thing, and not for any fashion or formality; that will hamper our cause.

Krishna says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*. Wherever we shall find Him, we must

run in that direction. The direction may not be always straight, it may go in a zigzag way, but if Krishna comes from that side, I must run there. Again if He appears on this side, I must run to this side. My interest is with Him. Not that we can challenge, “Why did Krishna appear here, and why is He appearing there? That may be a doubtful thing, so I must stay on this side.” No. If I have genuine appreciation for the real thing, the proper thing, I must go to that side, the side of Krishna.

If I am blind, that is another case. Then, I must have to suffer for my inability. But, if anyone has the ability to understand things properly, he will run wherever he finds help. If a man in a boat is passing through the current and finds himself in danger, then from whatever side help may come, he must turn to that side.

If we are worshipers of Śiva, when we understand the special superiority of Nārāyaṇa, should we stick to Śiva? And if we are worshipers of Nārāyaṇa and are shown the superiority of Krishna, should we stick to our Nārāyaṇa worship? And then should we not try to go from Krishna’s *Bhagavad-gītā* to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? One may think, “I have read the *Bhagavad-gītā*, I like the Krishna who is the speaker of the *Gītā*.” Then when the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is given to us, should we stick to that *Gītā* Krishna, or should we try to go to the Krishna given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? If we have

our interest in Krishna, we must run to His side, wherever He appears.

In the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* the story is told of how Gopa-kumāra, by chanting his Gopāla *mantra*, gradually leaves one stage and progresses to the next. There, the gradation of devotion is traced from the *karma-kāṇḍa brāhmaṇa*, to a devotee king, then to Indra, then to Brahmā, then to Śiva, from him to Prahlāda, then to Hanumān, then the Pāṇḍavas, then to the Yādavas, to Uddhava, and finally to the *gopīs*.

In this zigzag way he is passing. In the sincerity of his quest, his thirst is not being quenched. He is going from this side, to that side, and going up. So, all of them have their *guru-paramparā*. There is Prahlāda's *guru-paramparā*, Hanumān's *guru-paramparā*, the Pāṇḍava's *guru-paramparā*, Mahādeva's *guru-paramparā*. They have their own *guru-paramparā*. Brahmā and Mahādeva are *gurus* themselves; they are the creators of their own lines of *guru-paramparā*, but Gopa-kumāra passes them also. Why? His thirst is not quenched until he goes to Vṛndāvana. So, the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* has shown us the line of *guru-paramparā*, or the real line of our quest, of our search.

If we are sincerely searching after real truth, then wherever we go may be a contribution to our experience for further preaching in the future. If we go somewhere, hoping with all sincerity that our thirst may be

quenched there, but find that it is not quenched, and feel some uneasiness, then, by the grace of the Lord, a connection with higher truth will come, and we will go somewhere else, thinking that there our thirst will be quenched. Gradually we will again find dissatisfaction, the need for something higher, and again we will progress further. In this way, we may cross many *guru-paramparās* before ultimately attaining the *Vraja-līlā* of Krishna, as given by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

We are not interested in fashion or form; if we want the real truth, then wherever it will be found, we must accept it. Mahāprabhu says:

kibā vipra, kiba nyāsi śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei ‘guru’ haya
(Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, Madhya 8.128)

Anyone, regardless of caste or social position, may become *guru* if he knows the science of Krishna.” Sometimes the father may not be our guardian. Our uncle may be our guide, and not the father. It is possible. The line of interest is to be considered the most important. So, our line is the *śikṣā-guru paramparā*.

I am thankful to those that are helping my spiritual understanding not only in a formal way, but in the real sense. Whoever is untying the knots of our entanglement in this material world, giving us light, and quenching our thirst for inner understanding and satisfaction is

our *guru*. In this way, we live on the contribution of all these spiritual masters. They are all our *śikṣā-gurus*. All the Vaiṣṇavas are more or less our instructing spiritual masters. Our spiritual life may live on their contribution. But we do not accept the imitationists. They are our enemies, *asat-saṅga*, bad association. They will take us away from the real path of understanding and progress.

We must ask our sincere hearts, “From whom do I really get the benefit of spiritual life?” Our sincere consciousness will be the best judge, not form. If in a earthen pot there is Ganges water, and in a golden pot there is ordinary water, which should we select? In a case like that, *brāhmaṇas*, the intelligent class of men, take the holy Ganges water in the earthen pot. So, the substance contained, and not the container, should be given the real importance.

AM I THIS BODY?

I am not this physical body. My own physical identification should be challenged if I am too much addicted to the physical *guru-paramparā*. “Who am I? Am I this physical body?” If I am spiritual, then in the spiritual sphere I shall have to look with spiritual eyes, and pursue whoever will come before me who is really following the path of Mahāprabhu.

When the Pāṇḍavas retired to the Himalayas, Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāj was going ahead. Nobody believed they would fall. Arjuna couldn't believe that his brothers had fallen. But even after Arjuna had fallen, a dog was going on, following Mahārāj Yudhiṣṭhira. We may see many men fall down in the path of our journey towards the spiritual goal, but still we should try to reach the goal. And with the help of whoever comes along, I shall go.

Some may be eliminated; even a *madhyama-adhikārī guru* may sometimes be eliminated when he falls down. It is not a happy thing, but it may even occur that my *guru* was going ahead, taking me forward and fell down. Then with fresh energy, invoking the help of the Lord, I shall have to go on. Even such a disaster may come in our journey. But still, we must not be cowed down. Sometimes alone and sometimes with company we must go on.

First there must be *sukṛti*, accumulated merit, and then *śraddhā*, faith, will guide us. The quality of faith must be examined. *Śraddhā*, faith, is a general term, but *śraddhā* may be defined into different classes. A high form of faith will be our fare on the way back to Godhead. Sometimes we may find co-workers, and sometimes we may have to go alone. What of that? We cannot but go to the goal because we shall have the grace of so many unseen *gurus*.

UNSEEN GURUS

There are others also who are working, and their ideal will inspire me, although physically I am not seeing any companion or any follower with me. The inspiration of the unseen *gurus* will be our fare. They will inspire us to go on with the journey. And our own sincere hankering for the truth will be our real guide. That is *guru-paramparā*.

Who is *guru*? Is *guru* a body? Or is the *guru* a *vairāgī*, a renunciant? Or is the *guru* only a formal guise, a hypocrite who is showing the appearance of a *sādhū*, but within is doing something else? Who is a *guru*? Only one who will exclusively guide me to Krishna and Mahāprabhu, with devotion. He is my *guru*, whatever he may be.

Mahāprabhu told Rāmānanda Rāya, “Rāmānanda, why do you shrink away? Do you think that I am a *sannyāsī* and you are a *gṛhastha*? You are always hesitating to reply to My questions. Do you think it does not look well for you to advise a *sannyāsī brāhmaṇa*? Don’t hesitate. You know Krishna best. Give Krishna to Me. Have courage.” In this way, Mahāprabhu was encouraging Rāmānanda. “By the grace of Krishna, you have that capital. Give it to Me. You are a real capitalist. I have come to preach to the world that you are the wealthiest capitalist of the spiritual world. And that must be used for the good of the public. Don’t hesitate. Don’t shrink away. Come out.”

Rāmānanda said, “Yes, it is Your capital. You have deposited it with me, and today You have come to withdraw it from me. It is Your property. I understand. And You press and push me to take it out. All right. I am a mere instrument, used by You. Whatever You want me to say, I am ready to say.” In this way, Rāmānanda was going on. But is Rāmānanda a member of a *sampradāya*? We are so much indebted to Rāmānanda Rāya, but he is not in the *guru-paramparā*. Still, he is more than many of the *gurus* who are in the *guru-paramparā*.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is not in the *guru-paramparā*. Should we dismiss Her? First there should be *guru*, and then there is the question of *paramparā*. The question of first importance is, “who is *guru*?” And then there can be a chain of them coming down.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT—FORMBREAKER

Sometimes the formal must be left aside. Once, Alexander the Great was with his father, and they came upon a chariot with a thick knot tied in its rope. There was an inscription above the knot, and there it was written, “Whoever can untie this knot will be a great king in the future.” The young Alexander asked his father, “What is it, Papa?” His father replied, “This knot has been firmly tied here, and there it is written that whoever can loosen it will be a great king in the

future.” Alexander said, “I shall do it.” He took out his sword and cut the rope. Is it clear? The formality was not kept. A man stood by the side. He came out and said, “Yes, he will be a great king. It cannot be otherwise.” The formality was left aside, the realistic view taken, and immediately Alexander cut the Gordian knot. It is a famous story. Sticking to formality, he would have been lost. This happened also in the case of Columbus. Someone challenged, can you make an egg stand on a nail? Columbus pushed it in, a portion broke and he stood it on the nail and said, “Yes, I have done so.” This is practical knowledge.

So, the real disciplic line provides practical knowledge in support of the divine love which is coming down. We must bow down our heads wherever we find support of that. We should not become formalists, but substantialists; not fashionists, not imitationists, but realistic thinkers. That should always be our temperament.

The Land of Gurus

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.31) it is stated:

na hy ekasmād guror jñānaṁ
su-sthiraṁ syāt su-puṣkalam

“One certainly cannot get complete knowledge from only one *guru*.” In the highest stage of devotion, we must see not only one *guru*; we must see that *guru* is everywhere. In the land of Krishna, all are *gurus*; our transformation should be towards that. Everything in the spiritual world, the entire environment is our *guru* and we are servants. To enter into *Vaikuṇṭha*, or *Goloka*, means that on all sides we must see *guru* and pay our respects. There is gradation of course, but all are *guru*.

There are different classes of *guru*. All *Vaiṣṇavas* are considered *gurus*. If the spiritual master gives even one letter to the disciple, what is contained there is infinite. The knowledge given by the spiritual master is infinite. To know and understand it fully, however, different sources are necessary.

In the highest position one can read devotion to Krishna from everywhere. If we can attain the proper vision, then everything will supply inspiration towards the performance of our duties. Whenever Mahāprabhu saw a forest, He saw it as Vṛndāvana. Whenever He saw a river, He saw the Yamunā. Whenever He saw a hill, He saw it as Govardhana hill. In that highest stage, wherever we cast our glance, it will remind us about our Lord. That is the duty of *guru*. They will teach us, they will press us to engage ourselves in service to Krishna. Wherever we cast our glance, whatever we come in contact with will only excite us: “Do your duty.” That is *guru*. Our *guru* is whoever gives us impetus for the service of Krishna, whoever helps us to look towards the center. So, because every atom in Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka will encourage us towards our duty, they are all our *gurus*. *Gurus* will be very amply available when we can raise ourselves to a higher level.

GURU—DISPELS DARKNESS

When we are in the lower stages of material conception, everything we see takes us away from the center by the out-carrying current. Whatever we see says, “Oh, come and enjoy me.” The invitation of enjoyment is found here in the lower level, and the inspiration of renunciation is also found in a particular stage.

The impersonalists who desire salvation say, “Whatever we find here is temporary. Reject it all!” But devotion is the positive side. From the side of devotion, everything will draw me towards the center, towards Krishna. And those who will help us in that way are our *gurus*. *Guru* means “one who dispels the darkness of both enjoyment and renunciation.”

Krishna tells us not to particularize in one point (*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijāniyān*). There are so many *śikṣā-gurus* in the line, and it is our good fortune to see more *gurus*, to come to the stage where we see *gurus* everywhere. Everywhere we shall try to draw the hints of the auspicious presence of Godhead. Krishna says, “One who can see Me everywhere, and everything in Me, is never lost to Me, nor I to him.”

yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra

sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.30)

We shall try to see Him in every medium. Then our position is safe. Not to see *guru* is a dangerous position. But if we can see *guru* everywhere, advising us to concentrate our energy towards the service of God, then we'll be safe. Of course, there is also a specific vision of *guru*, from whom I can get the maximum immediate help. But ultimately, Krishna says, “I am the *āchārya*: see Me in him.”

JEWEL WITHIN THE PALM

Who is *āchārya*? One who knows how to give due respect to his own *āchārya*. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has explained in one of his commentaries how both Rūpa and Sanātana Goswāmī have shown Govinda to the world. He says that if one has a jewel in his hand, he can show the jewel in various ways by holding it differently. Rūpa and Sanātana have each dealt in various ways with the jewel by the name of Govinda, who is always served by the Supreme Goddess of Fortune. They have both shown that high substance, Govinda, to the world, just as a jewel within their palms.

So not only in the supreme goal of life, but in everything, our knowledge depends on more than one source. We mainly learn from one place, but this is verified and corroborated by many sources; then it comes to be proper knowledge. In the *nyāya śāstra*, the codes of logic, the six processes of acquiring knowledge are mentioned: *viśaya*, the thesis; *saṁśaya*, the antithesis; *pūrva-pakṣa*, cross-examination; *mīmāṃsā*, synthesis; *siddhānta*, conclusion; and *saṁgatiḥ* verification from different sources. After these six stages, something may come in the name of truth in this world. Any knowledge presupposes consultation with different sources, although mainly we can get it from one source. In the beginning we inquire about the truth, not from one, but from many sources. Then we

concentrate to inquire from a particular higher source.

Our first connection with the truth comes from here and there in small quantities. First there is *ajñāta-sukṛti*, unknown pious activities; then *jñāta-sukṛti*, pious activities performed in knowledge; then *śraddhā*, faith; then *sādhū-saṅga*, the company with saints. In this way, we search for Śrī Krishna. We inquire here and there. Many saints help us to a certain extent. Ultimately we go to that spiritual master in whom we find the greatest possibility of learning the truth, and we surrender there.

Having accepted a spiritual master, one will find that his *guru* has so many disciples, and he will take from them also. His spiritual master will recommend some books for him. He will say, “Read *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” That will also help us to get so many *gurus*—through the books, where we will find many references and quotations from many *gurus*.

ALL ARE GURU

All of them have their contribution, and ultimately we must understand that we have to enter into the land of the *gurus*. Everyone should be respected as *guru* that gives impetus to me to search for Krishna, to serve Krishna. They will all help to carry me to the center. And this is the most fortunate position: to see everyone, everywhere as *guru*, to see that no one is our servant, and no one is indifferent to us. That is our

highest fortune: to attain that highest spiritual environment where everyone is our *guru*. Here, everyone is our servant; even our father and mother. We want to draw something from everyone in this world of exploitation. And by renunciation everything is eliminated; it is a deserted position. If we are to enter into the land of eternal prospect, then we must learn to see that all are our *guru* and we are servants.

They are all *gurus* and they are all our well-wishing guardians. In that plane, we shall imbibe help from everywhere. Their benediction and their grace will come from everywhere. They are all well-wishers, all guardians; they all guide us towards the highest attainment of our fortune. There cannot be any objection to that.

But still there is gradation, just as in the very existence of God there is gradation: *Vāsudeva*, *Viṣṇu*, *Nārāyaṇa*, *Dvārakeśa*, *Mathureśa*, *Svayam Bhagavān* Krishna—there are so many levels. Gradation is always there, according to our inner position. So, we must not be afraid.

Of course there is a time, when we are surrounded by an unfavorable environment, that the association of a real saint is very rare. In that stage, we may be warned not to mix with the *māyāvādīs*; Buddhists, *Śaṅkarites*, *nāgā-bābās*, and so many other groups of so-called *sādhus*, so that we may not run hither and thither only to find a *guru* to get any advice. To save us from such

unfavorable circumstances, to protect us, we are warned, “Don’t try to see *guru* everywhere.” In a particular stage, however, when we already have a taste for the real truth, we are taken to that plane where everyone is our *guru*, helping us advance towards our destination.

This caution is valuable in the beginning because there are so many cheaters who want to devour us. At that stage especially, to help us proceed towards the goal, we must exclusively concentrate on our *guru*, avoiding the Buddhists, *māyāvādīs*, atheists, and all those who wear red rags in the name of *sādhus*.

Still, in every *sampradāya*, or religious tradition, that trick has been used: “Only listen here. Stick to the words of your *guru*, the advice of your *guru*. Don’t try to mix hither and thither, to run here and there to get advice. So many teachers are the enemies of your *guru*. They are not preaching the real truth.” That warning is necessary in some stage. “Don’t try to see *guru* everywhere, because in this world so many men in the dress of *sādhus* are going on with their lower campaign.” This warning should come in that stage.

HURLED DOWN TO VAIKUṆṬHA

And in the lower stage also, to keep up and to develop our attention and devotion towards our *guru*, so much help should come from our senior godbrothers. They will help us understand the greatness of our *guru* in different

ways. They are also doing the work of *śikṣā-guru*. But when we enter in the kingdom of service, then, of course, everyone will help us. It is also said that we may have an inner attraction towards Vṛndāvana, and our inner awakening may be in the service of Krishna of Goloka, but if we mix with so many *sādhus* in Vaikuṇṭha, then we will be hurled down to Vaikuṇṭha.

In a certain stage we should beware of bad association, so in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ* (1.2.90) Rūpa Goswāmī has said:

sajātī-yāsāye snigdhe sādhanau saṅgaḥ svato vare

What sort of saintly persons shall we try to mix with earnestly? Those who are in our line, who have the same high spiritual aspirations as we do, and who hold a superior position. To associate with such saintly persons will help us the most to progress towards the ultimate goal.

There may be some obstacles, but if at heart we are sincere, the environment cannot deceive us, because God's inner help is there, cooperating with our sincere, inner need: *na hi kalyāṇa kṛt kaścit durgatim tāta gacchati*. What we want from our innermost hearts cannot but come true, because Krishna knows everything. There may be some obstacles but, by Krishna's help, they shall all be eliminated and our innermost aspiration will be crowned with success.

Servant of the Servant

Devotee: Today is my birthday. According to the almanac, it is the most inauspicious day of the year.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: No. This is the happiest and most fortunate day, because on this day you came to *guru* and Krishna. Many birthdays have already passed, but this birthday has brought you in connection with Krishna. So this day should be respected not only by your disciples, friends, and relatives; you should also have respect for this day. Krishna has blessed you.

Time is also described in the *Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* in a verse recorded by Rāmānanda Rāya: *ye kāle vā svapane dekhinu vāmśi-vadane*. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī says, “When in My trance, I came to have a divine vision of Krishna, two enemies suddenly appeared: ecstasy, and also a feeling which is corresponding to extreme love in complete self-surrender. In that state, I could not see Krishna very clearly. These two enemies disturbed Me. Ecstasy was My enemy, for it made Me self-forgetful, and My greed for His touch was another enemy. They did

not allow me to have a clear vision of Krishna so, My thirst for seeing Him was unquenched.

A DIVINE VISION OF KRISHNA

“If by good fortune I have another chance to have His *darśan*, divine vision, then what should I do? Avoiding Krishna, I shall instead try to worship time. I shall worship that moment, that minute, that second in which I have the divine vision of Krishna. I shall try to propitiate time, so that time itself may stay for some time. With garlands, sandalwood paste, and jewels, I shall try to worship time and not Krishna. If time stands still, being propitiated with My respectful behavior, then Krishna will remain. In this way, I shall try to fix the time, ‘You please stay here for some time. Krishna is showing Himself—time, you be eternal here.’ Otherwise, like lightning, Krishna comes and vanishes.”

We worship the time, the land, the place, the paraphernalia of Krishna. Anything in connection with Krishna is *cinmaya*, transcendental. The paraphernalia of Krishna is worthy of our worship. In fact, we shall have to honor Krishna’s paraphernalia even more than Krishna Himself. That is the clue to success. Krishna’s abode, His paraphernalia, and His devotees have a relationship with Krishna, *Krishna-sambandha*. They are Krishna’s devotees, and He is at their disposal. So, if we can propitiate them, they will take interest in us

and take us up into that realm. Otherwise we are helpless. In the *Padma Purāṇa*, it is said:

**ārāḍhanānām sarveṣām
viṣṇor ārāḍhanām param**

Once, Pārvatī-devī asked Lord Śiva, “Of all kinds of worship, whose worship is best?” Lord Śiva told her plainly, “The worship and devotional service of Lord Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, is the highest.” Pārvatī became a little mortified and disappointed, thinking, “But I am serving Śiva, so I hold a lower position.” Then the next line came:

**tasmāt parataram devi
tadīyānām samarcanam**

“But higher than the worship of Nārāyaṇa is worship of the devotees of Lord Nārāyaṇa. That is even greater than devotion to the Lord Himself.” Then Pārvatī smiled, thinking, “I am serving the devotee of the Lord. Śiva is a devotee: *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*. So, I am doing the best thing.”

This is also confirmed by Krishna, in the *Ādi Purāṇa*:

**ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha
na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās
te me bhaktatamā matāḥ**

“Those who worship Me directly are not real devotees; real devotees are those who are devoted to My devotees.” And this principle is true in our own experience. It is said, “If you love me, love my dog.” How intense one’s love for his master must be if he can love the master’s dog. And he loves the dog only because it is his master’s dog; not that he wants to take away the dog for himself. He loves it not with the idea of independent love for the dog, but because it is the master’s dog.

This is a higher test of our love than simply to love the master. This will test whether we are really lovers. Krishna is more pleased if He sees that His servant is being served. Why? Because His servant always serves Him, but he won’t take anything in return from Krishna. Krishna tries to give His devotees something, but they won’t take it. They have no aspiration to fulfill, no petition to enter in the course of their service. They want only cent-per-cent service. There is no possibility for Krishna to award any remuneration there; He can’t find the slightest hole in their devotional service through which some remuneration can be pushed. His devotees are wholesale servants, and nothing but.

Krishna tries His best to give something to His devotees in return for their service, but He fails. So, when Krishna sees that His desired aim of rewarding His servants is being done by someone else, He becomes indebted to that person thinking, “What I wanted to do

for My servant, he is doing. I wanted to do that, but failed; it was not accepted. But now someone else is doing the same thing I wanted to do.” Krishna is more favorable to the devotee who serves His servant. Then Krishna comes to serve him. That is the underlying purpose of His saying “Those who are devotees of my devotee, they are the real devotees of My heart.” So *bhakta-pūjā*, worship of the devotees, is the best kind of worship. This statement is confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in the *Vedas* and by Vṛndāvana Dās Ṭhākura in the *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*:

āmāra bhaktera-pūjā—āmā haite baṛa

Bhakta-pūjā, worship of the devotees, is advocated everywhere. At the same time we should try to understand who is a devotee. That is also to be ascertained. What is the sign of a real devotee?

Krishna says, “Those who say they are directly devoted to Me are not devotees proper; those who are devotees of My devotees are My real devotees.” We should try to follow the principle of this saying. This is not a perverted remark, but there is some genuine reality in it. If we look for its inner meaning, we will reach the conclusion our *guru mahārāj* has announced. He said, “We are *śuddha-śakta*, worshipers of the pure potency, not the mundane potency. We worship the potency who is wholesale dedicated to the potent without retaining

Her individual independence as a separate entity at all, who is cent-per-cent dependent on Krishna. Such a potency as this is very, very rarely to be conceived.

The direct approach to Krishna is improper. One must approach Him through the proper channel, through the devotees. That is the real approach. Therefore, Gauḍīya Maṭh eliminates Mirabhai and so many other apparently great devotees from the category of real devotees because, although they are mad in praise of Krishna, they have little regard for the real devotees of Krishna.

SPIRITUAL BUREAUCRACY

Krishna is not alone. A king is always present with his entourage, his great establishment. If one is really to approach the king, it must be done through the proper channel. Krishna is always surrounded by a big hierarchy, a big bureaucracy, and one cannot approach Krishna directly. He whose approach is real must select a proper channel. He cannot but praise those devotees and revere them for their magnanimity. It is only by their help that we can get the nearness of Krishna. Should we think it possible that one can take a jump across the whole system and approach the king? It is unreal.

Someone may be externally engaged in such a way that apparently he is a great devotee of Krishna, but if he eliminates the devotees, that devotion has not

taken real shape; it is a vague thing. He is far away from Krishna. Suppose we take as an example the highest peak in the Himalayas, Mount Everest. We can see Mount Everest from far off. But to approach Mount Everest, we must pass through so many closer mountain peaks. When our approach to Mount Everest is genuine, we cannot avoid discovering the name and characteristic of other peaks surrounding Mount Everest. But from far off we can see only Mount Everest and not the other peaks surrounding it. So, when we say that our connection is with Krishna alone, then we are far off. If we are to actually approach the king, we must approach him through his entourage. If we are actually to approach Everest, we cannot but have a connection with the nearer peaks surrounding that highest peak. So, if we are practically engaged in approaching Krishna, our approach will be realistic only when we are engaged with the many devotees in different departments of service to Krishna.

THE REAL TEST OF DEVOTION

I noted when we were preaching in South India, that whenever any gentleman who was a renowned devotee in a particular place approached our *guru mahārāj*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, he used to ask such men, “Under whose guidance does your devotional service to Krishna go

on?" Generally they used to say, "No, no, I am directly concerned with Lord Krishna, and Lord Rāma." Then, when they went away, we heard our *guru mahārāj* say, "He has no devotion." That person was dismissed as an imitation devotee. That is a vague kind of devotion. It has not taken any particular shape because he is ignoring the *āśraya*, the shelter-giving devotees in the positions surrounding the Lord. That is the great test of devotion.

Otherwise, without taking shelter of a devotee, if one shows great devotion, what is his motive? Generally they think, "We want liberation, not the service of Krishna. To earn liberation, we are accepting the devotion of Krishna." That is a lower form of worship—worldly worship—not real worship in the transcendental plane. That is not eternal, but temporary. Devotion to the Lord must not be subservient to any other aim of life. The desire for liberation is one criterion of an imitation devotee, and another criterion is the neglect of elevated devotees. When the Lord alone is being worshiped, that is also false. These two kinds of apparent devotional practices which are generally seen in the world may be dismissed. But the world does not get any news of all these things.

Devotee: So, the spiritual master is sometimes called the *āśraya-vigraha*, the personality of whom one must take shelter?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Just as in the beginning one sees the forest from a distance, but in the end he enters the inner circle of the forest, so from far off Krishna alone appears to be the *āśraya*, the giver of shelter, but when we approach Krishna more closely, we will find our shelter among his devotees. Our real shelter is found within His inner circle of servitors, not with Krishna directly.

We are of a vitiated nature, but there are those who under no circumstances deviate from Krishna. They are the eternal paraphernalia of the Lord. They are not like us; they are eternally connected with Krishna, but we are sometimes coming and going away; we are unreliable servitors. That is our position, so we cannot claim the same position as the absolute servitors of the Lord. Under their guidance we can be given the chance of service, so we must accept that position. We are recruits, we are not amongst the permanent servitors of Krishna. We must perform our service under a bona fide superior. The new followers must be gradually accommodated under some bona fide, permanent servitors in the land of Krishna.

Lives of the Saints

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In his *Chaitanya Śikṣāmṛta*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained that there are two types of devotees in the stage of *premārurukṣu*, the beginning stages of pure divine love. These two kinds of devotees are classified as *viviktānandī* and *goṣṭhyānandī*. The *goṣṭhyānandī*, by nature, love preaching. They live among the Vaiṣṇavas. But there is another group, the *viviktānandī*, who prefer a solitary position. There they chant the holy name of the Lord, or think about the Lord's pastimes (*līlā*). These two groups have both been mentioned as being situated on a high platform of devotional service, just before the stage of pure love of Godhead. When they have completely attained the highest stage, there is no qualitative difference between one and the other: they are one and the same. Whatever work Krishna wants us to do through them, they will perform in surrender to Him. Therefore it cannot be said that one who does not have the preaching tendency is a lower Vaiṣṇava.



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: nineteenth century founder of the Krishna consciousness movement.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has clearly grouped these two sections of devotees in the stage of those who are just about to occupy the highest plane. There are two groups: one of a preaching type, another of a solitary type, but according to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, we cannot make the distinction that one is higher and the other is lower. According to the desire of Krishna, they will do His will. The devotee whom Krishna wants to preach will do that work, but those who do not like to work in that way cannot be called unqualified. Those that like preaching will naturally speak in favor of the preaching camp. Because they are inspired by Krishna to do that service, they are successful. Krishna says, *ācāryam mām vijānīyān*: “It is My inspiration that can really deliver the fallen souls. Whomever Krishna will accept can understand Him—others cannot. (*yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas*). When Krishna delegates power sufficiently to a Vaiṣṇava, and wants to deliver many fallen souls through him, it takes place by His will. Svarūpa Dāmodara is not found to preach in any extensive way. Rāmānanda Rāya is also not found to preach in an extensive way to make disciples, going from door to door. On the other hand, Nityānanda Prabhu and others did. Krishna selects His instruments according to His own desire.

Kavirāja Goswāmī prays: *vande 'haṁ śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūṁ vaiṣṇavāṁś ca*. First he offers his respects to the group of spiritual masters who are

immediately in touch with the fallen souls. Then he says: *śrī rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ*: he offers his respects to the *śāstra-gurus*. Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana did not practically come in touch with the masses for preaching, but they gave scriptures for the preachers. The *śāstras*, the rules and regulations, and the ontological questions—all these things were given by Rūpa and Sanātana. Are they not *uttama-adhikārīs*? They did not come in direct touch with the people, but, as they were meant to by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, they laid the foundation for the preaching of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism*. They are the *śāstra-gurus*, the spiritual masters who give the revealed scriptures.

SPIRITUAL TOUCHSTONES

Krishnadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī first offers his respects to the recruiter *gurus*, then in a higher stage, to the *śāstra-gurus*, and then to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu who came with his associates and paraphernalia to inaugurate a new truth in the world. In five stages he offers his respects to his spiritual masters, and in the highest stages he offers his respects to the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Govinda, and all the *gopīs*, headed by Lalitā and Viśākhā: *śrī rādhā kṣṇa pādān saha-gaṇa lalitā śrī viśākhān vitāṁs ca*. So the *śāstra-gurus*, are doing some work as they have been inspired by Śrī Krishna. They are not coming in direct touch with the fallen souls. So, we cannot say that because they are not



Śrīla Gaura Kiṣora Dāsā Bābājī Mahārāj. His only disciple Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, said of him, “All spiritual knowledge is contained within a particle of the dust of his lotus feet.”

directly preaching to the fallen souls, they are not *sparsa-maṇi*, or touchstones. To say so would only be expressing our partiality to the preaching group.

We have to put some faith in the spiritual master. We must have faith that what he does is the activity of

the Supreme Lord working within him, that Krishna has come to preach about Himself through our spiritual master. We must try to see Krishna in *guru*, and *guru*'s actions as meant to deliver us. We are encouraged in this way.

Still, this is the relative view. From very strict impartial vision, we can classify the *guru* according to his realization as an intermediate devotee, (*madhyama-adhikārī*), or a topmost devotee (*uttama-adhikārī*). Amongst the servitors of Krishna, some are inclined towards Rādhārāṇī, some towards Candrāvalī and some are in the middle. Some devotees are more attracted to *Vraja-līlā*, some to *Gaura-līlā*, and some are in the middle. This is the nature of the Lord's pastimes. These differences will exist eternally.

GAURA-LĪLĀ HIGHER THAN KRISHNA-LĪLĀ

Some devotees have a preaching nature, whereas others may be of the secluded type, but that does not mean that all who are of the secluded nature are lower and all who are of the preaching nature are higher. We can't say that. They should be judged according to their surrender and acceptance of Krishna. Both *Gaura-līlā* and *Krishna-līlā* are the highest in Goloka, but if we are bold enough to assert that *Gaura-līlā* is higher than *Krishna-līlā* because of its magnanimous dealings, because it is distributing itself, then it should be given more

importance. In that consideration, it is superior to Krishna-*līlā*. And if we are to follow very strictly this point, then, of course, we may have to appreciate the preaching section of the Vaiṣṇavas, considering that they are doing the most beneficial work in the universe (*loka hitāya ca*).

“The preachers are more fortunate because through them Krishna is trying to release many fallen souls.” A relative form of vision may be seen in that way: “Gaura-*līlā* is higher than Krishna-*līlā*. Why? Because it is spacious and broad; it is available to everyone. And in Gaura-*līlā*, Krishna is distributing Himself to the fallen.” This is something in addition to Krishna-*līlā*. Then, whenever we find that good fortune has made someone an agent to raise up the fallen souls, we may have some greater appreciation for him. Some justification for considering the preachers to be more fortunate may come if we consider that Krishna is better when preaching than when playing within His own group.

Naturally we will have preference for the preachers who have brought Krishna consciousness here amongst us. Krishna has chosen certain devotees as His agents to preach about Him to the fallen souls. And that is more desirable for us, in our present position. So, if we develop our perspective in that line, of course we can say that fallen souls like us will give more stress to those who are the cause for our delivery. To think that some agents

are preferable to others because the symptom of magnanimity is more easily traceable in them is a relative view in the ultimate context of reality.

Although sometimes we may judge Vaiṣṇavas according to their different activities, we are not always correct, because a devotee is chosen for a particular service by the Lord, and whatever the Lord wants to do through him is done by His will. This is the underlying principle: it is His selection. Sometimes the selection comes to A, sometimes to B, and sometimes to C. We are all at the disposal of the Lord's infinite will, and according to His sweet will, according to how Krishna wants to utilize us, our activities will be successful. That is the absolute consideration. We cannot fail to connect success with the medium; there is also some value in that, but we must consider that Krishna is there in the background. We must always understand that the divine will, the highest will, is working through us. So we should not be extreme in judging a devotee according to external considerations.

BĀBĀJĪS AND PREACHERS

Gaura Kīśora Dās Bābājī Mahārāj did not preach, but his disciple, our spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, preached with great magnitude. Śrīla Lokanātha Goswāmī did not preach at all, but we find that the preaching of

his only disciple, Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, was most extensive. So a Vaiṣṇava should not be judged only by the amount of work that he shows outwardly. His success is at the disposal of the divine will. Krishna awards service to a particular person according to His own choice, and enables that person to carry out that service. There are many examples of this.

Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu preached throughout the length and breadth of Bengal with great force, but Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, although apparently not doing any tangible service in the *līlā* of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, is said to be Rādhārāṇī's *bhāva*, transcendental sentiments, incarnate. And Gadādhara Paṇḍita's affinity for Mahāprabhu exceeds that of all others.

So, we should not judge the position of a Vaiṣṇava by the magnitude of his external activities alone. Of course, we cannot ignore the service rendered by a devotee. That is a noble thing, that is a great thing, but ultimately the key is in the hand of the Lord, *ekala īśvara kṛṣṇa āra saba bhṛtya*.

KRISHNA IS DANCING

Krishna is at the root of everything, and whatever He wills is successful. Krishna wants to dance in a particular way with a particular servitor, and He successfully dances according to His own sweet will. Krishna is the wire-puller, the controller. The key is in

His hand. He controls both universal and specific dealings. By understanding this, we can save ourselves from *pratiṣṭhā*, or false prestige, the thirst after name and fame. If we are fully conscious of the fact that everything is in the Lord's hands, then we cannot feel any pride.

So to teach us that it is not very easy to recognize a real Vaiṣṇava by his external dress or manners alone, Gadādhara Paṇḍita apparently misunderstood the position of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, an exalted associate of the Lord.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita was taken by Mukunda Datta to see Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. Mukunda Datta came from the same village as Puṇḍarīka. Mukunda knew him, and so he asked Gadādhara Paṇḍita, "Would you like to see a real Vaiṣṇava?" Gadādhara Paṇḍita told him, "Yes, I am always eager to have the *darśan* of a real Vaiṣṇava." Then Gadādhara Paṇḍita followed Mukunda Datta to the quarters of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, and he was dumb-founded by what he saw. "What is this?" He thought. "Here is an aristocrat with curled, scented hairs, and a stylish, princely dress, smoking a pipe decorated with a golden thread and the whole room is filled with a sweet scent. He is a Vaiṣṇava?"

Mukunda Datta could understand Gadādhara's heart, and began to sing a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.2.23):

aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
 jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
 lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyāṁ
 kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema

“Oh, how amazing it is! The sister of Bakāsura (Pūtanā), desiring to kill Śrī Krishna, smeared poison on her breasts and forced Krishna to drink their milk. Even so, Lord Krishna accepted her as His mother, and so she reached the destination suitable for Krishna’s mother. Of whom should I take shelter but the most merciful Krishna?”

ROLLING IN ECSTASY

Upon hearing this, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi became very serious. His movements stopped, and then some shivering was apparent in his body. The whole atmosphere was changed. He began to throw his hands and feet left and right. He cast his smoking pipe aside and began to roll on his bed, tearing off his silk clothing and the silk sheets, and pulling out his beautifully curled and decorated hair. He began to cry, “Of whom should I take shelter but the most magnanimous Lord? Where should I take refuge without such a Lord?” With this on his lips, he was rolling on the floor in ecstasy.

After a long time, he gradually subsided, and Gadādhara thought to himself, “What did I think about

this great personality? He has so much love for Krishna within. Although externally he appears as an ordinary man, a slave of luxury, internally he is a great devotee. What intense love he has for Krishna!" Then he thought, "I have committed *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, an offense to a great devotee. How can I free myself? I thought ill of him. What is the remedy for that offense?" So, he thought to himself, and then told Mukunda, "I have committed an offense against this great *mahātmā*. How can I get out of that? I am thinking that generally those who come to this devotional line have to formally accept some preceptor, but I have not yet taken initiation from any Vaiṣṇava. If I take initiation from him, he will forgive me and my offenses. He won't take any offense from me if I surrender unto his holy feet. Then only can I get release from this crime. But I have to consult my master Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. So, he went to consult with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Sometime before this, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was seen calling the name of Puṇḍarīka and crying, "Puṇḍarīka, my father! Puṇḍarīka! Where are you?" In this way He was suddenly crying. Ordinary people could not understand. They began to ask, "Who is that Puṇḍarīka? For whom is the Lord wailing so much? Why is Nimai Paṇḍita wailing 'Puṇḍarīka! Puṇḍarīka!'"

Within a few days, Puṇḍarīka came from another village to his Navadvīpa house. Mukunda Datta was his

co-villager, so he knew Puṇḍarīka. When the devotees inquired, “Who is this Puṇḍarīka?” Mukunda Datta answered, “Puṇḍarīka has got a small estate; he is a well-to-do, married man.” So, Gadādhara Paṇḍita asked Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu about Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, saying, “I have committed an offense against the great Vaiṣṇava, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, so for my own spiritual good I feel the necessity to take initiation from him. But without consulting You, and getting Your consent, I can’t do anything. I put it before You. What should I do?”

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu welcomed the idea, saying, “Yes, this is very good. You must accept him as your *guru*.” It is said by authoritative sources that Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi was the father of Rādhārāṇī, that he was the incarnation of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāj. So, Gadādhara Paṇḍita took initiation from Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. In this way, we should not be extreme in judging a devotee only from his external activities.

The Line of Śrī Rupa

The impersonalist transcendentalists say that once we are independent of the flesh connection, the consciousness of the human soul is the highest thing and that no finer, higher thing can exist. But the scriptures say that the Supersoul, or *paramātmā*, is superior in existence to the individual soul, and that the Bhagavān conception, the personal conception of God, is even higher. This begins with the Vāsudeva conception: Krishna alone. The Nārāyaṇa conception is again higher, and the Krishna conception is the highest. And even in the Krishna conception there are divisions: Dvārakā, Mathurā, and Vṛndāvana. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* assert that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead: *Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*.

The Vṛndāvana conception of Krishna as the Supreme Entity is the highest because beauty is above all. Beauty is above all grandeur and power. Neither physical, mental, or intellectual power, nor any other

power, but beauty and love is the ultimate controlling power. Absolute good is absolute beauty, and that is the absolute controller. Mercy is above justice.

Generally, we cannot conceive that anything could be greater than justice; we think that justice must be the highest principle. But we are told that mercy is above justice. And who can show mercy? Not an ordinary person, but only a king. One who can compensate for the loss in justice can give mercy. And the highest court is able to compensate everything. Such a realm exists. And there, the Lord is engaged in pastimes with His paraphernalia of equal quality. There is such a law, a provision beyond the sense of justice in our puppy brain.

Uddhava is recognized as the principle devotee of the Lord, and his statement about mercy is found in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.2.23):

aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyaṁ
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema

He says, “Where else should I surrender? How can I surrender to anyone more merciful than Krishna, when I find that the demoness Pūtanā in the garb of maternal affection went to kill Krishna, but instead received such a wonderful benediction that she was given a higher post as one of Krishna’s mothers? My Lord is so

kind, so benevolent. Where else should I surrender? Her poisoned breast was put into the mouth of the infant child Krishna, and she was blessed with such a high and affectionate post! So, how can we measure His grace, His infinite mercy? His ways and mercy are beyond all expectations.” Rather than treating her with justice, we find just the opposite. He showed magnanimous behavior towards His greatest enemy. So, beyond justice there is mercy, and such a high degree of mercy, such a quality and intensity of mercy that it cannot be measured. Uddhava prays, “Where should I find such a standard of grace as this? I must fall flat at the divine feet of Lord Krishna. Why should any man of intelligence not run to fall flat at the feet of such a magnanimous personality as Krishna? His nature is that of the highest love.”

DEPARTMENT OF MERCY

We, the finite, should approach the infinite with this spirit: “If justice is applied, I have no hope. I omit that department. I have come only to seek my fortune in the department of mercy, where there is no calculation of right or wrong, of merit or demerit. I have come to that department, my Lord, because I do not know what is within me. When I analyze and study my own heart, I find that I am unknown to my own self. I am so helpless and wretched that I don’t even know my self.

How then should I venture to appeal to a department where something will be granted only after a calculation of my merits and demerits? I don't want that. I don't want any decision based on justice.

"I surrender. You may do whatever you like with me. I am the worst of sinners. What to do with me now is in your hands. You, Savior, I have come to you. If there is any possibility—save me. This is my open appeal, my one-sided appeal." This sort of self-abnegation will automatically cleanse our hearts. By this attitude of *śaraṇāgati*, or surrender, we invite the greatest attention from above. *Śaraṇāgati*, surrender, is the only way to be reinstated in our lost prospect."

At present, we are disconnected from the prospect of divine love which we cherish in the innermost quarter of our hearts. If we want to have that privilege very easily and very quickly, we must approach the Lord with plain speaking, and with a naked body and mind, with everything exposed. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ* (1.2.152) has written:

mat-tulyo nāsti pāpātma
nāparādhī ca kaścana
parihāre 'pi lajjā me
kiṁ bruve puruṣottama

"My Lord, I feel ashamed. How shall I offer You so many pure things like flowers? Generally, pure things are



Śrīla Gopāl Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, one of the Six Goswāmīs, wrote, “O Śrī Rādhe, You are queen of the heart of Govinda. Please engage me in Your service.”

offered to You, but what about me? I have come with the most filthy thing to offer to You. I feel ashamed. I have come to You, with only my shame, to beg for Your mercy. There is no parallel to my sinful life, criminal life. Everything that can be conceived of as bad is found in me. It is very difficult even to speak about the characteristics of my heinous sins and crimes. Still,

Your nature, existence, fame, and benevolence cannot but attract me. You can save me. You can purify me. Hoping against hope, I have come to You. And I have only one solace, that I am the real object of Your mercy. Your tendency is to purify the meanest. Those who are the most needy have some claim to Your mercy. I am the worst of the needy and the meanest of the mean. This is my only qualification, my only hope to attract Your attention and appeal to Your magnanimity.”

Rūpa Goswāmī says in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ* (1.2.151) that still there is some sort of subconscious element within him:

yuvatīnām yathā yūni
 yūnaṁ ca yuvatau yathā
 mano 'bhiramate tadvan
 mano bhiramataṁ tvayi

“Just as a young boy feels attraction for a young girl, I want that sort of attraction towards You. I want to be engrossed in You, forgetting all material paraphernalia.” And by sincere surrender, at once our progress begins. And the development of that kind of attraction takes us to the topmost rank. I want that intimate connection with You, my Lord. I am the neediest of the needy, but at the same time I have this ambition. I am so disgusted with the world outside that I want the most intense and comprehensive relationship with You. With this

attitude the surrendering process begins and rises step by step. I want that standard of divine love, of intimacy with You. I want to dive deep within You.

APPEARING AND DISAPPEARING SCRIPTURES

govinda-vallabhe rādhe
 prārthaye tvām ahaṁ sadā
 tvadīyam iti jñātu
 govindo mām tvayā saha

This prayer is found in the *Arcana Paddhati*, which comes from Gopal Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī's edition of the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. From there it has sprung through him. It is there in the *śāstra*, which is an eternal flow of a particular current of knowledge. Everything is eternal in Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka. Just as the sun comes up and goes down, appears and disappears, the thought is eternal and sometimes appears and disappears.

In this verse, *govinda-vallabhe rādhe*, there is a sudden turn. Krishna says to His devotee, "Oh, do you want an intimate relationship with Me? It is not to be found within My department. You will have to go to another department. Go then to the department of Rādhikā." Then at once the devotee's thought is transferred towards that side. All his energy is monopolized there. It is Her monopoly. "Your inner quest is not to be found within My department," Krishna says. "You'll have to go elsewhere and file a petition there."

And, with this inspiration, at once the devotee puts his petition to Rādhārāṇī. *Govinda-vallabhe rādhe*: “O, Śrī Rādhe, Your master and sustainer is Govinda. He is the Lord of Your heart.” Govinda means, “He who can give fulfilment to all our senses.” With our senses we can feel perception as well as knowledge. Govinda is the master who gives fulfilment to all our channels of perception. “Govinda is Your Lord. But just the opposite is also true. You are mistress of the heart of Govinda, the Supreme Master. Is it not? You are queen of the heart of Govinda. I have been directed to come to You with my petition. Please enlist my name in Your department and admit me as a servitor in Your group.”

FLOWING RIVER OF NECTAR

rādhe vṛndāvanādhīśe

karuṇāmṛta-vāhini

kṛpayā nija-pādābja

dāsyam mahyam pradiyatām

“O Rādhe, O Queen of Vṛndāvana, You are like a flowing river filled with the nectar of mercy. Please be kind upon me, and bestow upon me some small service at Your lotus feet.” You are the Queen of the whole management of ecstasy (*rasotsava*). *Rasa* means ecstasy. That is an unlimited flow of ecstasy. That is the speciality of Vṛndāvana: *ādi-rasa*, the original *rasa*, *mādhurya-rasa*, conjugal mellow. All *rasas* are branches

of that *rasa*, in its peculiar developing character. If analyzed, all *rasas* will be found within *mādhurya-rasa*. And *mādhurya-rasa* has been recognized as the highest mellow of devotion.

In his conversation with Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu rejected devotion contaminated with reason. He said, *eho bāhya, āge kaha āra*, “This is superficial; go further.” Mahāprabhu accepted that real *bhakti* begins from the stage of pure devotion, unmixed with reason. When Rāmānanda suggested *dāsyā-rasa* Mahāprabhu said, “This is good, but go further.” Then Rāmānanda mentioned *sakhyā-rasa*: Mahāprabhu said, “This is also good, but go further.” Then he came to *vātsalya-rasa*, the son-hood of Godhead. “This is very good,” Mahāprabhu said, “But go further.” Then he came to *mādhurya-rasa*, “Yes,” Mahāprabhu said, “this is best.” At that stage in the development of *rasa*, Vṛndāvana is the most suitable place.

Mādhurya-rasa is found most extensively in Vṛndāvana. So, it is said, *rādhe vṛndāvanādhiṣe*: “You are the Queen of that sort of *līlā* which is found in Vṛndāvana. There, the highest type of nectar is flowing. You are like a flowing river of nectar.”

DISTRIBUTING ECSTASY

The very nature of Krishna has been described as “Ecstasy Himself.” He is tasting the innate ecstasy of

Himself.” He knows His ecstasy and He feels it, but to distribute that innate ecstasy outside, a particular potency is indispensable, and that is known as *hlādinī*. The gist of *hlādinī-śakti*, or Krishna’s internal ecstasy potency, is Rādhikā, who is drawing the innermost *rasa*, the ecstasy of the highest order, extracting it from within and distributing it outside.”

So, it is said, *karuṇāmṛta-vāhini*: “Ecstasy mixed with magnanimity is flowing from that great fountain, and just as a river flowing from the mountains may carry with its current many valuable minerals to the outside world, the *hlādinī* potency carries *rasa* out from the abode of the *rasa-svarūpa*, Krishna Himself, ecstasy personified. The flow of that river of nectar carries ecstasy and *rasa*, the flow of sweetness and magnanimity, to distribute to others.

Then, another categorical change is effected within the mind of a devotee. In the meantime, in the course of his progress, he realizes, “Oh! Krishna is of secondary concern to me. I find my primary connection with You, Śrī Rādhē. I want Your direct service and not the direct service of Krishna.” This awakening of the heart, intimate adherence and obligation to the next nearest agent, develops in a surrendered soul. At this stage the devotee thinks, “I shall derive more benefit by giving my closest attention to the nearest agent, my *gurudeva*. I shall thrive thereby.” And it is his concern

to sanction the upper connections. Of course, our intentions should be pure and genuine, and the business of that agent is to give us a favorable, normal connection with the hierarchy of service.

All our attention should be concentrated in the service of our *guru*. This should be the idea. Our first tendency is to approach Krishna. In that stage, the first thing to understand is that we are helpless. Of course, all things must be sincere. First there is the stage of helplessness, then we want the shelter of Krishna, sweetness personified, then we are attracted to sweetness of a particular type, and to approach that department. There, we pray for the final closest connection or permanent membership as a servitor there. This has been taught by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī as the highest achievement of the living being.

Dāsa Goswāmī lived for sixteen years continuously in the association of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Svarūpa Dāmodara. After they disappeared from this world, Raghunātha Dāsa, disgusted with his future prospect, went to Vṛndāvana to finish his life. But when he met Rūpa and Sanātana there, he saw another vision, a dream of a new life. Then he found, “Although Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Svarūpa Dāmodara have disappeared from my physical eyes, they are living here in Rūpa and Sanātana, within their activities, in their preaching tendency.

Mahāprabhu is here, as living as anything.” He had to reject the idea of finishing his life, and with new vigor he began to serve in Vṛndāvana.

And Dāsa Goswāmī has given us the understanding of our highest aspiration. He says, “O, Rādhikā, I want Your service. If You are not satisfied with me, I do not want Krishna, nor His land, *Vraja*.” This is his prayer and he is admitted as the *prayojana-āchārya*, the *guru* who has shown us what is the highest aim of our life, *prayojana-tattva*, the ultimate destination. And this *śloka* proves his position as the giver of our destination.

AN OCEAN OF NECTAR

āśābharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
 kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmprataṁ hi
 tvaṁ cet kṛpāṁ mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiṁ me
 prānair vraje na ca varoru bakārināpi?

This *śloka* is a direct prayer to Rādhārāṇī. It expresses a particular type of hope which is so sweet and reassuring that it is compared with an unlimited ocean of nectar. He says, “With that hope I am somehow passing my days, flagging my days, dragging my life through these tedious times only for that hope. That hope is sustaining me, the nectarine ocean of hope is attracting me and sustaining me. Somehow I am dragging my days to my only safety.

“Otherwise, I have lost the direct association of

Mahāprabhu, Svarūpa Dāmodara and so many other great souls, and still I am living. Why? I have a particular ray of hope. And the prospect and quality of my hope is very great and high. But my patience has reached its end. I can't endure it any longer. I can't wait. I am finished; I can't wait anymore. At this moment if you do not show Your grace to me, I am finished. I shall lose the chance forever. I shall have no desire to continue my life. It will all be useless.

“Without Your grace, I can't stand to live another moment. And Vṛndāvana, which is even dearer to me than my life itself—I am disgusted with it. It is painful; it is always pinching me. What to speak of anything else, I am even disgusted with Krishna. It is shameful to utter such words, but I can have no love even for Krishna, until and unless You take me up within Your confidential camp of service. Such charm I have come for. I have seen the clue of such charm within the service of Your camp. Without that, everything is tasteless to me. And I can't maintain my existence even in Vṛndāvana. And even Krishna, what to speak of others, has no charm for me.” This is the prayer of Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī.

SERVICE OF RĀDHĀRĀṆĪ

So, *Rādhā-dāsyam*, the servitorship of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, is said to be the highest attainment of the

living being by the school established by Mahāprabhu. It is the gist of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is Krishna's own version. He says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.15):

na tathā me priyatama
 ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
 na ca saṅkarṣano na śrīr
 naivātmā ca yathā bhavān

“O, Uddhava! Neither Brahmā, nor Śiva, nor Baladeva, nor Lakṣmī, nor even My own self are as dear to Me as you are.” And that Uddhava glorifies Vṛndāvana, the *vraja-gopīs*, and Rādhārāṇī in this way in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.61):

āsā maho caraṇa-renu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ
 vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
 yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
 bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgām

“The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to renounce, and they have sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna, which are sought after even by the *Vedas*. O! Grant me the fortune to be born as a blade of grass in Vṛndāvana, so that I may take the dust of those great souls upon my head.”

THE SEARCH FOR ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ

Uddhava has shown us the high position of the *gopīs*. And between all the *gopīs* and Rādhārāṇī there is also a categorical difference. That was proved in *rāsa-līlā*. When Krishna and the *gopīs* openly displayed their transaction of heart, with that divine *rasa* flowing and inundating all directions, Rādhārāṇī was also there. She gave the highest contribution to the common *rasa-vilāsa* display of the *parakīya-mādhurya-rasa*, paramour mellow. Then, suddenly, dissatisfaction came in Rādhārāṇī's heart. She began to think, "Am I also counted in the common flow of *rasa*?" Some reaction came within Her mind and suddenly She left. After displaying Her peculiar type of superexcellent dancing and singing, introducing a flow of a new type there, suddenly She departed. She left the circle of the *rāsa* dance. And Krishna suddenly found, "Rādhārāṇī is not here. It is tasteless." The flow of *rasa* was there, but the gist, the quality, is a little down. He felt, "Why is it not so satisfactory to My inner heart?" He felt some ebb in the tide. And then by inspection He found that Rādhārāṇī was absent. Disappointed, He left the circle of the *rāsa* dance, and went to search after Her.

Although the *parakīya-mādhurya-rasa*, the highest mellow of conjugal love, Vṛndāvana, and the *gopīs* were all there, still there is a categorical difference in

quality between the other *gopīs* and the particular camp of Rādhārāṇī. In every way there is a categorical difference, both in quality and quantity. Jayadeva Goswāmī, in his *Gītā-govinda* (3.1) has described how Krishna left the circle of the *rāsa* dance:

**kaṁsārīrapi saṁsāra-vāsanā-baddha-śṛṅkhalām
rādhām ādhāya hṛdaye tatyāja vraja-sundarīḥ**

“Lord Krishna took Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī within His heart, for He wanted to dance with Her. In this way, He left the arena of the *rāsa* dance and the company of all the other beautiful damsels of Vraja.” Jayadeva has described in this way that Krishna left the circle of the *rāsa* dance, taking Rādhā within His heart. Krishna departed in search of Rādhārāṇī. Her position is so exalted. It is said, “Lord Krishna’s transcendental desires for loving exchanges could not be satisfied even in the midst of billions of *gopīs*. Thus He went searching after Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Just imagine how transcendently qualified She is!” (*śata-koṭi-gopīte nahe kāma-nirvāpaṇa*).

The other *gopīs* numbered so many, but in quality they were a little less. Their total combination could not satisfy Krishna. The qualitative difference was there. That is found.

The *rūpānuga-sampradāya*, the followers of the line of Śrī Rūpa, are those who have the unique taste of service in the camp of Rādhārāṇī. In that plane, there



Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, the *bhakti-rasāchārya*, giver of the *rāgānuga-śāstras*.

is no entrance of any mundane exploitation or renunciation, and not even legalized *śāstric* devotion. The highest kind of devotion is not controlled by any law. It is spontaneous and automatic. Sacrifice to the highest

degree is only possible in that camp. The highest kind of divine sentiment is distributed from the camp of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and that can never be compared with any attainment hitherto known even in the eternal factor of time and space.

Then, there is another stage for which we should be prepared. Why should we try to enter into the camp of Rādhārāṇī? Should we think that there, in that better atmosphere, we shall have Krishna's presence more confidentially? Should we think, "I will have contact with Krishna very intimately?" Should we want to enter into that camp? No—we want to avoid the connection of Krishna, but concentrate on the service of Rādhārāṇī. Why? What more benefit is possible there in the service of Rādhārāṇī? If we approach Krishna directly to give service to Him, we shall be losers. Rādhārāṇī's service to Krishna is of the highest order in every way. If we devote our energy to help Rādhārāṇī, our energy will be utilized in Her service. In this way She will serve Krishna with Her service more enhanced. Then the reciprocation will pass to us through Her as our reward. That will be devotion of the highest type, *mahābhāva*.

So, the general inclination of the *sakhīs*, the confidential maidservants of Rādhārāṇī, is not to come in direct connection with Krishna. They avoid that. But still, it is the benevolent and generous nature of Rādhārāṇī to connect them with Krishna on some plea

at some time or other. But their innate nature is always to avoid Krishna and concentrate on the service of Rādhārāṇī. This is confirmed in the *Chaitanya-char-itāmṛta* (Madhya 8.209):

**rādhāra svarūpa—kṛṣṇa-prema kalpalatā
sakhī-gaṇa haya tāra pallava-puṣpa-pātā**

“By nature, Śrimate Rādhārāṇī is just like a creeper of love of Godhead, and the *gopīs* are the twigs, flowers and leaves of that creeper.” Eternally the twigs, flowers and leaves sprout from the creeper of Śrimate Rādhārāṇī. She is the trunk, and they are the branches. This is their relationship.

Yet still, there is another, higher thing. We are known as *rūpānugas*, or the followers of Śrī Rūpa. Why? The service of Śrimate Rādhārāṇī eliminates everything, even Nārāyaṇa, to go to Krishna. There is the Krishna of Dvārakā, the Krishna of Mathurā, and the Krishna of Vṛndāvana. Then again in Vṛndāvana, where there is free mixing without hesitation in other camps, Rādhārāṇī’s camp is the highest. Eliminating all other camps, direct service to Rādhārāṇī is considered to be the highest. Still, there is another point.

ŚRĪLA RŪPA GOSWĀMĪ—ŚRĪ RŪPA MAÑJARĪ

Who is Rūpa? Rūpa Mañjarī. Generally the hierarchy in the spiritual world is eternal. New recruits can

occupy a particular rank of *mañjarī*, assistant, in *mādhurya rasa*. And the leader of the *mañjarīs* is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. What is the special feature in the *mañjarī* camp which is not found among the *sakhīs*, girlfriends of Krishna? First there is Rādhārāṇī, then the camp of Her right-hand personal attendant, Lalitā. Then, under Lalitā, there is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. What is the unique position of the followers of Śrī Rūpa? The new recruits can attain to that status. Now, the privilege of this *mañjarī* class we are to conceive most respectfully and attentively.

When Rādhā and Govinda are in secrecy, in a private place, the *sakhīs*, who are well-versed in the art of that kind of play because they are a little grown-up, do not like to approach there to disturb Their confidential mixing. If the more grown-up *sakhīs* enter there, both Rādhā and Govinda will feel shy. So their presence may create some disturbance. But the younger girls can enter there, and then Rādhā and Govinda have no hesitation in free mixing. So in that highest stage of the mixing of Rādhā-Govinda, the free play of Rādhā-Govinda, these *mañjarīs*, the younger girls, can have admission. But the grown-up *sakhīs* cannot have admission there.

New recruits may come up to the *mañjarī* class. And the *mañjarīs* have that sort of special advantage under the leadership of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. So, they get the best

advantage there, the most sacred type of pure service, which is not open even to the *sakhīs*, is open to the *mañjarīs*. That is found in Rādhārāṇī's camp. So, the position of the *rūpānugas*, the followers of Śrī Rūpa, is the most profitable position. That has been given out by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. That has been shown by Him, and that is fixed as the highest limit of our fortune in Krishna's concern. This is unexpectable, undesignable and beyond hope, but our prospect lies there in that subtle camp of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Rūpa Goswāmī.

So, the camp, the *sampradāya* of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is known as the *rūpānuga sampradāya*. There our fate and our fortune is located. Now we have to conduct ourself in such a way that naturally we can connect with that highest, purest spiritual conception from here. We must not allow ourselves to be satisfied with anything less than this highest ideal. That should be the highest goal of our life. And we must adjust our approach from our present position.

SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE

We are minors. Our father has left us with so many important documents about the properties we are to inherit. As minors, we should try to find out what properties belong to us in those documents. When we come of age, then we shall take possession of our rightful

inheritance. The *rāgānuga-śāstra*, the scriptures of spontaneous devotional love, has been given to us, left to us, by our *guru*, our guardian, our father. And as we grow more and more in the spiritual line, we will have to detect what is our prospect, what is our real wealth. We must recover that. We must have that. It is there in the document. It is ours. This is our position. We are minors, but we must become majors and demand the service meant for us by our guardians.

Devotee: We are putting in our claim with you. We think that in the absence of our father, the court has appointed a guardian, in order to keep us out of mischief and also to regulate our inheritance.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: This is not mine. This is the property of my *gurudeva*. And Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda gave you a clue. He has distributed the key widely, and given a clue: “With the key come and open the iron chest and find out what valuable ornaments and gems are within the chest.” Of course, no one will understand us when we say such things. Who will come to appreciate? They’ll say, “Oh, this is all the product of a disorganized brain. These people are trying to take electricity from the sky, leaving aside this concrete earth. They are like the *cātaka* bird.” Rūpa Goswāmī says that there is a class of bird known as *cātaka*, who never take a drop of water from the

earth. Their nature is that whenever they want a drop of water, they always cast their eyes to the clouds. “One drop of pure water!”—that is their cry. And so they wait, with their beaks towards the sky, towards the clouds. And they never use any water from the earth. So, our line is like that. The spirit of that bird is described in the following way by Rūpa Goswāmī:

A DROP OF YOUR GRACE

viracaya mayi daṇḍaṁ dīnabandho dayāṁ vā
 gatir iha na bhavattaḥ kācid anyā mamāsti
 nipatatu śata-koṭīr nirbharaṁ vā navāmbhas
 tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena

“You may punish me, O cloud, You may punish me. If a thunderbolt comes, I’ll be nowhere. You can throw down thunder or You can give me water. But how much can I drink with my small beak? A flood of rain may come. O, Lord of the poor, Lord of the helpless, You can give me a drop of Your devotion, or You may punish me like anything.”

He is always praying for water. The cloud may satisfy him immediately or, by sending a thunderbolt, it may finish him and efface him from the earth. The bird has no other alternative by nature. So he says, “My position is also like that bird. O Krishna, You may finish me, destroy me, efface me from the world, or You may save

me by only a drop of Your grace. I won't search after my satisfaction in the mud. That is finished. I will never go back to search my fortune in the earth, in the mundane. I am already fixed to do or die. Either I must receive a drop of Your grace, or You may finish me." In this way, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī prays that Krishna's mercy will descend like rain from the clouds, and not only quench his thirst, but bathe him, satisfy his utmost hankering, and fulfill his innermost necessity.

So, we should never search for our fortune in the mud. We must always look to the high sky and pray for *Śrī Guru* and His Grace.

All Glories to Śrī Guru and His Grace



Explanation of the Logo of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

by His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Om̐ is the very gist of Gāyatrī, and from that Om̐ comes merciful rays, like the rays of the sun. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, where *saṅkīrtan* is always going on, is inside the flute of Krishna, and from there comes this sound Om̐. Om̐, the meaning of Gāyatrī, is coming from the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, and from there the explanation of Gāyatrī has been given by Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj:

gāyatrī muraliṣṭa-kīrttana-dhanam̐ rādhā-padam̐ dhīmahī

The position of the *guru* is like water; the servitors of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh are like lotuses; and the

position of the worshipful Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Divine form of Rādhā-Krishna, *Om̐*. Everything is within *Om̐*. *Om̐* is coming from the flute of Krishna, and the meaning of *Om̐*, of *Gāyatrī*, is *gāyatrī muralīṣṭa-kīrttana-dhanam rādhā-padam dhīmahi*. Krishna's flute does not make any other sound except the glorification of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and that is the real meaning and gist of the *Gāyatrī-Mantram*.

The sun's merciful rays give nourishment to the lotus, but if there is no water—if one cannot take shelter of Śrī Guru and His grace—then the lotus will become burnt by the rays of the sun.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math Road, Kolerganj, P.O. Nabadwip, Dt. Nadia,
West Bengal Pin 741302, ☎: (03472) 40086 & 40752
E-mail: govindam@scsmath.com

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math's principal Web site:

<http://www.scsmath.com/>

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INDIA

Sree Chaitanya Saraswata

Krishnanushilana Sangha, Opp. Tank
3, 487 Dum Dum Park,
Calcutta 700 055, ☎: (033) 551-9175
e-mail: govindam@scsmath.com

Sree Chaitanya Saraswata

Krishnanushilana Sangha, Kaikhali,
Chiriamore, (by Calcutta airport), P.O.:
Airport, Calcutta Pin 700 052, W. B.
☎: (033) 573-5428

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram,

P.O. & Vill. Hapaniya, Dt. Burdwan,
W. B. ☎: (03453) 49384

Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda Seva Ashram,

Vill. Bamunpara, P.O. Khanpur,
Dist. Burdwan, W. B.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math,

Bidhava Ashram Rd., Gaur Batsahi,
Puri, Pin 752001, Orissa.

☎: (06752) 23413

Srila Sridhar Swami Seva Ashram, Dasbisa,

P.O. Govardhan, Dist. Mathura, U.P.
281502. ☎: (0565) 81 5495

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math & Mission,

96 Sevakunji, Vrindaban, Mathura,
U.P. 281121. ☎: (0565) 444024

U.K.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math,

466 Green Street, London E13 9DB.
☎: (0181) 552 3551 Fax: (0181) 548-
9205 e-mail: sbasagar@macline.co.uk

U.S.A.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram,

2900 Rodeo Gulch Rd., Soquel, CA 95073.
☎: (831) 462 4712 Fax: (831) 462-9472
e-mail: maharaj@lcd.com

Mahila Sakha, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat
Seva Ashram,

497 North 17th Street, San Jose, CA
95112. ☎: (408) 288 6360

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math,

883 Cooper Landing Rd., Suite 207,
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002.

☎: (609) 962 8888 Fax: (609) 962
0894 e-mail: swamigiri@ibm.net

10884 Andrews Drive, Allen Park, MI
48101. ☎: (313) 928 0620

e-mail: scchoksi@aol.com

Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda Mission,

RR1 Box 450-D, Crater Rd., Kula,
Maui, HI 96790. ☎ & Fax: (808) 878-
6821 e-mail: mdasa@krsna.cc

Sri Chaitanya Sanctuary, P.O. Box 1001,
Hilo, Hawaii, HI 96721

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MÉXICO

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva

Ashram de México, A.R.,
Calle 69-B No. 537, Fracc. Santa Isabel,
Kanasin, Yucatán, c.p. 97370.

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ramahari@sureste.com

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva

Ashram de México, A.R.,
Reforma No. 864, Sector Hidalgo,
Guadalajara,

Jalisco, c.p. 44280. ☎: (3) 826-96-13
e-mail: pitambar@foreigner.class.udg.mx

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Krishnanushilana
Sangha,

Alhelí 1628, Col Santa María, Cd.
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☎: (8) 360-41-42

e-mail: sajjan@nll1.telmex.net.mx

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva

Ashram de México, A.R.,
Mutualismo 720-C3,, Zona Centro,
Tijuana B.C., Baja California, c.p.

22000 ☎: (66) 85-76-63

e-mail: jaibalai@telnor.net

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva

Ashram de México, A.R.,
1ro. de Mayo N° 1057, (entre Iturbide y
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☎: (29) 31-30-24

e-mail: madhuchanda@infosel.net.mx

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva

Ashram de México, A.R.,
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México, D.F., c.p.01020 ☎: (5) 662-2334
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Ashram de México, A.R.,
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VENEZUELA

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Quinta El Templo, Entrada a playa Parguito,
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ECUADOR

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BRAZIL

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Teresópolis, Rio De Janeiro, CEP
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e-mail: akrishna@terenet.com.br

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math,
Rua Bacupa 321 - Jaragua, Belo
Horizonte, Minas Gerais, cep 31270.360

Srila Sridhar Govinda Sangha,
Rua Pedro Wayne, 78,
Porto Alegre, RS
CEP 91030 - 480 ☎: (051) 341 7847
e-mail: sridhar-govinda@usa.net

IRELAND

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sangha,
Bishopsland, Ballymore Eustace,
County Kildare. ☎: [+353] 458 64766

GERMANY

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram,
Willibald-Alexis-Str. 20. 10965,
Berlin.
☎ & Fax: [+49] (30) 6919 320
e-mail: amrita@compuserve.com

RUSSIA

Moscow
Avtozavodskaya Str. Apt.24A.
☎: (095) 275 0944
Pin 197229 St. Petersburg. p. Lahta
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NETHERLANDS

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Ashram,
Middachtenlaan 128,
1333 XV Almere, Buiten.
e-mail: gandiva@xs4all.nl

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math,
van Beuningenstraat 81,
1051XD Amsterdam, ☎: 020-6862099
e-mail: sander.hartog@tip.nl

DENMARK

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sangha,
Olivenvej, 49, 6000 Kolding.
☎ & Fax: (45) 7550 3253
e-mail: paragati@post1.tele.dk

HUNGARY

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SWITZERLAND

Sri Govinda Kripa Dhama,
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TURKEY

Govinda Math Yoga Centre,
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MAURITIUS

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Ashram,
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International,
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Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, P.O.Box
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AUSTRALIA

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Mohammed Ali,
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SINGAPORE

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His Divine Grace
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Editor: Swāmī B.V. Mahāyogī

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Consultants: Swāmī B.K. Giri, Sārvabhāvana Prabhu

Contributors: Yudhāmanyu Prabhu, Bhakta Dāsa,

Swāmī B.K. Bhāgawat, Brahmā Dāsa, Bṛṣakapi

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Prabāla Dāsī, Ananga-maṇjarī Dāsī, Kamalā Dāsī,

Sucitra Dāsī, Jīvana Dāsī, Dikṣāvati Dāsī

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(408) 464-9045 fax (408) 464-9046 email owen@ananta-press.com

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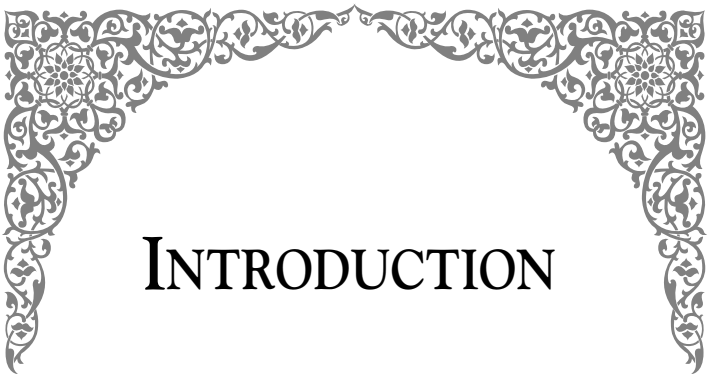
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Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī



INTRODUCTION

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu preached the full-fledged theistic conception given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mainly deals with the comparative study of theism and the ontology of Krishna consciousness. It surpasses all other Vedic literature, even the *Purāṇas*. The *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* and *Padma Purāṇa* represent the importance of devotion to Krishna through narration and history to some extent, but fall short of the philosophical and ontological standard set by the *Mahāpurāṇa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can satisfy all Vedantic scholars, for it represents Krishna consciousness in its fullest dignity. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* expounds as the highest attainment of theism not consciousness, intelligence, or ontology, but ecstasy, beauty, and harmony—*rasa*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *rasa* is all-important. It is a unique treatise, for it takes theism from the plane of intellectual jugglery to the domain of *rasa*.

I once began writing a book which was to be a summary study of the eighteen thousand verse *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura condensed the whole *Bhāgavata* principle into one thousand verses in his *Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā*. I had a mind to consolidate it even more, to represent it within three hundred verses. I began that book, but could not finish it.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a vast treatise in the Sanskrit language, filled with essential information, historical reference, and expositions on the major schools of philosophy. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, many minor points of history and geography are also mentioned which, although nonessential, support its conclusions. Whatever is unnecessary in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is eliminated when its meaning reaches its purest and most intensified glory in the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. So, if we are to consider the very gist of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we must study the life and precepts of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Just as the teachings of the great author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, were percolated by the realizations of Śukadeva Goswāmī, the essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has been percolated by the life and precepts of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Therefore, because the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu represent the gist of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

I would like to include here one of the verses I originally composed to introduce my summary study. It glorifies the position of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the most intimate associate of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Gadādhara Paṇḍita used to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Jagannātha Purī, at the Ṭoṭā-Gopīnātha temple. He would read, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the great devotees like Svarūpa Damodara and Rāmānanda Rāya were his audience:

nīlāmbhodhi-taṭe sadā sva-virahā-kṣepanvitaṁ bāndhavaṁ
 śrīmad-bhāgavatī kathā madirayā sañjīvayan bhāti yaḥ
 śrīmad-bhāgavataṁ sadā sva-nayanāśru-pāyanaiḥ pūjayan
 gosvāmi-prabaro gadādhara-vibhūr-bhūyāt mad-ekā-gatiḥ

“On the shore of the broad blue ocean, Gadādhara Paṇḍita used to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who was suffering from the great internal pain of separation from Himself (Krishna). Gadādhara Paṇḍita supplied the wine of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* to intoxicate his afflicted friend and give Him relief. As he read, tears would fall from his eyes like flower offerings onto the pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. May the pleasure of that brilliant personality, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the best of the Goswāmīs, be my only object in writing this book.”

The title of this book is *The Golden Volcano of Divine Love*. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu felt a great

pain of separation from Krishna which burned like fire and was expressed as the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. This is explained in *Prema Dhāma Deva Stotram* (54):

śrī-svarūpa-rāya-saṅga-gambhirāntya-līlanam
dvādaśābda-banhi-garba-vipralambha-śīlanam
rādhikāhirūḍha-bhāva-kānti-kṛṣṇa-kuñjaram
prema-dhāma-devam-eva-naumi-gaura-sundaram

“Diving deep into the reality of His own beauty and sweetness, Krishna stole the mood of Rādhārāṇī and, garbing Himself in Her brilliant luster, appeared as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. For the last twelve years of His manifest pastimes, He was deeply absorbed in the mood of union and separation and shared His heart’s inner feelings with His most confidential devotees. In the agony of separation from Krishna, volcanic eruptions of ecstasy flowed from His heart, and His teachings, known as *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, appeared from His lips like streams of golden lava. I fall at the feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the Golden Volcano of Divine Love.”

He was vomiting the fire of painful separation from Krishna in the form of the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. Therefore, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is compared to a golden volcano and the *Śikṣāṣṭakam* is compared to divine lava.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has taught us that separation is the highest principle in divinity. Just as the most intense conception of ecstasy is associa-

tion with Krishna, the most intense conception of pain is separation from Krishna. Yet the pain felt from Krishna's separation is far more intense than the ecstasy felt from His association. Śrīman Mahāprabhu says, "Can't you understand the painful situation you are in? Your senses must have all been destroyed? Otherwise you would have died from the pain of separation from Krishna. It is inconceivable. We belong to Him wholesale. He is all in all to us, but we can't see Him. We are forcibly separated from Him. How can we tolerate this?" And Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura once said, "I can't tolerate separation from Krishna any longer. I can go on for only three or four more days, and then I shall have to leave this body."

To love Krishna means that we shall have to "die to live." In the beginning divine love seems like lava, death, but really it is nectar, life. Many persons in this ordinary world are also frustrated in love. They sometimes go mad and commit suicide because they can't tolerate the pain. But the pain which comes with separation from Krishna, although compared with lava, is not injurious like lava. Kavirāja Goswāmī explains:

bahye viṣajvāla haya
bhitore ānandamāya,
kṛṣṇa premara adbhuta carite

"The wonderful characteristic of divine love of

Krishna is that although externally, it works like fiery lava, internally it is like sweet nectar that fills the heart with the greatest joy.”

Although he felt the greatest pain of separation from Krishna, still, within His heart, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu experienced the deepest ecstatic joy. The ecstatic symptoms manifested by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu have never been found in the history of the world or even expressed in any scripture. In Him, we find the highest conception of the Ultimate Reality. This is explained in my *Prema Dhāma Deva Stotram* (66):

ātma-siddha-sāva līlā-pūrṇa-saukhyā-lakṣaṇaṁ
svānubhāva-matta-nṛtya-kīrtanātma-vanṭanam
advayaika-lakṣya-pūrṇa-tattva-tat-parātparaṁ
prema-dhāma-devam-eva naumi gaura-sundaram

“This is the all-conquering conclusion. The highest conception of the Ultimate Reality must also be the highest form of *ananda*, ecstasy. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is Krishna, ecstasy Himself, tasting His own sweetness and dancing in ecstatic joy. His own Holy Name is the cause of His ecstasy, expressed as dancing, and the Holy Name is the effect of His ecstasy, expressed as chanting. The cause is the effect. The dynamo is creating ecstatic energy which makes Him dance, and His chanting distributes that ecstasy to others.”

In this way, by every word from His lotus mouth

and every gesture and movement of His beautiful golden figure, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu performs His ecstatic pastimes of divine love.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja is the foremost pure devotee and is the patriarch of the followers of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He is an intimate disciple and eternal associate of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, the *founder-ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Math who masterminded a spiritual revolution to inundate the world with Krishna consciousness. Noted for his wonderful ability to draw out the inner meaning of the scriptures, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja once composed a poem describing the ontological positions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the line of disciplic succession stemming from Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī was so pleased with his poem that he remarked, Śrīdhara Mahārāja is carrying the conception of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Now, I am satisfied that although I may go, at least one man will remain behind who can represent my conclusions.”

As he prepared to leave this mortal world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī expressed his desire to fix his consciousness on the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. He called his beloved disciple Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja to his bedside and requested him to sing the famous song of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, *Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada*. At that time, in what has been described as a ‘mystic transmission,’ he gave Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja entrance into the eternal entourage of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja’s vision, however, he was posted as the gatekeeper, the guardian of devotion (Bhakti Rakṣaka), to protect the storehouse of conclusive truths about the full-fledged theistic conception of Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful as presented in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and preached by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the line of disciplic succession that has descended from Him, known as the Śrī Chatanya Saraswata Sampradāya.



His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī

Śrīpāda Nityānanda Prabhu. By the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu we develop our attraction for Śrī Gaurāṅga. Nityānanda Prabhu helps us consolidate the foundation on which we can progress further. His mercy sometimes exceeds the mercy of Śrī Chatanya Mahāprabhu. He won't allow even those who want to avoid Krishna consciousness to escape. If someone says, "I don't want it," Nityānanda Prabhu won't allow it. He will say, "No! You must want it. I request you earnestly—take it! Use it and you will be able to feel the value of Krishna consciousness." He used to roam about here and there, rolling in the dust with tears in His eyes saying, "Take the name of Gaurāṅga and I will be sold to you."

By His mercy, even the most fallen souls can attain the supreme goal. He is the most generous-hearted aspect of *guru-tattva*, so we must bow down our head to Him, accept His holy feet, and surrender to Him.



Śrīpāda Nityānanda Prabhu

Śrī Chatanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Absolute Truth in its fullest and most dynamic expression. The influence of Rādhārāṇī over Krishna has transformed Him into a devotee, and He is searching Himself. Krishna—the personification of ecstasy and beauty —is mad in tasting His own internal nectar. His dancing indicates that he is full of ecstasy and His *saṅkīrtana* movement is the distribution of that ecstasy to others.

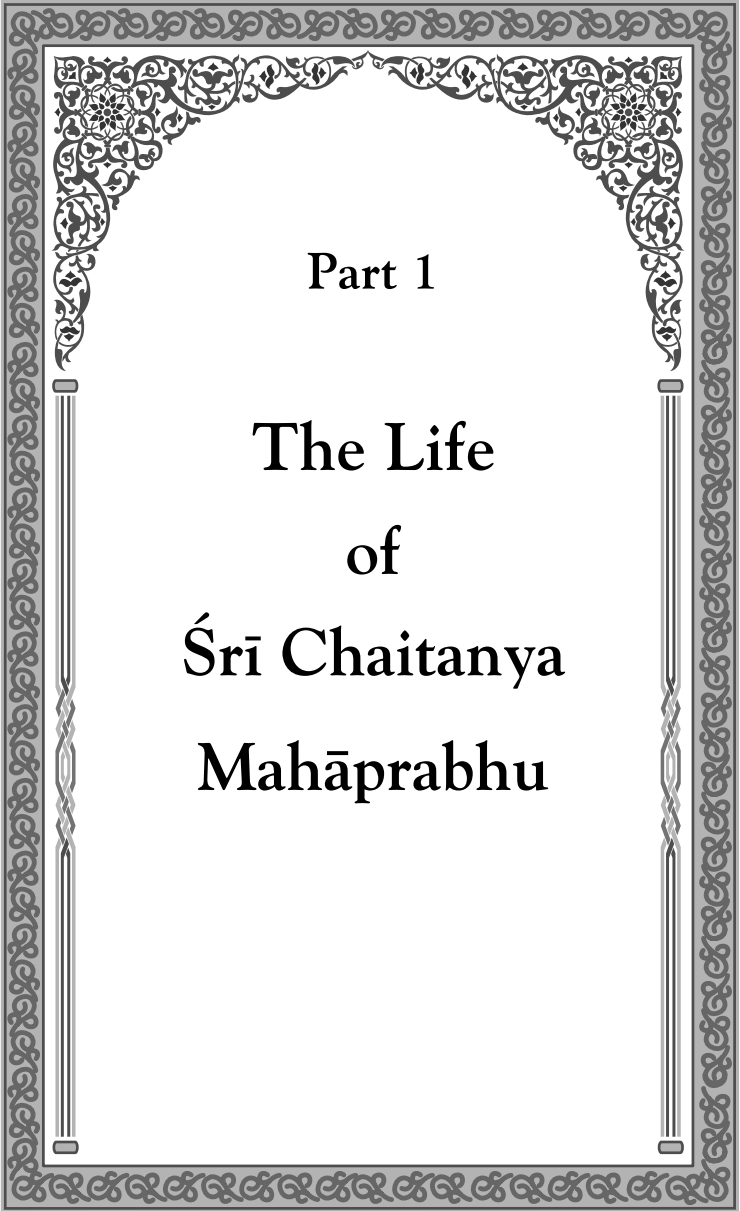


Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu

Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna. Śrī Krishna is the fountain-head of all pleasure, ecstasy Himself, and Srīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the embodiment of ecstatic love of Godhead. Rādhā and Krishna are one and the same, but They have assumed two forms. Thus They enjoy each other, tasting the mellows of divine love. The service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna in Vṇḍāvana can be attained only by unalloyed devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.



Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna



Part 1

The Life
of
Śrī Chaitanya
Mahāprabhu



THE GOLDEN AVATAR

In the teachings of Karabhājana Ṛṣi we find mention of the different incarnations for different ages (*yugāvatāras*). In Dvāpara-yuga, the *yugāvatāra* is mentioned as follows:

**dvāpare bhagavān śyāmaḥ
pīta-vāsā nijāyudhaḥ
śrīvatsādibhir aṅkaiś ca
lakṣaṇair upalakṣitaḥ**

“In Dvāpara-yuga, Lord Krishna appears with the color of a dark rain cloud, wearing lightning-colored garments. He is decorated with beautiful ornaments, His chest bears the mark of Śrīvatsa, and He carries His own weapons.”

After the description of the *yugāvatāra* of Dvāpara-yuga, Karabhājana Ṛṣi mentions the *kali-yugāvatāra*:

iti dvāpara urv-īśa
 stuvanti jagad-īśvaram
 nānā-tantra-vidhānena
 kalāv api tathā sṛṇu

He says, “O King, up to Dvāpara-yuga, I have finished describing the incarnations for different ages who come to remind the people of the most appropriate duty for their age. They come and tell us, ‘If you do this, you will get the greatest benefit.’ O King, after the Dvāpara age is finished, the age of Kali comes. The incarnation for the age of Kali has been mentioned in many places in the scriptures, and now I am just going to explain that information to you.” (S.B. 11.5.31)

Then he says:

kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣā 'kṛṣṇam
 sāṅgopāṅgāstra pārśadam
 yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
 yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ

In a suppressed way, this verse explains the advent of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The ordinary meaning of *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* is “of a black color.” But *tviṣā 'kṛṣṇam* means “His luster is not black.” “Accompanied by His associates, He is worshipped by the process of *saṅkīrtana*, the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna, and those of sharp intellect will perform this kind of worship.”

❀ GOLDEN GIFT OF THE GOLDEN LORD ❀

Jīva Goswāmī explains the meaning of this verse in his own parallel verse:

antaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ bahir gauram
 darśitāṅgādi-vaibhavam
 kalau saṅkīrtanādyaiḥ sma
 kṛṣṇa-caitanyam āśritāḥ

“I take shelter of Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is outwardly of a golden complexion, but is inwardly Krishna Himself. In this age of Kali, He displays His expansions while performing congregational chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna. That He is blackish within means that internally He is Krishna; that He is golden without means that He has accepted the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In the age of Kali, that Golden Lord is seen accompanied by His expansions, associates, and intimate devotees performing *saṅkīrtana*.”

Someone may argue that the meaning of *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* is that His color is black and His luster is also black. But how is this possible? That would be redundant. The conjunction between the words *tvisā* and *akṛṣṇam* mean that His color is *kṛṣṇa*, black, but His luster is *akṛṣṇa*: not black. Then, someone might say, “Not black does not necessarily mean golden. Why should it mean golden?” The answer is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Once Vasudeva sent the astrologer-priest Garga Ṛṣi to Vṛndāvana to perform the name-giving ceremony for Krishna. At that time, Garga Ṛṣi came to the house of Nanda Mahārāja and explained that Vasudeva had sent him. He said, “Your child is now a little grown up and the name-giving ceremony must be performed.” At that time, he spoke the following verse:

āsan varṇās trayo hy asya
gr̥hṇato 'nuyugaṁ tanūḥ
śuklo raktas tathā pīta
idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḥ

“In past incarnations, this boy has appeared with different complexions: white, red, and gold, according to the particular age in which He appeared. Now He has assumed this blackish color.”

He said, “Krishna comes in a white color in Satya-yuga, red in Treta-yuga, and He also comes with a golden complexion. Now in this Dvāpara-yuga He has come in a black color.” So the reference to the golden color (*pīta*) is found here, because only that color has been left for this present age of Kali. There is another reference to this golden color in the Upanishads: *yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam*: “Krishna, the Supreme Brahman, appears in a golden form.” *Rukma-varṇam* means golden. And here also, non-black means golden.

Krishna wanted to come as the incarnation for this age of Kali, as well as to fulfill His promise in

Vṛndāvana: “I shall chant the glory of the *gopīs*, especially of Rādhārāṇī. I shall chant Her name, Her glory, and roll in the dust of the earth!” But Rādhārāṇī said, “I won’t allow Your body to roll in the dust of this earth. I shall cover You with my luster.” Both the mood as well as the luster of Rādhārāṇī capture Krishna when He comes here in Kali-yuga. And this does not occur in all Kali-yugas, but only in a special Kali-yuga.

In all the days of Brahmā, in every *yuga*, the *yugāvatāra* comes, but Krishna appears only once in a day of Brahmā, or once every 4.3 billion years. At that time, the Original Personality of Godhead (*svayaṁ bhagavān*) appears along with His abodes, Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa. And Krishna and Mahāprabhu do not come here alone, but They come with Their paraphernalia and suitable companions.

❀ SWEETNESS TASTING ITSELF ❀

And in this age of Kali, He performs a double function: He preaches *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and more importantly, He assumes the mood of Rādhārāṇī to taste His own sweetness, *rasa*. He is *rasa* Himself. Krishna thinks, “What is the intensity of the finest *rasa* in Me? I would like to taste that.” But only devotees can taste that, so He took the position of Rādhārāṇī to taste Himself as Krishna, the central,

final and perfect abode of *rasa*. Only Rādhārāṇī can taste the maximum *rasa*, so He has to take Her nature, Her mood and temperament to taste His own intrinsic ecstasy. For that reason He descended. His first duty was to spread *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and the secondary, internal, private duty was to perform *svabhajana-vibhajana*, to taste His own intrinsic ecstasy in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. In Purī, with Rāmānanda Rāya, Svarūpa Dāmodara, and other intimate associates, He tasted that great ocean of union in separation continuously for twelve years. In His last twelve years, He passed His time only in the process of tasting that mellow.

That incarnation is generally worshipped by *saṅkīrtana*. Without *saṅkīrtana*, Gaurāṅga and His paraphernalia cannot be worshipped. He is the proponent of *saṅkīrtana*, He loves *saṅkīrtana*, and He gets satisfaction only by *saṅkīrtana*. Only those who have sufficient merit (*sukṛtivān*), will worship Him by this process. The common mob cannot join this campaign. Those who have good guidance internally, good fortune, can catch the very gist of truth and engage in this process of *nama-saṅkīrtana*.

❀ LOVE IS SUPREME ❀

A rubbish-brain cannot detect what is right or wrong, or how precious this is. He cannot understand

or follow this higher line of thought. A man should be judged by his ideal, his aspiration for higher things. If the ideal is great, the man is great. What should be the highest ideal? Love. Love is the supreme thing. It is the most rare and precious thing. Divine love and beauty is the highest thing ever known to the world, and those who can catch this are really possessed of good intellect (*su-medhasaḥ*). And one who possesses this highest ideal should be considered a man of higher order. He alone can understand and practice *saṅkīrtana*. He alone can take to this path, this process of satisfying the Supreme Being by chanting the Holy Name of the Lord.

✽ THE HIDDEN INCARNATION ✽

This is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as in the *Mahābhārata* and other Vedic scriptures. Karabhājana Ṛṣi, the last of the nine great yogis, has given us a clue to understand Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as the special incarnation for the age. He has mentioned the incarnation for this age of Kali in a mystic way. We may think, why has this not been described very plainly? So many *avatāras* are clearly described, but when *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as the incarnation for the age of Kali, it is discussed in a mystic way. The answer is found in the teachings of Prahlāda Mahārāja, who

says, “O Lord, one of Your names is Triyuga, meaning one who incarnates in three ages—Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara—but not in Kali. And why? Because the incarnation for the age of Kali is in disguise (*chhannah kalau yad abhavas tri-yugo 'tha sa tvam*).” Here we find the key to this mystic way of representing Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to the fortunate and intelligent circle (*su-medhasaḥ*), that ordinary people may not have any clue.

**dhyeyaṁ sadā paribhava-ghnam abhīṣṭa-dohaṁ
tīrthāspadaṁ śiva-viriñci-nutaṁ śaraṇyam
bhṛtyārṭi-haṁ praṇata-pāla bhavābdhi-potaṁ
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam**

“O Mahāprabhu, Your lotus feet are the highest object of meditation, for they not only destroy the pain of material existence, but they bestow the greatest fulfillment to all souls who take shelter beneath them. Your lotus feet even purify all saintly persons and holy places. Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā aspire to take shelter beneath Your lotus feet. O Mahāprabhu, You give shelter to all who simply bow down before You. You relieve all the miseries of Your surrendered servants. In the grand ship of Your lotus feet, we can cross over this ocean of material miseries. O Mahāprabhu, I bow down before Your lotus feet.”

After mentioning the incarnation of Godhead for the age of Kali, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* suddenly begins



The Pañca-tattva, Śrī Krishna Chaitanya, Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and Śrīvāsa Thākura

this song in praise of that great *yugāvatāra*, Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. With a grand voice the *Bhāgavatam* has come to sing the praise of that

guide for Kali-yuga. This follows the verse which hints at the *avatāra* of Kali-yuga. *Kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ* means one who is always describing Krishna, who always has on his lips the words “Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.” Another meaning of this expression is “One who is Krishna Himself, but whose luster is not black.” If we look deeply, we shall find that hidden beneath His golden luster is the blackish body of Krishna. With His own paraphernalia He has come to this plane, and service to Him is performed only by *saṅkīrtana*, divine sound in mass prayer. By that symptom we can recognize His divine position.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is a hidden incarnation; He comes in disguise. Such an *avatāra* is worshipped by the divinely intellectual. In this way, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* first describes that uncommon, extraordinary personality, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, in a mystic way and then proclaims His nobility and greatness.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains, “That same personality who came as Rāmacandra and Krishna has again appeared. He has come to direct you to the real fulfillment of life. He is drawing the sweetest nectar from above for the sake of everyone. Only meditate on Him and all your troubles will be finished. He is the agent purifying all the holy places of pilgrimage and saintly persons by His touch, by His *saṅkīrtana*, by His drawing the highest things down from the highest plane. And even Brahmā and Śiva, puzzled by His

noble gift, will begin to praise Him. They will eagerly aspire to take shelter under His lotus feet in surrender. The pains of all who come to serve Him will be removed, and their inner necessities will be fulfilled. And He will take care of those who take shelter of Him; they will be given protection as well as everything they may need. In this world where mortality rules, where we are continually experiencing the undesirable changes of repeated birth and death, in this area where no one wants to live, a great ship will come for us and take us within and carry us away from this unpleasant position. Let us fall at the feet of that great personality who comes to give the highest nectar.”

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* continues:

tyaktvā su-dustya-ja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm
 dharmiṣṭha ārya-vacasā yad agād araṇyam
 mājyā-mṛgam dayitayepsitam anvadhāvad
 vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam

“O Supreme Lord, You gave up the goddess of fortune and Her great opulence, which is most difficult to abandon, and is sought after even by the gods. In order to perfectly establish the principles of religion, You left for the forest to honor the *brāhmaṇa*’s curse. To deliver the sinful souls who chase illusory pleasures, You search after them and award them Your devotional service. At the same time, You are engaged in search of Yourself, in search for

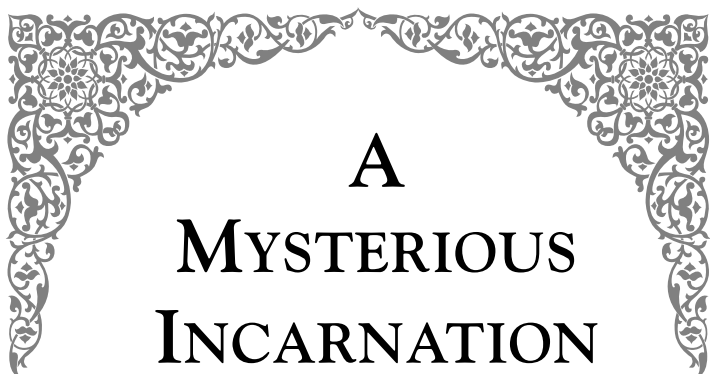
Śrī Krishna: reality the beautiful.”

Śrīla Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura has given his explanation that although it seems that this verse applies to Lord Rāmacandra, who left His kingdom and went with Sītādevī to the forest to discharge the duties designed by his father, this also applies to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura has drawn out the internal meaning of this verse and applied it in the case of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. *Tyaktvā su-dustyaja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm* means He left imperial prosperity which is hard to abandon. Generally we find this in the case of Lord Rāmacandra, but Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura says that *surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm* means the valuable devotional company of Viṣṇupriyā-devī. That may not appear to be a materially big thing, but the dedication that Viṣṇupriyā has shown in Her heart for Śrīman Mahāprabhu is greater than any imperial standard. And He had to leave that behind. Such a standard of sacrifice and service is never found even among the great society of the gods. For the sake of the public welfare, He had to ignore the serving, loving attitude of Viṣṇupriyā.

❀ THE CURSE OF A BRĀHMAṆA ❀

This verse mentions the curse of a *brāhmaṇa*. That *brāhmaṇa* told Śrīman Mahāprabhu, “I want to

participate in your nocturnal *kīrtanas* in which You taste *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, but the doors are closed.” When Śrīman Mahāprabhu used to perform *kīrtana* and taste the *vraja-līlā* of Krishna, he did so behind closed doors in deep night. But this *brāhmaṇa* thought himself a very qualified, religious person because he lived by only drinking milk and nothing else, so he said, “I must have entrance into that *kīrtana*. I do not eat anything but milk; why should I not be allowed?” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu replied, “Milk drinking is no qualification for entering into Krishna consciousness.” The *brāhmaṇa* said, “Then I curse You to lose your family life!” “All right,” Mahāprabhu said and accepted the curse. And later He took *sannyāsa* and chased after those who were misguided by Māyādevī in order to save them. At the same time, although He is Krishna, He accepted the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. For these two reasons, He left his apparently worldly life: He acted for the welfare of the public and, after finishing that work, spent the next twelve years tasting the very inner aspiration of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and searching after His own inner sweetness. This was what He came to show to the world. In this mystic way, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has proclaimed the magnanimous appearance of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.



A MYSTERIOUS INCARNATION

After Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, He went to live in Jagannātha Purī. There, he converted the greatest scholar of the day, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya. After meeting Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the great scholar Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya questioned his brother-in-law Gopīnātha Āchārya about the *avatāra* of the present age Kali-yuga. Gopīnātha had been living in Navadvīpa, and he was a follower of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. In his own way, Sārvabhauma began to praise Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as a beautiful man and a great scholar.

“I have great attraction for Him,” he said, “But I don’t think it wise that at such a young age He has taken *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. He has such a long life ahead of Him; how will He be able to keep up the dignity of the life of a *sannyāsi*, a life of renunciation? I can’t sit by and do nothing. I like this boy very much. I shall have to help Him as a

guardian, so that He may not lose His prestige by giving up *sannyāsa*, attracted by the fascination of worldly pleasures.”

Gopīnātha could not tolerate all this guardian-like advice. He told Sārvabhauma, “This young man, who is very beautiful, charming, and scholarly, has attracted your attention, and you want to become His guardian to keep up the purity of His life. Do you think you will have to help Him? What do you mean by saying all these things? Don’t you know that He is really the incarnation of Godhead for this age? He is the *avatāra* for Kali-yuga; He inaugurated the *yuga-dharma* of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* in Navadvīpa, and His appearance is mentioned in the scriptures.” Sārvabhauma replied, “No, no! You are not talking to an ordinary person. Don’t think that you can say whatever you like and I will accept it. I am a hard nut to crack. What are you saying? There is no *kali-yuga-avatāra*. One of the names of Viṣṇu mentioned in the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* in the *Mahābhārata* is Triyuga, ‘The Lord who appears only in three ages.’ That means that the Lord has no incarnation in Kali-yuga except Kalki, who is a past-time incarnation and not the *yugāvatāra*, the incarnation for the age.” Gopīnātha replied, “You think yourself so learned, but although you have studied all the scriptures, and are so proud of your learning, the *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are the

main scriptures of the followers of eternal religious principles, and still you have no particular knowledge about that.”

❀ “NOT MAN—BUT GOD” ❀

At that time, Gopīnātha Āchārya quoted passages from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Mahābhārata* (*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tvisā 'kṛṣṇam, suvarṇa-varṇa hemāṅgo*). In this way, he pressed his point: “Here we find the direct avatāra for the age of Kali. He has appeared to spread *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. He is not a man, but the Supreme Lord, Krishna Himself.” Sārvabhauma said, “No, no. Go away. Mind your own business. Don’t think that you can instruct me.” And in this way they argued.

Later, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya told Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “I would like to teach You Vedānta philosophy, so that You can keep up the standard of Your renunciation. I will teach You that this world is nothing, so that You never feel any charm to again enter into mundane life.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Yes, you are my guardian. Whatever you say, I must do. I will come and learn Vedānta philosophy from you at whatever time is suitable for you.

Then Gopīnātha Āchārya told Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “Sārvabhauma is saying this because

he doesn't know Your real identity." Śrīman Mahāprabhu replied, "Why are you speaking against him? He is My guardian. He was My father's class-mate, so he has great affection for Me. It is out of affection that he poses himself as My guardian and looks after My welfare. I don't find any fault in that."

❀ SEVEN DAYS OF SILENCE ❀

In a few days, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began to hear Vedānta from Sarvabhavana Bhaṭṭāchārya, and as Sārvabhauma would speak, He would remain silent like a good boy, as if He were hearing with a submissive attitude. But after he had been teaching Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu for seven days, Sārvabhauma had some doubt in his mind. He thought, "What is the matter" I am such a great scholar in Vedānta and logic, and I am trying my best with all my intelligence to put before Him the inner meaning of Vedānta, but I draw no response from Him. He is only quietly attending my discourse as if He is deaf and dumb. And I can't say that He does not understand me, for He has a sharp intellect. I am sure of this, but still He gives no appreciation, no response whatsoever. He raises no question and gives no indication whether He understands or not—nothing of the kind. Then

what am I doing?” He could not keep himself any longer. He put the question straight to the Lord: “For more than seven days I have been explaining the inner meaning of Vedānta to You. Many *san-nyāsis* come to me to learn about Vedānta, but You don’t have any question about my talk, my explanation? You maintain a strange and wonderful silence. What is the reason?

✽ ATHEISTIC SCHOLARSHIP ✽

Then, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu revealed Himself. He said, “Sārvabhauma, what you explain is on the basis of Śaṅkara’s philosophy, but I heard that it was by the order of the Lord that Śaṅkarāchārya concealed the real purpose of Vedānta. Its author, Vyāsadeva, is a completely theistic person, and he has prepared this Vedānta, but what you say is all based on atheistic scholarship.”

Sārvabhauma was a very intelligent man. He realized, “In a very gentle way, He wants to tell me that what I am explaining is all bogus. I am laboring diligently to explain Vedānta to my utmost capacity for the last seven days, and now He shows His true colors and says that what I am explaining is all false. What is He saying?” Still, in a gentlemanly way, Sārvabhauma with some hesitation asked Śrīman Mahāprabhu, “You say that what I have been explaining for the last

seven days is all unsubstantial and unreal. Then can You give the proper meaning? If this is all improper and false, then what is the real meaning of Vedānta?" Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu humbly replied, "If you order Me to explain Vedānta, I will try. The *sūtras* or codes of Vedānta are lustrous in themselves. They are self-evident. The proper reading of the *sutras* leads towards Parabrahman, Krishna." Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began with this introduction. He said that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the real explanation and commentary on Vedānta. It is mentioned in the *Garuda Purāṇa*:

artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrānām
bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau
vedārtha-paribṛṁhitah

"*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* represents the real purport of *Vedānta-sūtra*. And although it is very difficult to draw out the real purpose of the one-hundred-thousand-verse epic *Mahābhārata*, the great history of the world, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has come to give its real meaning. The mother of all Vedic knowledge is the *Gāyatri mantra*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives the gist of *Gāyatri* in a very full-fledged way. And the supplementary truths of the Vedas are also found within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." Therefore, Vedānta must be explained in the line of the truth which has been

expressed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Only then can the real meaning be understood.

✽ THE ASPIRATION OF LIBERATED SOULS ✽

When Śrīman Mahāprabhu mentioned *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Sārvabhauma, being a learned paṇḍita could not deny its validity. He said, “Yes, I also like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And I especially like this one very beautiful verse. At that time, Sārvabhauma, to regain lost prestige, began to explain the *ātmārāma* verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

ātmārāmās ca munayo
nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim
ittham-bhūta guṇo hariḥ

“Even the liberated souls fully satisfied in the self are irresistibly attracted by the superexcellent qualities of Krishna and surrender to Him with unalloyed devotion.”

Sārvabhauma explained this verse in nine different ways, while Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, as before, sat silently hearing. After he had finished his explanation, Sārvabhauma thought that he had regained his position to a certain extent. Still, as a courtesy, he asked Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “Are You satisfied with this explanation? If You can give any more light

to this verse, I will listen to that.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu told him, “If you order me, I may try.” Then He gave eighteen different types of explanations of that verse, leaving aside the nine already given by Sārvabhauma.

At that time, while listening to the explanation of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Sārvabhauma gradually saw that he was losing his position. His pride was finished. Astounded, he thought, “This youth, this young boy, is not an ordinary person. No ordinary intellect can refute my arguments. Leaving aside all of my attempts to explain this verse, He gave eighteen wonderful explanations of this particular verse. What is this? Such consistent, irresistible, devotional, and beautiful explanations are coming, superseding all those that with great energy and effort I explained. No human being can surpass my explanations. No human intellect can cross mine. This is a different sort of explanation. It is all-encompassing. But it is coming from this young boy? What is this?”

✽ MYSTIC REVELATION ✽

Gradually, he lost his faith in himself and became baffled. He recalled how Gopīnātha Āchārya had said that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was not a human being and thought, “It is not possible for a human to explain things in this way—it is something supernatural”. Then



Mystic Revelation. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu reveals Himself as Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa to Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu revealed to Sārvabhauma His spiritual position as Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa combined. In a trance, Sārvabhauma saw all these things and fell at the Lord's feet, and almost completely lost consciousness.

When he arose from his trance, he found that boy still sitting there like a student with great humility. Then Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu asked him, “May I go for today?” Sārvabhauma said, “Yes, you may go now.” The Lord went away, and Sārvabhauma remained there. After some time, he recovered, and began to think, “What have I seen? Four-handed Nārāyaṇa, then Krishna playing the flute! I was not defeated by a man—that is my solace. Sārvabhauma become a changed man and composed two verses:

vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga-
śikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dhārī
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye

“I surrender unto the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is an ocean of mercy. He is the Original Personality of Godhead, Krishna, and has descended to teach us the real meaning of knowledge, renunciation, and devotion to Him.”

kālān naṣṭaṁ bhakti-yogaṁ nijaṁ yaḥ
prāduṣkartuṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmā
āvīrbhūtas tasya pādāravinde
gāḍham gāḍham liyatāṁ citta-bhṛṅgaḥ

“Let the honeybee of my mind dive deep into the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who

is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna Himself. He has appeared to revive the path of unalloyed devotion, which had almost become lost due to the influence of time.”

✽ A TASTE SUPREME ✽

These two verses were composed by Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya expressing that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Lord Himself. The next day, early in the morning, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, with some *prasādam* from the Jagannātha temple, ran to Sārvabhauma while he was still in bed. He cried in a loud voice, “Sārvabhauma, how wonderful is this *prasādam*! It has a very extraordinary taste. Please take it. I have come for you with this *prasādam*.” Sārvabhauma arose from bed as Mahāprabhu offered him the *prasādam*, and he could not but accept it without cleansing his mouth. Ordinarily a *brāhmaṇa paṇḍita*, early in the morning, will first cleanse his mouth, bathe, offer different prayers, and only then take *prasādam*. But when Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu personally came and offered it to him with His own hand, what could Sārvabhauma do? He had to accept that *prasādam*. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu told him, “We have previously experienced the taste of so many things like ghee, rice, sweets, and spices. We all know what flavors they have, but this is wonderful. This has

touched the lips of Krishna Himself. It is extraordinarily wonderful and tasteful.” Then, Sārvabhauma eagerly ate that *prasādam* and began uttering some *mantras*:

śuṣkaṁ paryuṣitaṁ vāpi
nītaṁ vā dura-deśataḥ
prāpti-mātreṇa bhoktavyaṁ
nātra kāla-vicāraṇā

“One should take the *mahā-prasāda* of Śrī Krishna as soon as one receives it, without consideration of time or place, even though it may be dried up, stale, or brought from a distant country.”

na deśa-niyamas tatra
na kāla-niyamas tathā
prāptam annaṁ drutaṁ śiṣṭair
bhoktavyaṁ harir abravīt

“The *prasāda* of Śrī Krishna is to be taken by gentleman as soon as it is received, without hesitation. There are no regulative principles concerning time and place. This is the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

✽ “TODAY, I HAVE CONQUERED THE WORLD” ✽

He took *prasādam*, and the Lord and servant embraced one another and began to dance in ecstasy. As they danced, the symptoms of ecstasy appeared in

both of them. They perspired, trembled, and shed tears. Absorbed in ecstatic love, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Today, I have conquered the whole world, for I have converted a scholar like Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya. Now, he has so much faith in *mahā-prasāda* that without performing any Vedic rituals, he took the *prasādam*. My mission is successful!”

From that day on, Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya knew nothing but the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and could only explain the scriptures with the conclusions of devotion. Seeing that Sārvabhauma had become a follower of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Gopīnātha Āchārya began to clap his hands and dance. He said, “Well, Sārvabhauma, what do you think now?” Sārvabhauma replied, “Gopīnātha, you are my real friend, for it is by your grace that I received the mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.”



FRIEND OF THE FALLEN

Although it is the duty of justice to seek qualifications, mercy has no such limits. Divine mercy does not care for any qualifications, but is always ready to compensate the weak and unfit. Only one thing is required: our sincere eagerness to receive mercy. In *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said:

kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kṛiyatām yadi kuto’pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate

“Pure devotional service to Krishna cannot be obtained by performing pious activities even for millions of births. It can be purchased only by paying one price: intense eagerness. Wherever it is available, one must purchase it immediately.” No qualifications from one’s previous life will help one to attain Krishna consciousness; only eagerness and faith are important.

And what is the effect of Krishna consciousness?

**bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi
mayi dṛṣṭe 'khlātmani**

“Our inner aspiration for *rasa*, ecstasy, is buried in the heart and the heart is tied down and sealed. But hearing and chanting the glories of Krishna breaks the seal of the heart, and the heart awakens and opens to receive Krishna: the reservoir of pleasure, ecstasy Himself (*raso vai sah, akhila-rasāmr̥ta-murtiḥ*).”

✽ THE HEART WANTS ECSTASY ✽

Our heart's concern is with ecstasy, charm, and sweetness. And this is felt by the heart, not by the brain, so the heart has been given the most importance. The next effect is felt in the plane of knowledge. After getting a taste of divine sweetness, suspicion vanishes (*rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya paraṁ dṛṣtvā nivartate*). When we have a taste of real ecstasy (*rasa*), then all doubts are cleared. By getting a taste of Krishna consciousness, the heart is captured and when the heart is captured, the ecstasy of love of Godhead, *prema*, begins to flow. Being satisfied, the heart will say, “This is what I was searching for!” Then, the brain will follow, thinking, “Yes, there can

be no doubt, this is the highest goal of our search. Dissolve everything else.” The heart will say, “I have attained *prema*, divine love—this is the highest thing! Stop all works from now on.” Then, *karma* will close all its workshops. After coming in touch with Krishna consciousness, the first result is that the heart awakens. When the heart is captured, the brain approves, and our *karma*, energizing in the wrong direction, stops. Krishna consciousness is the real wealth of the heart.

It is the nature of divine mercy to extend itself without caring for any law. The only consideration is our eagerness to accept it. Mercy is offered in this way: “Do you want this?” If we simply agree, “Yes, it is wonderful and most tasteful,” then we can have it. If our prayer is genuine, then nothing else is required. It is a simple transaction. If we want it, we will get it. Krishna consciousness is most simple. Whether one is fit or unfit is unimportant. Anyone who simply wants it may have it.

And what of those who don’t want this divine gift? For them, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu distributed special mercy through His most magnanimous canvassing agent, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. Nityānanda Prabhu won’t allow even those who want to avoid Krishna consciousness to escape. If someone says, “I don’t want it,” Nityānanda Prabhu won’t allow it. He will say, “No! You must want it. I request you earnest-

ly—take it! Use it and you will be able to feel the value of Krishna consciousness.”

To capture the market, a clever merchant may distribute free samples of his product to his customers, saying, “Take one free! There is no question of paying any price now. I am giving this away. Use it, and if you feel the value, the utility of my product—buy it.” And then afterwards everyone will purchase.

❀ “PLEASE ACCEPT GAURĀṄGA!” ❀

In a similar way, Nityānanda Prabhu traveled throughout Bengal making His humble appeal. Nityānanda Prabhu would knock at the door and fall at the feet of His customers, crying, “Please accept this! Don’t dismiss Me. Don’t drive Me away. Please do what I say. Give all your attention to Gaurāṅga and you will be benefited beyond expectation. This is My request to you.” He would shed tears, roll at their door, and say, “You are reluctant to accept this, but have no doubts. I implore you—take it! Believe Me. Please accept Gaurāṅga!” In this way, Nityānanda Prabhu used to wander down both sides of the Ganges, roaming here and there and preaching about Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nityānanda Prabhu knows only Gaurāṅga. He is represented in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* as Baladeva. Baladeva apparently performed the *rāsa-līlā*, but at heart was only



The Two Lords, Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīman Mahāprabhu

arranging *rāsa-līlā* for Krishna: His nature shows the experts of devotion that He is always dedicated to Krishna. Otherwise He would not be Baladeva. He has no individual thoughts for His own enjoyment; every atom of His body is always eager to make arrangements for the enjoyment of Krishna. In a similar way, every atom of the body of Nityānanda Prabhu is conscious transcendental substance. And every atom of His body is meant only for the service and satisfaction of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

❀ “COME DOWN FROM YOUR THRONE!” ❀

One day, Mahāprabhu’s mother, Śacīdevī, had a dream that Krishna and Balarāma were on a throne

and Nityānanda Prabhu was addressing Baladeva, “Come down from Your throne! Your days are over. Now my Lord Gaurāṅga will be installed.” Baladeva refused: “No. I have My Lord—Krishna.” There was a fight, but Nityānanda Prabhu was stronger and He took Baladeva down from the throne, saying, “Your day has gone. Now the time for My master, Gaurāṅga, has come. You are a trespasser, a usurper—You must come down.” And Baladeva could not defeat Nityānanda, who took Him down from the throne.

This is the nature of Nityānanda Prabhu’s relationship with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He has nothing of His own; His everything is Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. As Baladeva is to Krishna, Nityānanda Prabhu is to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The aim of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s descent was to distribute the devotional service of Vṛndāvana most generously. On the other hand, Nityānanda Prabhu used to sing,

**Bhaja gaurāṅga, kaha gaurāṅga laha gaurāṅger nāma,
yei jana gaurāṅga bhaje sei āmāra prāna**

“Worship Gaurāṅga, speak of Gaurāṅga, chant Gaurāṅga’s name. Whoever worships Śrī Gaurāṅga is My life and soul.” Nityānanda Prabhu tried His best to make the people at large accept Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. What did He say? “Come straight to the campaign of Śrī Chaitanya and you will safely attain Vṛndāvana.”

Of course, Navadvīpa, the abode of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, is no less valuable than Vṛndāvana, the abode of Krishna. The same *rasa* which is found in Vṛndāvana is present in another feature in Navadvīpa. Some devotees have a special attraction for *vṛndāvana-līlā*, others have a special attraction for *navadvīpa-līlā*, and a third group represents both camps, but Navadvīpa is the most generous. In Vṛndāvana, the pastimes of Krishna are confined to a confidential circle, but in Navadvīpa, those pastimes are distributed. *Gaura-līlā* is more generous than *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

In the *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* (Mad. 25.261), Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī explains his conception of the difference between *gaura-līlā* and *kṛṣṇa-līlā*:

**kṛṣṇa-līlā amṛta-sāra, tāra śata śata dhāra,
daśa-dike vahe yāhā haite
se caitanya-līlā haya, sarovara akṣaya,
mano-haṁsa carāha' tāhāte**

He says, “There is no doubt that we find the highest nectarine taste of *rasa* in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. But what is *gaura-līlā*? In *gaura-līlā*, the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is not confined to a limited circle, but is being distributed on all sides. It is just as if from all ten sides of the nectarine lake of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* hundreds of streams are flowing.”

Our highest aspiration is to achieve the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, but in the beginning, we must

approach Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu through His manifest representation, the *guru*. Nityānanda Prabhu consolidates the foundation which helps us progress further in devotion. Quick progress without a good foundation invites a negative reaction, so the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu is our primary necessity. This approach culminates in the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (*nitāiyer-karuṇā habe braje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pābe*).

To be reinstated as a servant of the servant to the extreme degree is the philosophy of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Our goal is not to become one with Krishna—to receive service—we want to render service. The predominated moiety of the Absolute Truth is negative potency—the energy that serves—and the predominating moiety receives that service. Our best interest will be reached when, according to our constitutional nature, we attain our position in the line of servitors in the negative, predominated moiety; not by considering ourselves one with the positive, predominating moiety.

By the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu, we develop our attraction for Śrī Gaurāṅga. If we receive the grace of Śrī Gaurāṅga, we receive everything in the highest degree. And that is the safest way to approach Rādhā-Govinda. If we try to achieve Rādhā-Govinda in some other way, our attempt will naturally be artificial and defective; if we approach Rādhā-Govinda

directly, avoiding Śrī Gaurāṅga, there will be great difficulty.

✽ AN INVESTMENT IN NAVADWĪPA ✽

Therefore, we should invest all our energy in the service of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Then, we shall automatically find ourselves being lifted towards the highest level. Prabodhānanda Saraswati Ṭhākura prays:

yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde
vindeta bhaktim kṛta-puṇya-rāśiḥ
tathā tathot sarpati hṛdy akasmād
rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbhu-rāśiḥ

“As much as we devote ourselves to the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurāṅga, we will automatically achieve the nectarine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Vṇdāvan.” An investment in Navadwīpa Dhāma will automatically take one to Vṇdāvana. How one has been carried there will be unknown to him. But those who have good fortune invest everything in the service of Gaurāṅga. If they do that, they will find that everything has automatically been offered to the Divine Feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. She will accept them in Her confidential service and give them engagement, saying, “Oh, you have a good recommendation from Navadwīpa; I immediately appoint you to this service.” Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is introduced in the form of

Gaurāṅga with the added element of magnanimity. No selfish sensualism can enter our consideration of the pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga, for there He appears as a *sannyāsi* and a devotee.

Of course, if we are to analyze Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, we shall find Krishna in the garb of Rādhārāṇī. According to the impersonal philosophers, when negative and positive combine, they become non-differentiated oneness, but Vaiṣṇava philosophy says that when both positive and negative aspects of Godhead are combined, personality is not lost. Rather, in the garb of the negative, the positive is converted and begins searching for Himself in the mood of the highest searcher. According to Vaiṣṇavism, when positive and negative combine, they do not create equilibrium; rather their dynamic character is always maintained. The combination of Rādhā and Govinda is Śrī Gaurāṅga, and by the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu, we may be attracted to Śrī Gaurāṅga.

✽ ALL-EMBRACING MERCY ✽

Nityānanda Prabhu's mercy sometimes exceeds the mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Because it may create a bad precedent, Mahāprabhu sometimes cannot accept certain fallen souls—He has to consider their status as well as other things.

Nityānanda Prabhu's mercy, however, does not care for any unfavorable circumstances; His mercy is very lavish and almost blind. He does not discriminate between different degrees of sinners. His mercy is all-embracing. And Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu cannot dismiss His recommendation. Even those who Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu rejected, Nityānanda Prabhu sheltered, and gradually Mahāprabhu had to accept them. So the grace of Nityānanda is the greatest both in magnitude and circumference, and that is our solace, for by His mercy even the most fallen souls can attain the supreme goal.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu once told His followers, "Even if Nityānanda Prabhu is found with a fallen girl of the lowest kind, drinking wine in a wine shop, still you should know that He is above all these things. Although you may find Him apparently engaged in lower activities, He is never implicated. He may appear connected with so many fallen activities, but you should know that He is always revered by the creator of the universe, Lord Brahmā, and other exalted devotees. Nityānanda Prabhu's mercy is so powerful that if one simply takes a piece of His loincloth and wears it respectfully on his body, he will be saved from all the disturbances of the mundane senses." Therefore we pray, "May my mind always stick to His holy feet; I offer my obeisances to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu."

❀ SWALLOWED BY MĀYĀ ❀

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sanmyāsa* for the benefit of those souls swallowed by *māyā*. He ran and chased after the fallen souls to deliver them from illusion by giving them the Holy Name of Krishna, and Nityānanda Prabhu, like His shadow, ran after Him wherever He went. He fully surrendered and identified himself with Mahāprabhu's cause. So we must bow down to Nityānanda Prabhu. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was merged in tasting the sweetness of Rādhā-Govinda *līlā*, and diving deep into that reality, however, at the same time, He wanted to deliver all souls whose hearts had not been devoured by the false notions of renunciation and exploitation, He ordered Nityānanda Prabhu, "Go to Bengal and try to deliver them—give them divine love for Rādhā and Krishna."

He ordered Nityānanda Prabhu to distribute divine love for Rādhā-Govinda, but instead, Nityānanda began to preach about Śrī Gaurāṅga. He thought, "It will be better for them to worship Gaurāṅga; that will help free them from their offenses in their present condition, and by doing so, they will automatically achieve a position in Rādhā-Govinda *līlā*." He was ordered to preach the name of Krishna, but instead began to preach the name of Gaurāṅga. So, for our own welfare, we bow down to Nityānanda Prabhu with all our humility.

We pray, “O Nityānanda Prabhu, O *gurudeva*, please give me a drop of firm faith in Śrī Gaurāṅga, who is Rādhā-Govinda combined, tasting the sweetness of the divine nectar of the pastimes of Vṛndāvana. Give me a drop of faith, so that one day I may attain divine love and enter into that domain.”

If we neglect Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, our aspiration to serve Rādhā-Govinda will be a dream, an abstract imagination without reality. Nityānanda Prabhu is the refuge of all fallen souls. He is the most generous-hearted aspect of *guru-tattva*; we must bow down our head to Him, accept His holy feet, and surrender to Him.

In the spiritual realm of Vaikuṇṭha, Nityānanda Prabhu is represented as Saṅkarṣaṇa, the Supreme Lord who is considered to be the foundation of everything in existence. All possible existence is maintained by His energy. Nityānanda Prabhu is the original Baladeva, the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, we should view the pastimes of Nityānanda Prabhu with full consciousness of His dignified position, although He used to roam about here and there, rolling in the dust with tears in His eyes, saying, “Take the name of Gaurāṅga and I will be sold to you.” Although He posed in this lower position, still, He should be considered in light of His actual dignified position. We must surrender to Him with that attitude.

Balarāma is represented in different parts of the spiritual world in different aspects. He came here as Nityānanda Prabhu with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The truth about Nityānanda Prabhu has been exhaustively explained in *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Chaitanya-bhāgavata*. There, He is described as enjoying His life and relishing His pastimes with His own younger brother. To that Nityānānda, we must bow our heads.

Śrī Krishna *prema*, divine love, is an inconceivable substance which is very pleasing and ecstatic. Great saints who get a taste of that wonderful substance throw away all sorts of aspirations, including salvation, which is lavishly praised by the *Vedas*. So Nityānanda Prabhu, although one with Baladeva, is greater than Him? Why? He is distributing divine love.

What is divine love? It is so important and valuable, so much higher than all other sorts of achievements, that one who can give divine love is far superior to those who can give duty, wealth, pleasure, and even salvation (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*). If we conceive that Krishna is subordinate to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, then of course Balārama is subordinate to Nityānanda Prabhu. In all other respects the two of Them are similar, but when magnanimity is added to Balārama, He becomes Nityānanda Prabhu.

First, the position of divine love must be established: the great saints discard salvation and other

things after they get a slight scent of divine love. Once the position of divine love is established, we can understand that one who can give it must necessarily be superior to the givers of all other things.

So Nityānanda Balārama is superior to Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of the collective universes, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of this universe, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of all living beings. And that Balārama has come here as Nityānanda Prabhu—not with majesty, grandeur, or power, but in a human form—to distribute divine love. And He is the giver of Gaurāṅga. His greatness is proved by this fact. We can understand this by further examining the different aspects of His life, step by step.

Nityānanda Prabhu was born in Ekacakrā, and there He passed His early life. His parents, friends and neighbors were filled with ecstatic joy, being pleased with His sweet infant pastimes. From His birth, He was a pleasure to the whole atmosphere of Ekacakrā, and in this joyful atmosphere He passed His childhood years.

One day, while Nityānanda was still young, a *sannyāsi* came to His home and begged Him from His parents. The *sannyāsi* was roaming about to different holy places and he prayed for Nityānanda as his alms. He took Him in his company and Nityānanda Prabhu wandered about almost all the holy places, following

that *sannyāsi*. It is said that the *sannyāsi* was Madhavendra Purī.

Then one day, from within, feeling ecstasy in His heart, Nityānanda Prabhu could understand that Śrī Gaurāṅga had begun His pastimes of *saṅkīrtana* in Navadvīpa. And with that inspiration, He came to Navadvīpa Dhāma.

✽ AN EXTRAORDINARY DREAM ✽

That day, Mahāprabhu told His followers, “I had a dream that an extraordinarily great man, in a chariot marked with the palm tree flag of Balarāma, came to My door and said, ‘Where is the house of Nimāi Paṇḍita?’ Twice, thrice, four times—again and again—he keeps saying, ‘Where is the house of Nimāi Paṇḍita?’” Mahāprabhu continued, “That great personage must have come last night to Navadvīpa. Try to search Him out.” They searched and searched, but could not find Him anywhere.

Then Mahāprabhu told them, “Let Me try.” He took them straight to the home of Nandanācārya, and when Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu with His followers suddenly arrived there, they found Nityānanda Prabhu sitting on the veranda. After seeing Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu stared intently at Him for some time, became absorbed in Him, and fainted. In this way, in one day, He became the most



Nimai meets Nitai. Seeing Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu stared intently at Him for some time, became absorbed in Him and fainted.

intimate associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. When He was ordered by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to give Krishna consciousness to everyone, He began to distribute Gaurāṅga consciousness, divine love of Śrī Gaurāṅga. That Nityānanda Prabhu is the savior of all fallen souls, without any discrimination of the degree of their fallenness; so we bow down to His holy feet.

Once, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu had a secret talk with Nityānanda Prabhu in Jagannātha Purī. When Nityānanda Prabhu went to Bengal and married, some say that Mahāprabhu asked Him to marry. It is our opinion that because the so-called “high class” people were so much surcharged with vanity, Nityānanda Prabhu was asked to approach the masses. Because He was ordered to mix with them very familiarly for His preaching purposes, it was found necessary for Him to

marry. Otherwise, if He were to have mixed very familiarly with family men, accusations may have been leveled at His standard of renunciation. And to further that purpose, He married. He had to adopt that policy and accept that attitude. And He may have been told to do so by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu; it was not his own decision. Of course, marrying or not marrying was nothing to Him.

How He came in contact with His eternal consort, Jāhnavādevī is described in the *Bhakti-ratnākara*. It appears that when He was preaching all around Bengal, He preached at the house of Jāhnavādevī's father, Sūryadāsa Paṇḍita, the brother of Gauridāsa Paṇḍita, who was already a follower of Gaurā-Nityānānda. Sūryadāsa gave Him intimate help in His propaganda work, as his house was a good base. And Sūryadāsa, who had two daughters, offered Nityānanda Prabhu his daughter in marriage. Ultimately, Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīmatī Jāhnavādevī are eternally associated, and although Their marriage apparently took place out of necessity, it was actually part of Their eternal *līlā*.

Of course, some so-called *sannyāsis* take advantage of this to give up their vows of celibacy and marry. They give the marriage of Nityānanda as an excuse. But it is not a proven fact that Nityānanda Prabhu was a *sannyāsi*. Actually, the name "Nityānānda" is a *brahmacārī* name. "Ānanda" is a suffix added to the

name of a *brahmacārī*. Ānanda, Svarūpa, Prakaśa, and Chaitanya are different types of *brahmacārī* names. The name Ānanda is also found in the *sannyāsa* order of life, but we find no *sannyāsa* title mentioned for Nityānanda Prabhu. There is also no mention anywhere of a *sannyāsa guru* for Nityānanda Prabhu, although we know that His *dikṣa guru* was Madhavendra Purī, the *guru* of Advaita Prabhu and Īśvara Purī.

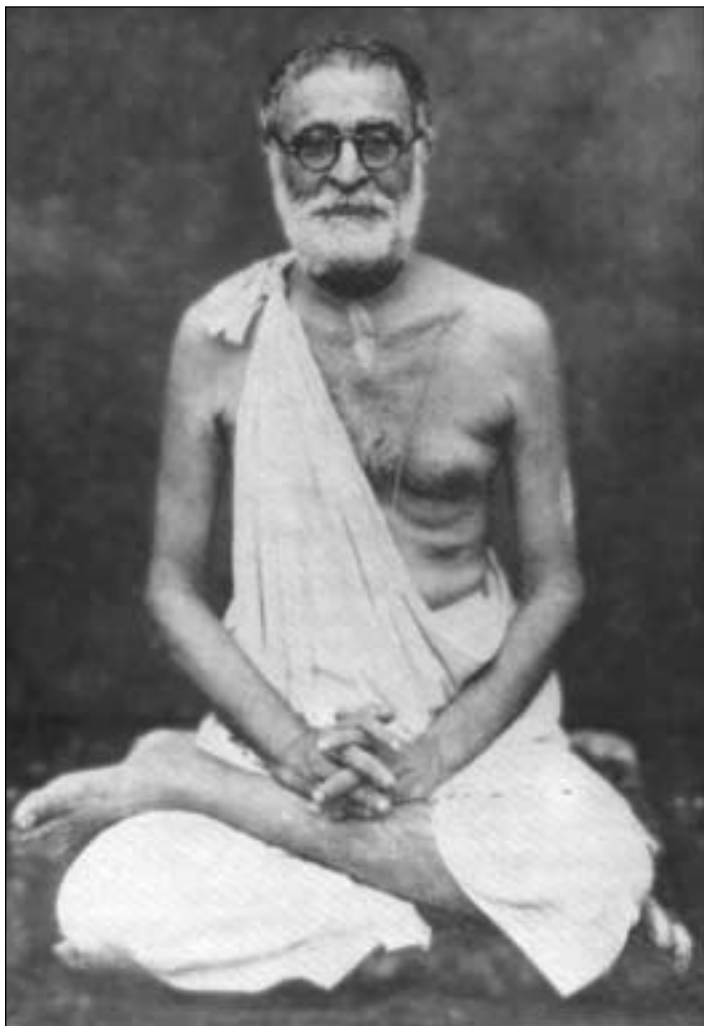
Nityānanda Prabhu is known as an *avadhūta*. *Avadhūta* does not mean a *sannyāsi*, but one who is not very particular about his external practices and sometimes does things which should not be done. When an exalted person is seen engaging in lower practices, he is considered an *avadhūta*. It is understood that he is above that, but his practices are of a lower nature. *Ava* means lower, and *dhūta* means that he can either remove or purify.

Nityānanda Prabhu broke the single *sannyāsa* staff (*ekadaṇḍa*) into three; that indicates that when taking *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life, we should accept not one, but three *daṇḍas*, which symbolize the dedication of body, mind, and words in the service of the Lord. And Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhuṇpāda was also inspired by this action of Nityānanda Prabhu's to give *tridaṇḍa sannyāsa* to his followers, in contrast to *ekadaṇḍa* which was formerly current in Bengal. The system of *tridaṇḍa san-*

nyāsa as was the custom in Southeast India with the Vaiṣṇavas who follow Ramānujācārya, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta introduced it for the modern age.

✽ MISCONCEPTION: ATTACK IT—CRUSH IT! ✽

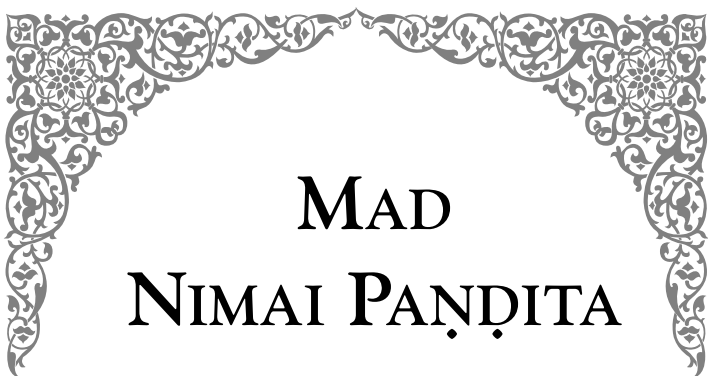
Nityānanda Prabhu's approach was somewhat peculiar. His strategy was to uplift the most fallen. Like Napoleon, whose policy was to attack the strongest position of the opposing army, Nityānanda Prabhu wanted to capture the most sinful. Generally, we think that a saint flies away from this world of *māyā* and goes to a solitary place where he can enter into a cave and engage himself in meditation. Indian saints generally preach, "Give up everything, go to a solitary place in the jungle, find a cave, and engage yourself fully in understanding Godhead." But our *guru mahārāja* was different. Like Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu, he wanted to attack *māyā* and, like a great general, he declared totalitarian war on illusion and even all other existing conceptions of religion. "Why is there this misunderstanding and misconception?" he thought. "Everything belongs to Krishna: *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. It is plain and simple and sweet. How can we think, 'This is for me, that is for Him?' Why should we let this misconception stand here at all? Attack it—and crush the whole thing!"



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He declared totalitarian war against *māyā*, illusion, and even all other existing conceptions of religion.

He told us, “*Kīrtana* means to preach against misconception. As soldiers, you must go door to door and preach Krishna consciousness—Krishna’s interest—the Krishna conception. If they understand that everything is for Krishna, they will be saved. This truth is plain and simple. Why should they not understand this? Try to capture them, to release them from the world of misconception and misunderstanding where they are now suffering from reaction.”

In this way, we are not afraid of anything. A Vaiṣṇava who loved solitary life once asked our *guru mahārāja*, “Why do you stay at Calcutta? That is the place of Satan, where fighting for selfish interest is so acute. Leave that—come to the holy *dhāma*.” But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura especially chose that place, saying, “I prefer to represent Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s creed in an extremely contaminated place.” For this reason, he wanted to send men to the West. “The East is captured by the glamour of Western civilization,” he said, “so Western civilization must first be crushed. Then, its glamour will vanish and the whole world will come to join the campaign of divine love of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.” This was the same spirit with which Nityānanda Prabhu canvassed the fallen souls of this world, in his attempt to take them to the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.



MAD NIMAI PAṆḌITA

At the time of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's Advent, Bengal had fallen far away from Krishna consciousness. The people of the day had become so much degraded that they would pass their time spending money like water to see the marriage of cats. Deviating from the worship of the Supreme Lord, Krishna, they used to worship the serpent-goddess, Viṣaharī, or the controller of the demons, Kālī. Very rarely would the name of Krishna be heard from their lips. Only a few of the Hindu gentleman, when bathing in the Ganges, would chant the holy name of Govinda, Hari, or Krishna. And Navadwīpa Dhāma, place of the advent of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, was under Mohammedan rule in those days. The Kazi was in power in Navadwīpa, and the Hindu's religious feelings were checked by the strong hand of his Islamic rule.

Advaita Ācārya was a great scholar and the most senior among Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's followers.

He appeared in Navagrāma in Śrī Haṭṭa, in the eastern province of Bengal, and resided in Śāntipura. Ontologically speaking, Śrī Advaita Ācārya is the *avatāra* of Mahāvisnu, who creates the material cosmos through the agency of His illusory energy. Advaita Ācārya is the devotee who earnestly invited Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to descend here as the *yugāvatāra* to look after the welfare of all souls. He began to worship the Lord with Ganges water and *tulasi* leaves and invoked His grace, praying, “O Lord, please come and deliver these people; the time has come to relieve them by the distribution of the sweet name of Krishna. Come, My Lord—they are most poor!” In this way Advaita Ācārya attracted Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu by pleading the cause of the fallen souls. Of course, the time had come for the advent of the incarnation for this age, the *yugāvatāra*, but still Advaita Ācārya performed the function of inviting and welcoming Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

✽ THE ADVENT OF ŚRĪ CHAITANYA ✽

And when the Supreme Lord was about to appear, Advaita felt in his heart, “My prayer is going to be satisfied—He is coming!” Ultimately, He detected that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had personally appeared in the house of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śacīdevī as

their newborn boy, Nimāi Viśvambhara. And so, Advaita Ācārya went to pay due respects to the child and His parents on the divine advent day.

When the boy was a little grown up, Śrī Advaita Prabhu came down to bow at the feet of the child, Nimāi. Śacīdevī, Nimai's mother, shuddered: "What are You doing? You are an old *paṇḍita*, a Vedic scholar. If You show this kind of respect to my young boy it will spoil His future! What are You doing?" It was said that whenever Advaita Ācārya used to bow down His head to a Deity, the statue would shatter into pieces if it was a sham, if there was no genuine presence of the Lord. But here, when Advaita put His head at the feet of the boy, Nimāi put one foot on Advaita Ācārya's head. Everyone was astounded and wondered, "What kind of spiritual power does this child have? Such a great devotee-scholar and senior man as Advaita has bowed down to this child, and the child has stepped on Advaita's head, but the child is quite unaffected! Who is this child?"

❀ NIMAI'S CHILDHOOD ❀

When Nimāi was a boy, sometimes He would disguise Himself with a blanket and enter into the banana grove of a neighbor's house. With a push of His head He used to break down the banana trees. The neighbors would come out and think, "A bull

must have entered and demolished our garden!" In these pastimes the Lord was teaching His devotees, "I am demolishing all your banana trees that will be used for some other purpose besides My service. In the highest sense, you are My eternal associates, and I can do anything and everything with your possessions to suit My fleeting pleasures." Sometimes He would snatch fruit from the hand of Śrīdhara Paṇḍita, saying, "Oh, give Me this banana. I won't be able to pay you any price." Śrīdhara Pandit would tell Him, "Why are you doing this? You are a *brāhmaṇa* boy; I can't refuse You. But You should not do these things. I am a poor man. If You snatch away my best things, how can I make a living?" In this way, Nimāi performed His pastimes of stealing fruit.

As Nimāi Paṇḍita grew up, He used to show Advaita Ācārya great respect. But Advaita could not tolerate it. He said, "I know that You are not an ordinary person. You are a supernatural, transcendental personality of the highest order. Still, in the worldly sense, You are younger than Me, so You show Me respect, but I can't tolerate it. It is too much for Me." But what could Advaita do? Nimāi used to show His formal respect to Advaita Prabhu every time They met, so Advaita made a plan to stop this, and thought to Himself, "I shall see how clever You are."

He left Navadvīpa, went to Śāntipura, and began to preach against the devotional school. The news

came to Nimāi that Advaita Ācārya, after such a long time as a devotee, was preaching against the devotional school. He was preaching that *jñāna*, knowledge, is higher than devotion. “Devotion makes the Lord far away,” He argued, “and knowledge tries to bring Him very near. With knowledge, one thinks, ‘I want to experience You, O Lord.’ And devotion says ‘He is *adhokṣaja*: transcendental. He can’t be traced by our senses.’ So devotion makes Him far away by saying, ‘It is only His sweet will that may connect us.’ But according to the path of knowledge, the supreme authority is within you, in your heart. The devotional school is clearly secondary.”

❀ “DON’T KILL THAT OLD MAN!” ❀

In this way, Advaita Ācārya began to preach. And when that reached the ears of Nimāi Paṇḍita, He went with Nityānanda to punish Advaita. They jumped into the Ganges and swam all the way to Śāntipura, where they found Advaita Ācārya. Nimāi confronted him: “What are you doing, Ācārya? Why have You invited Me to come here? With Ganges water and *Tulasi* leaves, You prayed for Me to appear, and now You are making fun of Me? You are speaking against devotion, against Me? What is the matter with You?” In this way, Nimāi Paṇḍita began to punish Advaita. He began to slap Him. The old wife of

Advaita Ācārya began to cry, “What are you doing? Don’t kill that old man!”

Nityānanda Prabhu was smiling, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, perplexed, was standing at a little distance trying to understand, “What is the matter?” Then Advaita Ācārya Prabhu felt great satisfaction. He said, “I have taught You a lesson now—You have come to punish me. You are defeated—I have gained victory over You!” Advaita Prabhu began to dance. “Today I have defeated You, My Lord! You had to punish Me. Where has that formal respect You were always showing Me gone now?” In this way, Advaita Ācārya rejoiced, and offered Mahāprabhu a feast of śāk, His favorite delicacy.

The Lord gave so much grace to Advaita Prabhu that although he was an old scholar and *ācārya*, He was punished with slaps. It is not possible to punish or dishonor anyone we respect, but only our intimate friends. Disrespect and dishonor is possible only when there is great intimacy. Pure devotees want punishment. “Punish us!” they pray, but punishment from the high quarter is not very cheap.

✽ ADVAITA’S MYSTIC POEM ✽

Many years later, just before Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began to manifest His final pastimes of divine ecstasy, Advaita Ācārya Prabhu wrote some

mystic lines of poetry which He sent to the Lord through Jagadānanda Paṇḍita:

bāulake kahiha—loka haila bāula
 bāulake kahiha—hāṭe nā vikāya cāula
 bāulake kahiha—kāye nāhika āula
 bāulake kahiha—ihā kahiyaṅche bāula

Tell our Prabhu, who acts as madmen do,
 that everyone has lost their sanity,
 And rice once high in price has no value.
 In love of God, half-crazed humanity
 neglects this world and all they once held dear;
 tell Him a madman brings this to His ear.

When Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu read that mystic poem, His mood became serious. Svarūpa Dāmodara was there: “What is written here?” he said. Mahāprabhu replied, “I do not know what is the real meaning, but Advaita Ācārya is a great ‘worshiper,’ and a certain class of ‘worshippers’ are accustomed to think, “We shall invite the Deity, and for some time we shall try to keep Him here for worship. Then, when we are finished with our worship, finally we shall bid Him adieu.’ Perhaps Advaita thinks, ‘Now it is time for the Deity to go.’ I don’t know what is the real meaning, but perhaps this is His purpose.” Svarūpa Dāmodara took the poem, read it, and became very thoughtful: “Oh. Advaita Prabhu is say-

ing that the requirements for Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance have been fulfilled, and now, He is no longer needed to preach the Holy Name of Krishna as the incarnation for this age. The *avatāra*'s duty is finished, and so He may go."

❀ THE LAST TWELVE YEARS ❀

After this, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu remained within this world for twelve more years, but not as before. His mood was quite changed. From that day on, He felt great separation from Krishna in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. Divine madness became predominant in Him and His social connection was almost closed. Ramananda Raya and Svarūpa Dāmodara were His attendants at that time. He no longer kept any social connections; the fire within Him was burning—the fire of separation. He was absorbed in Rādhārāṇī's search for Śrī Krishna after Krishna left Vṛndāvana. In that mood of divine madness, He spent twelve years in a closed room within the house compound of Kāśī Miśra.

Sometimes at night, unconsciously crossing the boundary wall, He would run to meet Lord Jagannatha. When Svarūpa Dāmodara and His other attendants would suddenly find that no sound of Krishna's name could be heard within His room, they would begin searching: "Mahāprabhu is not there, where is He?"

Sometimes they would find Him fallen before the main gate of the Jagannātha temple, His legs and hands drawn within His body like the limbs of a tortoise drawn within its shell. A very sweet fragrance could be detected emanating from Him, and the cows would flock there, smelling His body. While Mahāprabhu was lying in his trance, He was internally experiencing the pastimes of Rādhā and Govinda with the *gopīs* in Govardhana. At that time, Svarūpa Dāmodara and the others tried their best to revive Him from His trance by chanting the Holy Name of Krishna.

When Mahāprabhu was roused, He complained, “What have you done? I was enjoying a most happy experience there but by raising a clamor, you have drawn me down here.” And what raised a clamor? The chanting of Hare Krishna. And who was chanting the name of Krishna? Svarūpa Dāmodara and others of his caliber. The depth of the experience of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in His divine trance was so great that He took the chanting of Hare Krishna to be noise. So, we may chant the Holy Name of Krishna, and that may be simply noise. From another angle of vision, however, it may be seen that *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is of such immense value that it was given preference over direct participation in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. But the direction given to us by our *ācāryas*, the spiritual preceptors of our line, is that we should consider our own chanting to be merely noise.

One day, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was wandering near the seashore. A girl was fervently singing in praise of Lord Jagannatha, and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu ran straight towards that sound. He began running through thickets of dangerous thorns. Then Govinda, His attendant, somehow stopped Him. When He understood everything, He said, “Oh, a girl is singing? Govinda saved my life.”

✽ HALF-MAD IN ECSTASY ✽

Sometimes He would suddenly feel that Krishna is playing with the *gopīs* in the Yamunā. In that mood He would jump into the ocean, crying, “Krishna!” He jumped there and became unconscious, as the waves were playing with Him. Finding Him gone, His devotees would wonder, “Where is Mahāprabhu?” and, headed by Svarūpa Dāmodara, would begin their searching. Once, the night was almost over and they still couldn’t find Him. At last a fisherman came running, half-mad, chanting, “Krishna, Krishna, Krishna!”

“What is the matter?” Svarūpa Dāmodara asked. The fisherman replied, “Every night I catch fish, but tonight I threw out my net and caught something very heavy. When I began pulling it in, I thought it was a big fish, but when I took it on shore I found a big human figure, and when I went to remove the



A Vision of Reality. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu described the *līlā* of Krishna that He had seen in His trance.

body from my net, somehow I touched Him; now I am half-mad.” Then, Svarūpa Dāmodara said, “You must have seen our Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu?” “No, I have seen Him before,” the fisherman said, “He has a beautiful figure. It is not Him. It is something else.” Svarūpa Dāmodara told him, “Anyhow, try to show us where He is.”

They went and saw the long figure of the Lord, His joints dislocated, lying on the sands, senseless. Svarūpa Dāmodara and the others began to chant the Holy Name of Krishna in His ear, until He came to His senses. At that time Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began to describe the *līlā* of Krishna that He had seen in His trance. In this way, after Advaita Ācārya's poetry was sent to him, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu lived His last twelve years in the mood of intense separation that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī felt for Krishna.

❀ MAD NIMAI PAṆḌITA ❀

This intense degree of divine madness was exhibited by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in His last days on this Earth. But even in His life in Navadvīpa, when Mahāprabhu was the great boy-scholar Nimāi Paṇḍita, everyone thought He had become mad after He had returned from Gayā and had begun showing signs of devotion to Krishna. The normal-thinking men of the day said: "This Nimāi Paṇḍita was a good man, a gentleman, but after returning from Gayā, He is totally changed, and is doing so many undesirable things. He wants to preach so many new ideas. What is this? He has become a madman. He doesn't care for any rules and regulations, social customs, or ancient scriptures—only 'Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.' Before, He was normal, but recently He has become abnor-

mal. Of course, He has a powerful intellect. When He was a professor, He did not care for the scholarship of even the greatest of *paṇḍitas*. He easily defeated the champion scholar, Keśava Kāśmirī, and many others. But now we have lost Him. Now He is different. He does not care for the *brāhmaṇas* or the scriptures we follow. He has a new opinion and He is presenting that to the world. His ways are incomprehensible.” The neighbors complained to His mother, Śacīdevī: “Śacīdevī, what is this? Nimāi was not like this before; now He doesn’t care for us anymore. He even has no charm for His wife. What has He become? You are the daughter of a gentleman, but just see your misfortune! What to do? The fact is this, Saci, your only son, who was so brilliant, has become mad. You must arrange for proper medical treatment.” Then, Śacīdevī called for the *kavirāja*, the doctor.

The doctor made an arrangement for a small, brick bathing tank to be filled up with *Viṣṇu* oil, which is supposed to be a very cooling thing. And Nimāi Paṇḍita was asked to bathe in that tank. He did so, and suddenly began laughing and playing in the tank. As He was diving and swimming in the oil, He was laughing madly. At that time, Śrīvasa Ṭhākura arrived for a visit and asked, “How is Nimāi Paṇḍita?” Śacīdevī told him, “Just see my misfortune! My Nimāi has become completely mad. I called for the doctor and he arranged for this treatment.” As she showed

Śrīvasa how Nimāi was playing in the tank, he asked, "What is this?" Saci replied, "My neighbors advised me to do this." Śrīvasa said, "You are a very gentle lady. You do not know how to deal with others. What Nimāi has—I want! Your boy has *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and I want a drop of that. If only we are allowed to live a few days longer, we shall have the opportunity of seeing many wonderful pastimes of Krishna."

Then, Nimāi became sober for the time being and told Śrīvasa, "If you had also remarked that I was mad, then I would have run to the Ganges and finished My life. At least you have understood what I am; that is my solace, Śrīvasa. If you would have told the public, "He is mad," then I would have found that there is no man here to accept what I have come to give, so I must enter the river and drown myself without hesitation."

Before Nimāi Paṇḍita went to Gayā, He was a big scholar. When He returned from Gayā surcharged with devotion, He began to explain grammar again, as before, but now He would show Krishna in the grammar. He would give interpretations of the roots of Sanskrit grammar which showed the relationship between Sanskrit and Krishna. He explained that sound is only a vibration, and vibration means the potency of Krishna. It is the potency of Krishna that makes everything pure, that makes everything move. If that potency is withdrawn, everything is dead and

gone. In this way, Nimāi Paṇḍita wanted to explain grammar in terms of Krishna.

Then, His students became very much disturbed. “What is this!” they thought. “We have come to learn Sanskrit from Nimāi Paṇḍita, but our academic requirements will not be satisfied now. Still, the coaching we got from Him is never to be had anywhere else, so we can’t abandon Him. But how to improve the style of His teaching?” They went to the previous teacher of Nimāi Paṇḍita, Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita. He had been Nimai’s tutor in His childhood. Gaṅgādāsa said, “You are all fortunate to be students of Nimāi Paṇḍita. He is such a nice professor. What is your complaint?” The students said, “We were very much pleased by studying under Nimāi Paṇḍita. But now, since He has returned from Gayā, He is explaining everything in quite a new way. He teaches Sanskrit in terms of the Holy Name of Krishna. He understands a very high philosophy, but that won’t serve our purpose of studying grammar. It is certainly valuable, but it will not help our studies. Please ask Him to change His ways. He has regard for you because you are His teacher. Only you can influence Him.” “All right,” he said, “Ask Him to see me tomorrow.”

The students went to Nimāi Paṇḍita and told Him, “Your former professor has called for You. He wants to see You.” Nimāi said, “Yes, I shall go and

see him.” Later that day, He went to Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, and offered His respectful obeisances. Gaṅgādāsa said: “How are You my boy? I am happy to hear that You went to Gayā and performed Your religious duties for Your ancestors. This is all very good, but what is the matter? Your students are complaining to me. Is it true that You do not care to teach them properly? Why don’t You care to teach them as You did before? They all appreciate Your teachings, but after returning from Gayā You have adopted a novel style of teaching. Don’t continue this, I say—teach them properly. I hear from the people that You have become a devotee. But were Your forefathers not devotees? Of course, You have become a devotee of an extraordinary type. But don’t go astray. What You speak about devotion seems unnecessary—that is not really grammar. Do You think You are giving new light with Your new meanings? Do You think your former professors were all idiots? What do You have to say?” Nimāi was silent. “All right then. Don’t go astray. Remain calm and follow Your predecessors and teach the boys well, so that we will not have to hear any complaints against You in the future. Your students won’t go to any other school. They are very fond of You, so teach them well.” Then, Nimāi Paṇḍita took the dust of His teacher’s feet and told him, “Yes, I shall try to obey your order. By dint of your footdust, no

one can challenge Me in scholarship. Don't worry. I shall teach them well."

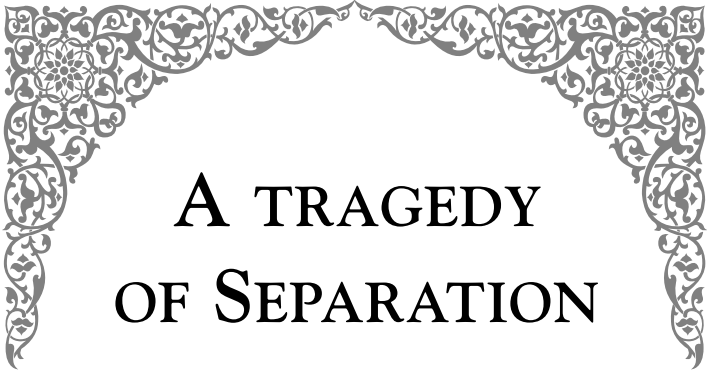
❀ "WHY SHOULD I WORSHIP KRISHNA?" ❀

A few days later, Nimāi Paṇḍita began to chant the name *gopī*, *gopī* while He was in a trance of devotion. Some big scholars that held a high social position went to Him and said, "Nimāi Paṇḍita! You were a big *paṇḍita* and now You are a devotee. That doesn't matter, but why do You chant the name *gopī gopī*? Take the name of Krishna. According to the scriptures, that will bring You some benefit. But You are chanting *gopī gopī*. What benefit will You get from that? You are mad." Nimāi said, "Who is this Krishna? Why should I worship him? He is a dacoit and a woman-hunter!" And Nimāi picked up a stick and chased them away.

Later they began to talk among themselves, saying, "Nimāi Paṇḍita has become stark mad. We went to speak something good to Him, and He came with a stick to kill us! We are not sons of ordinary men. We have our high position in society and our family dignity. We will show Him!" They began a conspiracy to teach Nimāi Paṇḍita a good lesson by giving Him a good beating.

At that time, Nimāi suddenly cried out: "I took the greatest measures to deliver these wretched souls, but I

see now that they are simply creating more sins by abusing Me and conspiring to punish Me. Why have I come? What will be effective in delivering them? I shall have to take the role of a *sannyāsi*. Otherwise, they will think that I am simply one of them, a householder. But if I become a *sannyāsi*, a preacher, then they may have some respect. They will say, ‘We are all householders, he has become a *sannyāsi*. He should be revered.’ Then, from that reverence, they will get some benefit. Otherwise, they will have to go to hell for thinking that I am an ordinary man. To create some respect, so they may benefit, I shall have to accept the role of *sannyāsi*.” And He revealed to Nityānanda Prabhu and a few others, “On the last day of the first month of this year, I shall take *sannyāsa*.”



A TRAGEDY OF SEPARATION

According to solar calculation, it was on the day of Makara-saṅkrānti, an auspicious conjunction of the stars, that Nimāi Paṇḍita went to Kāṭwā to take *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. After this, He would become known as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He swam across the Ganges and in wet cloth ran towards Kāṭwā. Just before this, He told only a few of His friends, including Nityānanda Prabhu, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Mukunda, and others, “The time when I will accept the robe of renunciation is very near.”

Just a few days before this, an opposition party had been raised against Nimāi Paṇḍita. Those who believed that material nature is the highest principle, and that consciousness is a product of matter, began to abuse Nimāi Paṇḍita. He thought, “I came to deliver the lowest of men, but if they commit offenses

against Me, there will be not hope for their upliftment.” Suddenly, He said, “I came with that medicine which gives the greatest relief, but now I find that their disease is rapidly growing worse and seems beyond treatment. It will take its own course towards doom. The patients are committing offenses by abusing their doctor. They are making arrangements to insult Me. They take it that I am a family man—their nephew. They take Me as one of them. I came with the best medicine for the present degraded age, but now I find that they are plotting against Me. Now they are doomed. At least I have to show them that I am not one of them.” He thought, “I shall leave family life and take *sannyāsa* and wander from village to village, town to town, preaching the Holy Name of Krishna.” That was His decision, and within a few days He went to take *sannyāsa* at Kāṭwā from Keśava Bhāratī Mahārāja.

Just the day before He left to take *sannyāsa*, from the afternoon until the evening, there was a spontaneous gathering of devotees in the home of Nimāi Paṇḍita. Every year in Bengal, that day was celebrated as *Lakṣmī-pūjā*, worship of the goddess of fortune, when special cakes are prepared and distributed. Nimāi, knowing that early the next morning He would leave Navadvīpa to take *sannyāsa*, attracted His followers in such a way that almost every leading devotee came to see Him that evening.

❀ THE HARE KRISHNA MAHĀ MANTRA ❀

They came with flower garlands and many other offerings to be presented to the Lord. Nimāi accepted their garlands and then placed them on the necks of the devotees who gave them. Only four of His most intimate devotees knew He was leaving; the ordinary devotees did not know this would be His last night in Navadvīpa. With His own hands He garlanded the necks of His devotees and appealed to them, “Always chant the name of Krishna. Under no condition should you give up this *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. And don’t do anything else. While working, eating, sleeping or walking, day or night—in whatever you do—continuously take the name of Krishna. Always talk about Krishna—nothing else. If you have any real attraction for Me, then don’t do anything without chanting the name of Krishna.

“Cultivate Krishna consciousness. Krishna is the origin of us all. He is our father; we have come from Him. The son who shows no gratitude towards the father is sure to be punished birth after birth. Always chant these names of the Lord:

**Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare**

No other religious principle is required. Chant Hare Krishna. This is not an ordinary *mantra*, but this

is the *mahā-mantra*, the greatest of all the great *mantras*, the very essence of all the *mantras* known to the world. Only take to this, always. No other prescription is to be followed.

“Remember your Lord, your home. This is a foreign land; you have nothing to aspire after here. Try always to go back home, back to Godhead.” In this way, the Lord spoke, and all His devotees intuitively came because it was Nimāi Pandita’s last night in Navadvīpa.

✽ THE LORD AND THE FRUITSELLER ✽

Late at night, one devotee named Kholāvecā Śrīdhara arrived. He used to make trade on the plantain tree and its fruit. He would sell the fruit, ripe or green, and the big leaves which are used as plates. Sometimes Nimāi would pay him less for his fruits than what they were worth, and sometimes He would snatch the best fruits from him. Śrīdhara came to see Him late at night to offer Him a choice pumpkin. And Nimāi thought, “I have spent almost My whole life snatching so many things from him, and now, on this last night he has brought this wonderful pumpkin. I can’t resist.” He asked Śacīdevī, “Mother, Śrīdhara has given me this pumpkin. Please think of how it can be prepared.” At bedtime, someone came with some milk. Nimāi said, “Mother, with this milk

and this pumpkin, please prepare some sweet-rice.” So Śacīdevī prepared some pumpkin sweet-rice: pumpkin boiled with milk, rice and sugar.

Late at night, at about three o’ clock in the morning, Nimāi went away. He left Viṣṇupriyā-devī asleep in bed. His mother Śacīdevī, sensing what was to come, was staying awake all night guarding the door. Nimāi bowed down to her and went away. And like a stone figure, Mother Śacīdevī sat there by the gate as Nimāi left. She could not say anything, but was struck dumb.

A little after three o’ clock in the morning, Nimāi swam across the Ganges and in His wet cloth went straight to Kāṭwā, a distance of twenty-five miles. He reached there by nine or ten o’ clock. There, He approached Keśava Bhāratī to take *sannyāsa*.

❀ MOTHER ŚACĪ’S SADNESS ❀

In the early morning, the devotees came to see Nimāi and found Śacīdevī like a statue, sitting at the door. The door was open. Everything was empty. “What’s the matter Śacīdevī?” they asked. She told them, “Oh, I was waiting for you devotees. You take possession of the house. I shall go somewhere else. I can’t enter this house any more. You are His associates; you are the true heirs. Take possession.” They began to throng around her and console her. “You will

go? What about the young wife He left? The girl is only fourteen years old. Who will protect her? You can't shun the responsibility given to you. It is on your shoulders." In this way they came and consoled her and tried to give her some hope.

Suddenly the devotees heard that Nimāi Paṇḍita, Śrī Gaurāṅga, had left Navadvīpa. They learned that He had gone to Kāṭwā, to Keśava Bhārati's āśrāma to take *sannyāsa*, bidding goodbye to the people of Navadvīpa forever.

A dark shadow came down. Many began to weep and cry for Him. Many of them ran towards Kāṭwā. Nimāi Paṇḍita was an unprecedented scholar with beautiful features—tall, fair, and benevolent. He had already made the people mad with the Holy Name of Krishna. He had released the two great sinners Jagāi and Māḍhāi from their nasty life. He had checked the Mohammedan ruler, the Kazi, who had broken the *mṛdaṅga* drum. As a famous *paṇḍita*, he had defeated many scholars who came to conquer Navadvīpa, which was very much renowned for its high culture of learning, especially of logic.

At that time in Navadvīpa, logic (*nyāya*), worship of material energy (*tantra*), and official Hinduism (*smṛti*), were in high culture. Navadvīpa was highly renowned for scholarship. If *paṇḍitas* could not defeat the scholars of Navadvīpa, they could not become famous. From far away in Kashmir, Keśava Kāsmiri

had to come to Navadvīpa to get a certificate that he was a *paṇḍita*. And he was defeated by Nimāi Paṇḍita. Keśava Kāsmiri was such a big *paṇḍita* that it was rumored he was the favorite child of Saraswatī, the goddess of learning. No one could face him. Still, he was defeated by Nimāi Paṇḍita.

✽ EFFULGENT LIKE THE RISING SUN ✽

But Nimāi Paṇḍita left Navadvīpa forever and took *sannyāsa* because the people of Navadvīpa could not appreciate Him. He reached Kāṭwā, where, just on the banks of the Ganges, there was a *sannyāsi* named Keśava Bhāratī. Nimāi went to him and asked him for *sannyāsa*. Keśava Bhāratī suddenly found that his *āśrāma* was full of luster. At first, it seemed as if the sun was rising before him; then he saw that it was a bright person approaching. He rose from his seat, and with strained eyes approached in wonder. “What is this?” he thought.

Then he realized that the great devotee-scholar, Nimāi Paṇḍita, had come. He appeared before him saying, “I want to take *sannyāsa* from you.” But Keśava Bhāratī could not accept Nimai’s offer. “I am charmed by Your beauty and personality,” he said. “But You are so young, only twenty-four years old. What about Your mother, Your wife, and Your guardians? Without consulting with them, I cannot

venture to give You the robe of renunciation.”

In the meantime, as it was Makara-saṅkrānti, a famous holiday, many people had come to take bath in the holy waters of the Ganges. They gathered there and the rumor spread like fire: “Nimāi Paṇḍita of Navadvīpa has come to take *sannyāsa*.” Many men flocked there, until a huge crowd gathered.

❀ AFFECTIONATE OPPOSITION ❀

They all opposed Mahāprabhu’s *sannyāsa*. Some of them raised their voices in protest: “You—Keśava Bhāratī! We won’t allow you to give *sannyāsa* to this young man. He has a family, his mother and wife. We won’t allow it. If you give *sannyāsa* to this charming, young, beautiful boy, we will break down your *āśrāma* immediately. It can’t be!”

But Nimāi Paṇḍita kept pressing for *sannyāsa*. At last, Keśava Bhāratī asked him, “So, you are that Nimāi Paṇḍita about whom we have heard so much? Many big scholars came to conquer Navadvīpa, the famous seat of learning, and You have defeated them all. Are You that Nimāi Paṇḍita?” “Yes,” said Nimāi. Keśava Bhāratī told him, “I can give You *sannyāsa*, but You must take the permission of Your mother—otherwise I won’t, I can’t do it.” Nimāi suddenly began running towards Navadvīpa to ask permission, but Keśava

Bhāratī thought, “He has such a commanding personality, He can do anything.”

Nimāi was called back. Keśava Bhāratī told him, “With Your most extraordinary personality You can do anything. You will go there, charm Your guardians, get permission, and return. Nothing is impossible for You.”

The ordinary public was very much enraged, saying to Keśava Bhāratī, “We can’t allow you, Swāmījī, to give *sannyāsa* to this young boy. It is impossible! If you do, then we shall smash your *āśrāma*.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began performing *kīrtana*, chanting Hare Krishna and dancing madly. And the angry mob grew, sometimes creating a disturbance. In this way the whole day passed with no decision. The night passed in *saṅkīrtana*. And the next day, Nimai’s will prevailed, although there was still some opposition.

✽ TEARS FROM THE EYES OF MILLIONS ✽

Nityānanda Prabhu, along with Nimai’s maternal uncle Candraśekhara, Mukunda Datta and Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, gradually arrived there. And that afternoon, the *sannyāsa* function began. Candraśekhara Ācārya was asked to perform the ceremony on behalf of Nimāi Paṇḍita, who began to chant and dance and charm the audience.

lakṣa-locanāśru-varṣa-harṣa-keśa-kartanam
 koṭi-kaṇṭha-kṛṣṇa-kīrtanādhya-daṇḍa-dhāranam
 nyāsi-veśa-sarva-deśa-hā-hutāśa-kāśtaram
 prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

“While showers of tears fell from the eyes of millions, He delighted in having His beautiful hair shaved away. Millions of voices sang the glories of Krishna, as Śrī Krishna Chaitanya accepted the staff of renunciation. From that time on, wherever He went, whoever saw Him in the dress of a *sannyāsi* cried in grief. I sing the glories of that beautiful Golden God, the giver of divine love.”

❀ MAHĀPRABHU’S SANNYĀSA ❀

The scene was at Kāṭwā. Four-hundred and seventy-four years ago, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*. He was young and beautiful, with a tall figure. He was only twenty-four and had beautiful curling hair. A barber was asked to shave Him, and approached Him, but then withdrew. The barber could not venture to touch Nīmaī’s body. He began to cry. “How can I remove such beautiful hair from such a beautiful head?”

And so many others were also crying aloud, “What a horrible thing is being done here! Who is the creator of this *sannyāsa*? Who is so hard-hearted that he created the *sannyāsa-āśrāma*, where one must give up all that is near and dear and go from door to door, beg-



The Sannyāsa of Nimai Paṇḍita. Plunged into an ocean of unhappiness, Mahāprabhu's devotees weep in disbelief.

ging, leaving his own friends and relatives crying helplessly? What is this creation of the Supreme? Is it logical? Is it a happy thing? It is most cruel!"

Nimāi Paṇḍita was smiling. After the barber was ordered repeatedly, somehow he was forced to shave Nimai's head. At first, he could not venture to touch His hair, saying, "I can't touch Him." But at last, he had to do the service of shaving the beautiful, curling hair of the beautiful face of the twenty-four year old genius boy. He began with his shears. Some people could not stand the scene. Some even became mad. In the midst of the weeping, wailing, and crying of the threatening mob, it was done.

Nimāi Paṇḍita was senseless. After being only half-shaved, He stood up and began chanting in

kīrtana and dancing in ecstatic joy. After He was shaved, the barber promised, “I will never again shave anyone with this hand! I would rather live by begging. This is my last service as a barber.” After this, that barber took up the occupation of a sweetmaker.

Ultimately Nimai’s appeals pacified the mob, and a little before noon the inevitable gradually came: the *sannyāsa* function was performed. Candrasēkara Ācārya, the maternal uncle of Nimāi Paṇḍita, was deputed to take charge of the rituals in the ceremony of *sannyāsa*. When the *mantra* was to be conferred, Nimāi Paṇḍita asked Keśava Bhāratī, “Is this the *mantra* you will give me? I heard it in a dream.” He whispered the *mantra* in the ear of his *guru* who accepted, saying, “Yes, this is the *mantra* I shall give You.” Then that *mantra* was given.

And the name of this *sannyāsi* was not given in an ordinary way either. A most peculiar name came through Keśava Bhāratī: “Krishna Chaitanya.” None of the ten names generally given to *sannyāsis* was given to Nimāi Paṇḍita, but the name that was given to Him was Krishna Chaitanya. As soon as they heard that name, the mob began to cry, “Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu *ki jaya!*” “All glories to Śrī Krishna Chaitanya!”

The father of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was a class-friend of Nimāi Paṇḍita. On his way to his father-in-law’s house, he heard that Nimāi Paṇḍita had come to take

sannyāsa. He ran there, and seeing everything, he became dumb—he was devastated and went half-mad. After that, nothing came from his mouth but “Chaitanya!” After he heard the name “Krishna Chaitanya,” whatever anyone said to him, he would only say, “Chaitanya!” He became mad. After that, his name became Chaitanya dāsa. His former name vanished, and everyone used to call him Chaitanya dāsa. He could not stand the scene of Nimāi Paṇḍita’s *sannyāsa*.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, newly dressed in red robes, embraced His *guru*, and both of them began to dance, chanting the name of Krishna. After some time, the meaning of the name was given. Keśava Bhāratī Mahārāja said, “Śrī Krishna Chaitanya means that You arouse Krishna consciousness throughout the entire world. You have descended to make all people Krishna conscious. So the most suitable name for You cannot but be Śrī Krishna Chaitanya.”

✽ THE NECTARINE WORLD ✽

Mahāprabhu was very cheerful, thinking, “I am going to relieve so many souls from their eternal misery and affliction. I have promised to deliver the whole world from this ocean of misery and take them to the nectarine world, and now I am going to accept that task.” He was cheerful, but everyone around

Him was diving in the ocean of despair and sorrow.

Some scholars stress that Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* from Keśava Bhāratī, who was a *māyāvādī*, an impersonalist. But although Keśava Bhāratī may have externally showed himself in that way, it is seen that by coming in connection with Mahāprabhu, he became a devotee. Otherwise, we may also think that he was a devotee who came in the garb of an impersonalist to help the preaching of Mahāprabhu by assisting Him with the social formality of taking *sannyāsa*. At that time, all over India, *māyāvādī sannyāsis* had greater recognition than Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsis*, and Keśava Bhāratī was already situated in that post. Mahāprabhu took the garb of a *sannyāsi* from him for His own purpose, to help His preaching activity. All these things may be explained in different ways. In any case, after Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, Keśava Bhāratī began to sing and dance with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He joined in *saṅkīrtana* and was immediately converted.

❀ KRISHNA CONCEPTION: UNION IN SEPARATION ❀

In this way, the *sannyāsa* of Nimāi Paṇḍita took place. What is the meaning of His *sannyāsa*? Is it redundant, auxiliary, or a necessary part of spiritual advancement? Is it desirable? Although apparently undesirable, still it has its necessity. In the Krishna

conception of theism, there is a deep-rooted correlation between union with the Lord and separation from Him. Without separation, union cannot be deep-rooted. The pain of separation can enter into the depth of the heart much more than cheerfulness. Such apprehension increases our satisfaction. The greater our want, the greater our satisfaction. This is especially true in love affairs. If there is no necessity of a thing, it has no value. This principle is found everywhere. A glass of water is ordinary, but according to the degree of its necessity, its value will increase. So the degree of necessity is most important. Necessity means separation. Necessity independent of fulfillment is separation, hunger.

Separation plays the most important part in both Navadvīpa and Vṛndāvana *līlā*. How many years of union were there between Krishna and the *gopīs*? Krishna was only in Vṛndāvana from the age of seven years up to the age of twelve: five years. Then, He went to Mathura. Of course, it is mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa* that in peculiar or extraordinary cases, growth should be measured by multiplying by one and a half. So when Krishna is eight years old, He should be considered twelve. When He is twelve, He should be considered eighteen years of age. So according to His growth, Krishna was in Vṛndāvana from the age of twelve to eighteen, but according to His years, from the age of seven to twelve.

❀ THE DEPTH OF DIVINE LOVE ❀

He stayed in Dvārakā for a long time; altogether He lived here on this Earth for one hundred and twenty-five years. After He left Vṛndāvana at the age of twelve, the pangs of separation were felt by the *gopīs* throughout their whole lives. Their long, long separation has made their devotion so dignified; the test of separation shows whether love is real. Such a long-standing separation and such a great test has never been found in history; still, the depth of their love did not diminish. Rather, an inconceivable, ever increasing depth of divine love was found there.

And in both Navadvīpa and Vṛndāvana, the background is almost similar. In Navadvīpa, to gain victory over the opposition party, Mahāprabhu left His household life. And in *vṛndāvana-līlā* it is also similar. The opposition in *vṛndāvana-līlā* came from Mathura in the form of Agha, Baka, Pūtānā, Tṛṇāvarta, and other demons who were being sent by King Kāṁsa. To uproot the opposition, Krishna had to go to Mathurā. And when He went there, He found that the opposition was widespread. Kāṁsa's father-in-law, Jarāsandha, Kālayavana, Śīsupāla, Dantavakra, and many others were inimical to Krishna. So Krishna promised the *gopīs* that after finishing His enemies, He would return to Vṛndāvana to play peacefully with them. To uproot the opposition party, Krishna had to go away. And He told the *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra, "I have

some other enemies; after finishing with them, I will be reunited with you.” That sort of hope was given to the *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra.

Here also, to conquer the opposition party, Mahāprabhu had to leave Navadvīpa. Later, after His conquest of all the Indian scholars and religionists of different positions and creeds, after five years, when He returned to Navadvīpa, everyone was transformed. The mass approached Him madly. It is difficult to conceive with what madness the mass approached Śrī Chaitanya-deva, the child of their own village.

❀ THE GANGES—FILLED WITH HUMAN HEADS ❀

They crossed the Ganges. The whole Ganges, as far as it could be seen, was filled with human heads. They were running towards Him from all directions in such a way that the jungles were cleared by human feet. For a few days, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu stayed nearby in Vidyānagara, and then went towards Vṛndāvana, singing the Holy Name of Krishna. Thousands of devotees were running behind Him, digging up the earth to take the dust of His holy feet, and huge pits were being created.

For about eighteen years Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu led a scholarly life as Nimāi Paṇḍita. After that, for about six years, He wandered through the length and breadth of India, including Vṛndāvana.

The last eighteen years of His life, He remained in Jagannātha Purī continuously. For the first six years of His *sannyāsa*, He mixed with the general public. The last twelve years of His life, He almost retired from the whole human society and engaged Himself deeply in tasting the union in separation of Rādhā-Govinda. And many extraordinary symptoms of ecstasy which have never been experienced anywhere, nor even heard of, were expressed by Him. Separation can produce such wonderful effects in the body and mind.

❀ ŚRĪ GAURĀṄGA-AVATĀRA ❀

Śrī Gaurāṅga-*avatāra* has twofold characteristics: the apparent reason for His advent is to deliver to people in general from sin, and to give them the highest attainment of life—to take them towards Vṛndāvana, *vraja-līlā*, by giving the Holy Name of Krishna. This is actually the function of the *yuga-avatāra*, the incarnation of Godhead for the age. The Lord comes to distribute the divine sound and to show how one can reach the highest position through divine sound. Still, He had another purpose to fulfill. Once in Brahmā's day—in a special Kali-yuga—Krishna Himself comes in the mood of Rādhārāṇī to search Himself. He wants to taste the mood of Rādhārāṇī, to understand the nature of Her inner hankering for Krishna, how She can taste the

sweetness of Krishna by Her mood, and what is the joy She derives.

Krishna wanted to have some experience of why Rādhārāṇī is so mad for Him. He thought, “What is there in Me that makes Her so immeasurably mad for Me? What sweetness can She draw from Me? I can’t ascertain it.” He wanted to mold Himself in the mood of Śrī Radhika and try to taste His own self from that temperament. So He came as Śrī Chaitanya.

When He conceived of such an incarnation, and proposed His idea to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, we are told that Rādhārāṇī, on Her part, said, “Sometimes You will madly roll on the earth, taking My name, but I won’t be able to tolerate it. I shall cover Your body with My golden form. I won’t allow You to roll on the earth. I shall cover You with My embrace.” So it is said by those who know the ontological aspect of Śrī Chaitanyadeva, “I offer my respects to Śrī Chaitanyadeva, whose mood and color is Rādhārāṇī’s and whose inner self is Krishna searching for Himself, tasting Himself, and trying to understand why Rādhārāṇī is mad to taste Him and what sort of sweetness She finds in Him (*rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*).”

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu remained in this world for forty-eight years. In the last twelve years of His life, He engaged Himself with deep attention in tasting Himself. Just as everyone is mad to taste

sweetness, Krishna, sweetness personified, is also mad to taste Himself.

Introspection means to know oneself. Consciousness can know consciousness. And just as one can feel his own body, or consciousness can conceive of itself, ecstasy can also taste ecstasy. This is confirmed by Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's personal secretary, who is considered to be Lalitā-sakhī, the nearest friend of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the pastimes of Krishna. He has said what Śrī Chaitanyadeva is:

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī-śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakaṣaṁ adhunā tad dvayam caikyam āptaṁ
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam

“I worship Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Krishna Himself, enriched with the emotions and radiance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. As the predominating and predominated moieties, Rādhā and Krishna are eternally one, with separate individual identities. Now They have again united as Śrī Krishna Chaitanya. This inconceivable transformation of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency has arisen from the loving affairs of Rādhā and Krishna.”

In this verse, Svarūpa Dāmodara says that the pastimes of Rādhā-Krishna and those of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu are parallel and eternal. Whether winter

is first and summer follows, or summer is first and winter follows is difficult to say. Similarly, in the eternal pastimes of the Lord, the movement is rolling in a circle. Therefore, Svarūpa Dāmodara says, “Whether Chaitanya-avatāra is first and Krishna-avatāra is next, or Krishna-avatāra is first and Chaitanya-avatāra is next is difficult to say—both are eternal.”

And who is Śrī Rādhā? She is the development of the sweetness that springs from Krishna Himself. That sweetness, in a developed form as Rādhā, springs up from within Krishna; Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is a particular potency coming out of Krishna Himself: *hlādinī-śakti*. So Rādhā and Krishna cannot be conceived of as separate entities; the two of Them are one and the same. Still, we are told that in ancient times They divided into two. And then again, both of Them combine as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Whose luster and mood is that of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and whose nature and reality within is Śrī Krishna's. Fire and heat cannot be separated; sun and light cannot exist separately. They are one and the same. The Absolute Truth is one absolute substance (*advaya-jñāna*), but sometimes Rādhā and Govinda show Themselves as divided and again They are united. When They are together, They are enjoying each other, and sometimes They experience a painful separation without the possibility of union. That is Their divine nature.

Śrī Rupa Goswāmī explains this as follows:

aher iva gatiḥ premṇah
svabhāva-kuṭilā bhavet
ato hetor ahetoś ca
yūnor māna udañcati

He says that just as a serpent naturally moves in a crooked way, in a zigzag way, the nature of love is naturally crooked. It is not straight. So the concerned parties quarrel, sometimes with cause and sometimes without cause, and separation comes. Separation is necessary for the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā and Krishna.

✽ THE PANGS OF SEPARATION ✽

There are four kinds of separation: *pūrva-rāga*, *māna*, *pravāsa*, and *prema-vaicittya*. *Pūrva-rāga* means before meeting. This is found when Rādhā and Govinda are not actually meeting, but somehow one has come in remote connection with the other's name, portrait, or something of that nature. When Rādhā hears Krishna's name or the sound of the flute—no real meeting is there, but there is some connection. The sound of Krishna's flute, a picture of Krishna, or Krishna's name may bring about *pūrva-rāga*. And Krishna may experience

something similar by hearing the sound of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's name. In this way, there are pangs of separation, but no actual meeting. The name is so sweet that He can't contain Himself; she can't contain Herself.

When the Holy Name of Krishna enters within Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's ear, She becomes perturbed, thinking, "Is a name as sweet as this possible within this world?" This is Her reaction, and She experiences this also. She feels, "I can't meet Him." A pang of separation comes within Her heart. That is *pūrva-rāga*: the pain of separation that comes before meeting.

Māna is another kind of separation. *Māna* means that when meeting, there is some difference between Them in trifling matters. This is the very nature of love. Therefore, Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī says that love moves in a curved way like a serpent. It is not diseased, but this is the nature of the path of love. Sometimes with a trifling cause, or with no cause, a feeling comes that, "He is neglecting me; He wants to avoid Me." And thereby Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī thinks, "I don't want His company." Although cent per cent appreciation is there, still, for the time being, some opposing sentiments spring up from underground; a clash comes in the sentiments of the Two, and One wants to avoid the company of the Other.

❀ TRANSCENDENTAL JEALOUSY ❀

In *prema-vaicittya*, jealousy rises to such a degree that although They are already together, still some sort of thought comes within and makes Them think that They are far away from each other. These different kinds of separation are found only in the *madhura-rasa*. *Prema-vaicittya* is that condition which arises when Krishna is there and Rādhārāṇī is just nearby, but seeing Her own shadow reflected on the body of Krishna, She is so jealous that She thinks that it is another lady. So, great pangs of separation come within Her, and She thinks, “What is this? Another lady is there!” Her mind revolts. But Her friend, Lalitā, is warning Her, “What are You saying? It is only Your own image reflected there. Can’t You see it?” Then Rādhārāṇī comes to Her consciousness. She particularly notices, “Oh, it is My own shadow.” Then that feeling is immediately gone. This is an example of *prema-vaicittya*. These are extremely high transcendental subjects, and although this is not to be discussed in details, this is the nature of divine love in union and separation. Both are interdependent, for One cannot stay without the Other, and separation is created willingly to enhance union.

Another kind of separation is called *pravāsa*. There are two types of *pravāsa*: one is when the separation is for a limited time; another is when one has

left the country for a far-off place, as when Krishna went to Mathurā to attend to other duties. These are the four types of separation pangs between the lover and the beloved.

Of course, these transcendental topics are very high, and we should not indulge in them carelessly, for if we project mundane characteristics into the higher plane, our future realization will be harmed. Our mundane experience will tend to take us down, so we must proceed with caution. What we conceive of at present is not to be found in the plane of Krishna's pastimes—it is a far higher plane of existence than the realm of our experience. Our vision is adulterated. We have only an alloyed conception of the original thing. We must keep this in mind, and with this caution we may deal with these things.

It is safer to deal with the topics of the separation between Rādhā and Govinda than with Their union. Of course, we must understand that the pain of separation experienced by Rādhā and Govinda has nothing to do with this plane. And so, with this caution, we may talk to some extent about separation, but it will be extremely dangerous for us to discuss or to think of when Rādhā-Govinda and Their intimate friends are combined, enjoying each other's company, because if we deal with the pastimes of Rādhā and Krishna with any mundane conception, we will create a great offense. So to conceive of the union of

Rādhā and Govinda is more dangerous than cultivating feelings of separation, as Mahāprabhu has shown by His example.

In separation from Krishna, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is thinking, “I can’t tolerate even My own life without Krishna! Without His grace, without His company, I can’t maintain My undesirable existence.” This kind of mood helps us, but still we should not imitate it; rather we must respectfully accept it as our highest ideal. This will help us brush aside our filthy, unwanted habits (*anarthas*). If some tears come, however, we should not think that we have realized the highest stage; that sort of thinking should be avoided. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu Himself says, “I don’t have a drop of divine love within Me, for otherwise, how could I maintain My mundane life?”

And Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* so that the residents of Navadvīpa would be drawn into this high stage of separation through affection’s force. His old mother Śacī-devī was crying hopelessly. His young wife, Viṣṇupriyā-devī, was helplessly passing Her days. Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* to create excitement, piercing into the hearts of the people the divine love that He came to give. They thought, “Who was Nimāi Paṇḍita? What great benefit did He come to give us?” That He left everything made them sympathetic towards Him.

And for all these reasons the Lord went to take *sannyāsa*.

❀ “I MUST RUN TO VṚNDĀVANA!” ❀

After the function of *sannyāsa* was finished, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu became mad. “I must run to Vṛndāvana,” He thought. “I have given up all connection with this world. I have no attraction for it. I must run to Vṛndāvana to exclusively engage Myself in the service of Krishna.” In trance, He began to chant a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where Krishna gives a description of *sannyāsa* to Uddhava. This verse was spoken by a *tridaṇḍī bhikṣu*, a mendicant. Mahāprabhu quoted this verse, thinking, “I have accepted this garb of a *sannyāsi* for this is favorable to My spiritual life. Now, no one in society has any claim over Me, and I will be able to exclusively devote Myself to the service of Krishna. I am going to Vṛndāvana with no other engagement or connection with anyone.” In this way, in ecstatic madness He began to chant and dance. Keśava Bhāratī Mahārāja embraced Him, and both guru and disciple joined together, chanting and dancing. At that time Mahāprabhu spoke the verse of the *brāhmaṇa* who, in the last stages of his life, took *tridaṇḍa sannyāsa* and had to tolerate the torture of society in different forms. He said:

etām sa āsthāya parātma-niṣṭhām
 adhyāsītām pūrvatamair mahāṛṣibhiḥ
 ahaṁ tariṣyāmi duranta-pāram
 tamo mukundāṅghri-niṣevayaiva

“The previous great sages have accepted and shown the path of *sannyāsa*. I have now accepted that very form of life. Now leaving everything aside, I shall run towards Vṛndāvana. There, taking the name of Mukunda, Krishna, I shall cross over the ocean of nescience. Crossing over this *māyā*, I shall reach Vṛndāvana and fully enter the service of Krishna.”

The dress of a *sannyāsi* is meant only for an external adjustment, but the real thing is to serve Mukunda. And so, with this verse, He suddenly started towards Vṛndāvana from Kāṭwā. Near the banks of the Ganges, He entered the jungle thinking, “Now, my duty is to reach Vṛndāvana as soon as possible and there, in a solitary place, I shall sit and chant and sing the name of Krishna.”

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu ran towards Vṛndāvana and entered the jungle before evening. And Nityānanda Prabhu, Candrasekhara Ācārya, Mukunda Datta, and Jagadānanda pursued Him through the jungle. Sometimes while running He would suddenly fall on the ground and begin to cry, “Krishna, Krishna!” Getting up suddenly, He began



The Deity of Nimai Paṇḍita. The original Deity installed and worshiped by Viṣṇupriyādevī.

running—without any apparent direction—to the north, east, west and south.

❀ WANDERING IN TRANCE ❀

Sometimes He would run away so swiftly that the devotees could not trace Him, especially in the night, when they would lose Him in the darkness. Then, they would all be disappointed, thinking, “Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, our Lord and Master, has left us!” But suddenly they would hear Him far away, crying, “Krishna, Krishna, Krishna!” in a piteous, wailing tone. Then they would run in that direction and see that He was lying on the ground, crying,

kāhāṅ mora prāṇa-nātha murali-vadana
kāhāṅ karoṅ kāhāṅ pāṅ vrajendra-nandana

“Where is my beloved Krishna? I can’t tolerate His separation. Where is the Lord of My life, who is playing His flute? What shall I do now? Where should I go to find the son of Mahārāja Nanda?” In a piteous, heart-rendering tone, He was crying. In a bewildered state, with no consciousness of any particular direction, He would say, “Who are you? I’m going to Vṛndāvana. Why are you disturbing me?” After nursing Him, again they began to start towards the west, towards Vṛndāvana. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu continued wandering in trance. But the

great attraction of His devotees did not allow Him to go towards the west.

Taking advantage of His trance, Nityānanda Prabhu somehow coaxingly turned Mahāprabhu's face towards Śāntipura. It is mentioned in the *Chaitanya-Bhāgavata* that beginning from Kāṭwā, they went west until they reached a place near Vakreśvara, about six miles north-east of Dubrarājpurā, in the district of Birbhum. In Viśramatalā, on the other side of the Adjai river, there is a place which is observed as the seat of Śrī Chaitanya. There, they say, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu turned His face from the west towards the east, or from Vṛndāvana to Śāntipura.

They wandered throughout the remaining evening, and then another day and night. Finally, on the third day, in the evening, He returned through Kālnā to Śāntipura through the arrangements of Nityānanda Prabhu, who appeared before Mahāprabhu in the red cloth of a renunciate. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, although so familiar with Him, couldn't recognize Nityānānda. He saw a *sannyāsi* before Him and thought, "I am going to Vṛndāvana, and here is a *sannyāsi* in front of me." He said, O Śrīpada *sannyāsi*, where are You going?

"I shall go to Vṛndāvana with You."

"How far is Vṛndāvana from here?"

Nityānanda showed Him the Ganges, near Kālnā, saying, "Just see, there is the Yamunā."

Mahāprabhu said, “Oh, We have come so near the Yamunā!” Then, He took his bath in the Yamunā, singing this verse:

**cid-ānanda-bhanoḥ sadā nanda-sūnoḥ
para-prema-pātrī drava-brahma-gātrī
aghānām lavitrī jagat-kṣema-dhātrī
pavitrī-kriyān no vapur mitra-putrī**

“O daughter of the sun: although you have appeared in the form of water, you are most dear to the son of Nanda, who is the spiritual sun. You dispel the sins of all sinners. Please purify this mortal body.” (Kavi Karnapura: *Chaitanya Candrodaya-nāṭaka* 5.13)

Just before Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu arrived there on the banks of the Ganges, Nityānanda Prabhu sent Candraśekahara to inform Advaita Ācārya to come. When Mahāprabhu asked Advaita Ācārya, “Is that you, Advaita? How did you know I was in Vṇḍāvana?” Advaita Ācārya said, “This must be some kind of joke. Wherever You are is Vṇḍāvana. And it is my fortune that You have come here, near the Ganges.”

“Oh, it is the Ganges?”

“Yes.”

Then Mahāprabhu, regaining His consciousness of this world, said, “Oh, then it is a conspiracy of Nityānanda Prabhu. He has brought Me here to the banks of the Ganges and told Me it is the Yamunā. It is all a hoax! I have fallen prey to His hoax.”

Advaita Ācārya argued, “No, no, Nityānanda Prabhu has not spoken any falsehood. You have really taken bath in the Yamunā. The confluence of the Yamunā and the Ganges is in Āllāhabād, and it is mentioned in *śāstra* that the western side is the Yamunā, the eastern side is the Ganges. Now You have taken your bath in the western side, so You have taken Your bath in the Yamunā, according to scripture. So Nityānanda Prabhu has not told any lie. Anyway, I have come with this new dress for You. Leave Your wet clothes and accept this new garb. I have also cooked something for You. For three days you have been fasting, and today, as a *sannyāsi*, you must take some charity in my house. I am a poor man,” he said with folded palms, “but You must come.” They took him by boat to Śāntipura, to the house of Advaita Ācārya. The next morning Śacīdevī came, and Mahāprabhu spent about ten or twelve days there in Śāntipura performing *kīrtana*.

✽ WHAT IS VṚNDĀVANA? ✽

What is Vṛndāvana proper? It is a stage of consciousness. In different stages of consciousness, there are different subjective realities. Everything springs from the willpower of the Lord. He is the subject, and His potency and sweet will is all subjective. The Lord said, “Let there be light,”—and there was light. He

said, “Let there be water,” —and there was water. He said, “Let there be earth,” —and there was earth. If, like a hypnotist, the higher subject wants to make the lower subject see something, he cannot but see that thing. We are all in the subjective, imaginary world, but above imagination is the supersubjective plane of reality. So, Krishna reveals Himself to one who has developed pure consciousness, and in the stage of pure consciousness one can perceive the true nature of subjective reality (*sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditam*).

To show us that Vṛndāvana is everywhere, Mahāprabhu was running here and there in ecstasy. When They met, Advaita Prabhu told Him, “You must be jesting when You say *You* are going to Vṛndāvana. Wherever You are—that is Vṛndāvana. We have that experience. What You say is very peculiar: ‘I am going to Vṛndāvana.’ Simply to teach us the value of Vṛndāvana, You are posing in this way.”

❀ THE LAND OF LOVE ❀

Vṛndāvana, the highest plane of divinity, is a stage of consciousness. Above the plane of awe and reverence found in *Vaikuṇṭha*, is Vṛndāvana, the land of simplicity and divine love. The peculiarity of the inhabitants of that highest plane of consciousness is that they do not feel they are in Vṛndāvana. It is *aprākṛta*, supramundane.

Knowledge has been classified under five headings. The lowest is knowledge acquired through one's own sense experience: *pratyakṣa*—what we have experienced through our senses. That is the first stage. The next higher stage is knowledge we have not experienced with our own senses, but have gathered from the experience of others (*parokṣa*), just as the scientists have their experience, and we have gathered some knowledge from their inventions and discoveries.

The third stage is above the stage of human experience (*aparokṣa*). It is something like deep sleep. When we awaken, we say, "I slept very happily; I slept a very good, sound sleep." But when in deep, dreamless sleep, we have no consciousness of that state. When we return from a deep dreamless sleep, we express some awareness of that experience, but it is hazy. *Aparokṣa* is a sort of hazy experience which is indistinct, where the subject and material object come together, and the material object vanishes in the subject. Śaṅkarācārya, the great proponent of impersonalism, explains the gradation of consciousness up to this point.

✽ THE FOURTH DIMENSION ✽

On the other hand, the great devotee-scholar Rāmāṇujācārya, as well as other Vaisnava *ācāryas*, are of the opinion that there is a fourth stage

beyond this. That plane is called *adhokṣaja*, transcendental, or that which exists beyond the scope of the senses, whether gross or subtle. It is a plane that we can experience only when, by its sweet will, it comes down to our gross plane of understanding. If it withdraws, we are helpless; we can't find it. We cannot say that the Absolute Truth is under the control of our knowledge. We can't measure it like that. It is independent. By its sweet will it may come down and we may experience that higher realm, but if it withdraws, we are quite helpless; we can do nothing. We may cry or we may pray, but we can't enter there forcibly by dint of our own power. This is the fourth plane of consciousness, and it is grand, all-powerful, and all-inspiring. Only if it reveals itself to us can we have some experience of that plane known as *Vaikuṇṭha*, the unlimited spiritual region of awe and power

That is the *adhokṣaja* plane. So, there is *pratyakṣa* direct experience through sense perception, then *parokṣa*, learning through the experience of others, then *aparokṣa*, the negative plane of indistinct consciousness, and then the fourth dimension: *adhokṣaja*. We are underground. Real knowledge is above, on the surface, beyond our experience. If we can pierce through the thick coverings walling up our experience, we can come in connection with another plane of consciousness: that is *adhokṣaja*. *Adho-kṛtam*

indriya-jam jnānam: adhokṣaja means the superior knowledge which can force down our knowledge of the experience of this world. That transcendental, supramental knowledge is the fourth stage of knowledge. That plane is different in every way. It is not similar to this world.

But through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, we come to know that there is a fifth stage of knowledge which is very similar to this mundane world, yet is not mundane. It is called *aprākṛta*. That is Goloka, the full-fledged theistic conception which is only found in Krishna's domain. Central knowledge of the absolute must have a connection with even the lowest level of mundane creation; it must be able to harmonize the worst portion of the illusory world. This is known as *aprākṛta*, supra-mundane. To enter that highest realm is possible only through divine love.

Everything can be compensated only through love. There is a saying that a loving mother thinks that her blind child has beautiful lotus eyes. She is blinded by affection. So, what is mean and low can only be compensated by love—that shines very beautifully. That is *prema*, or divine love. Through mercy, through pity, through grace, a king can come to play with a boy on the street. Affection can make it possible. The difference between high and low disappears at such a stage.

✽ THE SPIRITUAL ENCHANTING POTENCY ✽

The residents of Vṛndāvana think themselves ordinary. This is *jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti*, divine love which is free from any calculation and does not consider even the opulence and power of the Lord. That devotion is above even *Vaikuṇṭha* and goes on under the spell of *yogamāyā*, the spiritually enchanting potency. It is the special art of *yogamāyā* that those holding the highest position think themselves very insignificant. Love removes the difference of great and small, high and low. Vṛndāvana is such a plane of existence. There we find devotion free from any trace of calculation (*jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti*). Even the residents of Vṛndāvana may not know their own exalted position.

Advaita Prabhu tells Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “Wherever You are, there is Vṛndāvana.” Narottama daśa Ṭhākura says wherever we find a true devotee of Krishna—there is Vṛndāvana (*yata vaiṣṇavagaṇa sei sthāna vṛndāvana. Prema-Bhakti-Chandrikā*). Outwardly we may think that they are members of this ordinary world, but the object of all their conversation and behavior is Vṛndāvana. Still, although they are in Vṛndāvana, they do not feel themselves to be there.

They are not conscious of their own exalted position. A king, when he is not very conscious of his power, thinks of himself as an ordinary person. It is something like that. Someone may be a great doctor but

through affection he may do the work of a nurse for his patient. Out of his love and affection for the patient, he may come down to do such work, but still he is great. This is the beautiful nature of Vṛndāvana life. It is great without the attitude, the air of bigness. Although they are really great, they appear to be simple. Power dressed in affection and love, couched in humility—that is Vṛndāvana. And that is also Navadvīpa.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu say that this is the highest and most laudable place for us to live. There, the Supreme Lord Krishna and the *gopīs* are living in the forest. There, we find no grandeur or big buildings, but if we have a true eye for grandeur, we will see it in Vṛndāvana. From an impartial judgement of the facts, their position is very great, but through humility they have apparently descended to our level. It is a very sweet and beautiful form of life that we find in Vṛndāvana. And Mahāprabhu came to show that to us through Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Krishna is the Lord of that land, and the cows, hills, forests, and the Yamunā river are all creating a favorable environment there.

So Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* to teach us, to take us up and make us the permanent inhabitants of that place. He says that actually, our real self lives in that plane, but unfortunately our consciousness has become focused outside. Now we are captured by the mundane aspect of this creation and think that we are suffering,

but this is all illusion. We must get relief from this mania. Mania means madness, and now we are possessed by some mania. Just as a madman leaves his home and wanders in the street collecting pieces of paper and cloth, we are focused in this world, but when this madness is gone, we will awaken in our own home.

✽ A GREAT TRAGEDY ✽

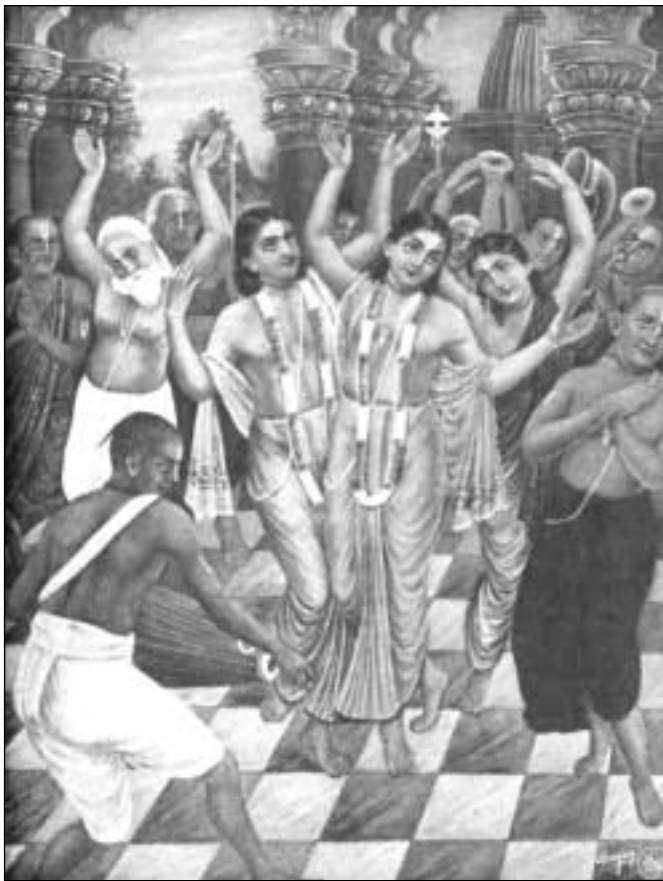
We must return back to Godhead, back to home. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Your home is a beautiful land. You must try for that. Why are you always troubled with the horrors of war, epidemic, earthquake, undesirable disease, stealing, dacoiting, and fighting with so many neighbors? At the bottom of all this is the fact that you have identified yourself with this material world and this body of flesh and blood. You have to retrace your path and go back to your home.” That is what is necessary. Our homeland is such a lovely and beautiful and divine place. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s *sannyāsa* is all for us, and it is for the purpose of taking us back home, where we can have home comforts, home sweetness. If we have any home-consciousness within, then we must appreciate such a proposal: home sweet home.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s *sannyāsa* is apparently very cruel to His devotees, and to His family members, but it was meant only to take us to our home. To work out the ecstasy of union, it was necessary for Śrī



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura envisioned himself seeing Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu on a rooftop and expressed his heart's desire, "When will the day come when Naimi Paṇḍita will give up the robes of renunciation and again come and join us in kīrtana at the house of Śrīvāsa?"

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to show separation from His devotees and relatives. Separation and union are mutually helpful. Mahāprabhu's *sannyāsa*, His renunciation, is a great tragedy of separation.



Nocturnal Kīrtana. Nimai Paṇḍita and associates absorbed in the nocturnal *rasa-kīrtana* at the house of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura.

Part 2

Śikṣāṣṭakam
The
Precepts of
Śrī Chaitanya
Mahāprabhu



THE HOLY NAME OF KRISHNA

SANSKRIT

चेतोदर्पणमार्जनं भवमहादावाग्निनिर्व्वापणं
श्रेयःकैरवचन्द्रिकावितरणं विद्यावधूजीवनम् ।
आनन्दाम्बुधिवर्द्धनं प्रतिपदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनं
सर्वात्मस्नपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्णसंकीर्तनम् ॥१२॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanaṁ bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇaṁ
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaranaṁ vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanaṁ prati-padaṁ pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanaṁ
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam

TRANSLATION

“The Holy Name of Krishna
cleanses the mirror of the heart
and extinguishes the fire of misery
in the forest of birth and death.

As the evening lotus blooms
in the moon’s cooling rays,
the heart begins to blossom
in the nectar of the name.

And at last the soul awakens
to its real inner treasure
—a life of love with Krishna.

Again and again tasting nectar,
the soul dives and surfaces in
the ever-increasing ocean
of ecstatic joy.

All phases of the self
of which we may conceive
are fully satisfied and purified,
and at last conquered by
the all-auspicious influence
of the Holy Name of Krishna.”

ILLUMINATION

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is the pioneer of Śrī Krishna *saṅkīrtana*. He said, “I have come to inaugurate the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna, and that name will reach every nook and corner of the universe (*pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*).”

What is the meaning of *saṅkīrtana*? *Samyak* means “full” and *kīrtana* means “chanting.” Together, these two words form the word *saṅkīrtana* which generally means “congregational chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna.” But *samyak* means full not only in quantity but also in quality. Full quantity means extensive in number: congregational. Full quality means complete praise. Complete praise can only mean the glorification of Krishna, and not any other gods.

So *saṅkīrtana* means complete *kīrtana*, a song in praise of the complete whole, the Absolute Truth; anything else is only a partial representation and therefore defective to a certain extent. Therefore, Krishna should be praised. His glories should be chanted, for He is everything. He is the master, the dispenser of both good and bad, the Absolute Controller of everything. Everything is due to Him. The fulfillment of all life is reached in Him alone. Just as a horse may have reins to check his movements, but if let loose will run freely, praise which is

unchecked by any mundane purpose will run straight towards the Supreme Cause, Krishna.

The word *śrī* means Lakṣmīdevī: Krishna's potency. This means that in *saṅkīrtana*, Krishna is worshiped along with His potency, for Krishna's potency is included within Him.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says that *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* should thrive throughout the world; it should be victorious without any hindrance (*param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*). It should be a spontaneous, unchecked, and natural flow. It should be exclusive, independent, and without reservation. And this praise of Krishna should be congregationally chanted—that vibration is beneficial for the whole world. Only by surrender and pure devotion can we take to *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*.

✽ CLEANSING THE MIRROR OF THE MIND ✽

What are the different stages through which we will pass while chanting the Holy Name of Krishna? The first stage is that it cleanses the mirror of the mind. If the mirror of the mental system is covered with dust, we cannot see things clearly, and scriptural advice cannot be properly reflected there. What are the different kinds of dust covering the mirror of the mind? Our infinite, fleeting, and organized desires are considered dust, and our hearts and minds are covered

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare**

The Supreme Syllables. The Hare Krishna *Mahā-mantra*.

with layers and layers of this dust. Therefore we cannot see things properly; they cannot properly reflect in our mind because it is covered with the infinite ordinary desires of this mundane world (*bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī*—*sakali* ‘asanta’).

So the first effect of *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* is the cleansing of the mind. The Vedic social system (*varnāśrama-dharma*) has been formed for this purpose. If we discharge our social duties perfectly, without any attraction for the consequences, we achieve purification of our consciousness—but the first installment of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* gives us the end result of *varnāśrama-dharma*: purification of the heart and mind. Then we can understand Vedic advice properly.

The next effect of chanting the Holy Name is that it extinguishes the fire of material existence in the forest of repeated birth and death. We are forced to come

into creation and again die. The mundane wave catches the soul which mingles with that vibration in different stages. That is stopped by the second effect of *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, and we become liberated.

With the first stride, the intelligence is purified. With the second stride, the Holy Name effects liberation from the great conflagration of threefold miseries. The threefold miseries are *ādhyātmika*: miseries within the body and mind, such as disease and mental anxiety; *ādhibautika*: miseries from our neighbors: man, beasts, insects, and so many other living beings; and *ādhidaivika*: natural catastrophes like famine, flood, and earthquake. We have to suffer from these three kinds of miseries which burn in our heart like fire. But everything is extinguished forever by the second stride of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* which gives us relief.

✽ THE SUPREME GOAL OF LIFE ✽

The next stage is *śreyāḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitarāṇam*: the Holy Name bestows upon us the supreme goal of life. After doing away with these two negative engagements, our positive engagement begins and ultimately takes us to reality, to the real truth, which is eternal, auspicious, and beautiful. It takes us to that auspiciousness which is above this world of difficulty, and in a general way we achieve

the supreme goal, the highest auspiciousness, the greatest good from chanting the Holy Name of Krishna. If we analyze this scrutinizingly, we find that in this stage, the Holy Name takes us to an intimate personal relationship with Krishna which includes neutrality, servitude, friendship, and filial affection (*śānta*, *dāśya*, *sakhya*, and *vātsalya rasa*). Śreyah covers the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu, for it is by His grace that we may be allowed to worship Rādhā and Krishna in Vṛndāvana (*nitāiyer karuṇā habe braje rādhā kṛṣṇa pābe*).

The next stage is *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*. The Holy Name prepares us for the wholesale surrender to Krishna that is found in conjugal love (*madhura rasa*) where the devotees surrender themselves infinitely at the disposal of Krishna.

The next stage is *ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam*. When we come to the proper level while chanting the name of Krishna, we find the transcendental ocean that is above all sorts of experience. The name comes to assert Himself over us according to the degree of our surrender, and when our surrender is complete, we feel a new type of ecstatic joy; we experience an infinite ocean of joy which is not static, but always dynamic. There we find new life and a new type of blissfulness. It never becomes stale or static, but at every moment gives us a taste of the infinite ocean of ecstasy.

❀ COMPLETE SELF-PURIFICATION ❀

The last effect is that our entire existence is purified. This kind of enjoyment does not pollute—it purifies. Enjoyment means exploitation. Mundane enjoyment creates a reaction and pollution attacks the enjoyer, but here, because Krishna is the aggressor, the result is purification. All enjoyment that comes from the center, from the autocratic desire of Krishna, purifies us completely.

In this verse, the words *sarvātma śaṇpanam* mean that all different phases of the self which may be conceived are fully satisfied and purified at once by chanting the Holy Name of Krishna. And there is another meaning of *sarvātma śaṇpanam*. If we praise Krishna congregationally, we will be purified according to our capacity. Both the singer and the audience as well as anyone who comes in connection with the transcendental sound will be purified. *Śaṇpanam* means “purifying.” That vibration purifies everyone and everything that comes in touch with it.

So Mahāprabhu says, “Go on with *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna.” Of course, *saṅkīrtana* must be genuine, so association with saints is necessary. It is not an empirical attempt. We are attempting to have a connection with the higher, unconditioned realm which can descend to help us here. We must have that connection with higher reality, for that is all-important. The

Holy Name of Krishna is not mere physical sound; it is not lip-deep only, but it has a greater and higher aspect (*nāmākṣara bāhirāya baṭe tabu nāme kabhu naya*). It is all spiritual. We are in the marginal plane of existence, so some higher connection is necessary in order that the wave will descend from that higher realm and come to us and spread its influence outside as well.

Wherever it goes, the *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name of Krishna will produce these sevenfold results. This is the purport of Mahāprabhu's first verse. The first effect is that the Holy Name cleanses the soul which is attacked by the dirt of desires from the mundane world. By the second effect it gives *mukti*, liberation, perfect independence from material forces. The third effect brings real fortune: the opening of the soul's treasure. The innate resources of the soul are gradually awakened by the Holy Name of Krishna. Here, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu includes the other forms of relationship with the Personal Absolute. In describing the next step, He takes the mood of conjugal devotion, where one is absolutely disposed for Krishna's enjoyment, unconditionally surrendering everything for His maximum pleasure.

❀ "I NEED MILLIONS OF MOUTHS!" ❀

The next effect is the tasting of his ecstatic association. In Vṛndāvana, the realm of Krishna, one who can chant the name of Krishna properly



Krishna's flute. The sound of Krishna's flute has the great mystic power of capturing and pleasing everyone and everything.

will express himself with a peculiar sort of ego:

**tunḍe tāṇḍavinī ratim vitanute tunḍāvalī-labdhaye
kārṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate kārṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṇām kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyadbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī**

“When the Holy Name of Krishna appears on the lips of a devotee, it begins madly dancing. Then the name takes over and handles him as if the person to whom the lips belong loses all control over his lips, and the devotee says, ‘With one mouth, how much can I gather the ecstasy of the Holy Name? I need millions of mouths to taste its unlimited sweetness. I’ll never feel any satisfaction by chanting with only one mouth.’”

When the sound “Krishna” enters the ear, he feels that transcendental sound awaken in his heart. “What are two ears?” he thinks. “This is the greatest injustice of the creator—I need millions of ears! Then, if I could hear the sweet name of Krishna, my heart might be a little satisfied. I want millions and millions of ears to hear the sweet name of Krishna.” This is the temperament of a devotee when his attention is drawn towards the Holy Name. Then he faints; he loses himself, merging in an ocean of ecstasy and joy. And in great disappointment he says, “I failed to understand the quality and quantity of the substance of Krishna’s name. I am perplexed. What sort of

honey sweetness does this name contain?” In this way, the chanter of the name wonders.

❀ KRISHNA'S MYSTIC FLUTE-SONG ❀

This has been taught to us by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who said, “Properly chant the Holy Name, the sound representation of absolute sweetness.” That sweetness is also to be found in the flute-song of the Lord. The sound of Krishna’s flute has the great mystic power of capturing and pleasing everyone and everything. Upon hearing the sound of Krishna’s flute, the Yamunā’s current is paralyzed. The sweet sound of Krishna’s flute attracts the trees, the birds, and the beasts. Everything is astounded by contacting the sweet vibration from Krishna’s flute.

Sound vibration can work miracles; sound has the highest capturing potency. Sound can make or mar. It can do anything; it has such intrinsic capacity. It comes from the subtlest plane, beyond the ether. That universal sound is absolute sweetness and goodness. How much power is there—how it can capture us! Like a blade of grass, we may be played by the current of that sweet sound in such a way that we cannot even trace out our own personality. We may lose ourselves there, but we do not die; the soul is eternal. Diving, up and down, we are played by the current of the sweet sound. We are less qualified than a straw, a

blade of grass, and the Krishna sound is so big and so sweet that it can play us in any way it likes. We cannot begin to conceive how much power is in the name, the sound which is identical with absolute goodness and sweetness.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Don’t neglect the sound which is one and the same with Krishna.” Absolute sweetness and goodness—everything is there within the Holy Name. And the Holy Name is representing itself to us in a very cheap way: nothing is required to purchase it—no money, no physical energy. All these things are unnecessary. What is required? Sincerity.

One who simply takes this divine sound sincerely will be so enriched that no one will be able to conceive of so much goodness and development. And anyone may have it very cheaply, but one must chant sincerely with his whole heart. Of course, wholehearted sincerity presupposes going to a proper agent, a saint, and getting the Holy Name from him.

Śrī *kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* is praised by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the inaugurator of the *saṅkīrtana* movement who came as Rādhā-Govinda combined. His advice is most valuable and necessary to tell us that with a sincere spirit we must come to join this *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, the most purifying transcendental sound, which effects liberation, gives all fulfillment, and grants us such a positive attainment that we lose

ourselves in the ocean of joy and inconceivable sweetness.

This is Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace, and He proclaims, "Let *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* be expanded into this mortal world, that it may benefit everyone infinitely, for this is the highest and greatest benefit for the whole world. It is all-comprehensive. It releases us from all sorts of troubles, establishing us in the highest position of attainment."

And in this present degraded age of Kali, only *nāma-saṅkīrtana* can help us. Of course, *nama-saṅkīrtana* is beneficial in all ages, but it is especially recommended in Kali-yuga, because in this age all other attempts will be opposed by many forces. *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* cannot be opposed by the troubles and waves of this material world, so one must adopt it. If we exclusively give ourselves to this, we will gain the highest fulfillment of life. There is no necessity of any other campaign, for they are all defective and partial. But the most universal, captivating, and beneficial thing is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, which takes us to the highest goal. That alone can satisfy everyone.

All souls that are now disconnected from Krishna may be helped in this way. No other movement is necessary. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu tells us, "Exclusively devote yourself to this. It is all-embracing and all-fulfilling. And you can achieve it with the least trouble and least energy. Let it flourish in this Kali-yuga—let it

flourish for the welfare of the whole universe, to reestablish all souls in their normal position.”

In the last verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the conclusion of the book is given as follows:

nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ yasya
sarva-pāpa-praṇāśanam
praṇāmo duḥka-śamanas
taṁ namāmi hariṁ param

Pāpa means all anomalies, all undesirable things: sin. Material enjoyment and liberation are also included as anomalies, sinful activities. Why is liberation considered sinful? Because it is an abnormal condition; our natural function is to serve Krishna, but we do not do that in salvation. Mere salvation does not include service to Krishna, so that is an abnormal position and therefore it is also a sin. To ignore our natural duty and stand aloof cannot but be sinful.

✽ THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF VYĀSA ✽

The concluding verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, “Krishna’s Holy Name can relieve us from all undesirable sinfulness, all filthy characteristics, and all miseries. Let us all bow down to Him.” Uttering this verse, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* stops; that great treatise becomes silent. The last word in the *Bhāgavatam* is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The *Bhāgavatam* has

given such great importance to chanting the Holy Name of Krishna, and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu developed it from there. The last publication of the compiler of Vedic literatures, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, took theism to that stage, and gave it to the public announcing, “Chant the name of Krishna! Do this; nothing more is necessary. Take this!” This is the very conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the greatest spiritual gift of Vyāsadeva: “Chant the Holy Name of Krishna and begin your life in this dark age with the most broad and wide theistic conception.”

✽ NECTAR OF THE NECTARINE ✽

We may consider ourselves fortunate that we have come to the verge of this most generous and useful thought, that we have come close enough to touch it, to accept it, and float ourselves in its waves according to our capacity. After passing through so many conceptions and the charm of different prospects, we have left them all behind and have come to the shore of the ocean of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Now we may throw our bodies in this ocean and begin to swim in the waves of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the nectar of the nectarine, by the grace of our *guru* and the mercy of the Vaisnavas.

It is their property, and we are their slaves. We have such audacity to throw our body into this ocean of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and swim in that nectarine ocean!



Sanātana and Rūpa Gosvāmī. The dearmost associates of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Swimming in Rādhā-kunda, the highest conception of spiritual attainment, can also be found in the highest form of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. This verse represents the positive side of the unlimited ocean of *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*. The next verse explains the negative possibilities.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given his Sanskrit

commentary on the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, as well as his Bengali translation, and his is a most original presentation. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has also given his commentary on the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. They should be carefully studied in order to understand these points more completely. In these talks, however, I am simply coming out with whatever I feel in my heart. Whatever comes to my mind on these verses, I am expressing, and that is the outcome of what I have collected from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and all the predecessor *ācāryas*. By their grace that is gathered in my storehouse, and I am trying to give the gist of these things.

✽ THE KRISHNA CONCEPTION CONQUERS ALL ✽

By accepting the path of devotion, a wholesale transformation of our internal system begins, and gradually our charm for the outside world vanishes. There is a war within, and when the Krishna conception enters into the heart of a devotee, all other thoughts and ideas gradually have to retire. This is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.8.5):

**praviṣṭaḥ karṇa-randhreṇa
svānām bhāva-saroruham**

**dhunoti śamalaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ
salilasya yathā śarat**

When the autumn season appears, the mud within the water vanishes. In the same way, when the Krishna conception enters into one's heart, all other conceptions and aspirations will gradually have to retire, leaving Krishna in possession of everything. When a real drop of Krishna consciousness enters the heart, all opposing forces must leave and Krishna will conquer and take possession of the whole.

That is the nature of Krishna consciousness: nothing can stand in competition with it, not even the so-called devotion for the demigods or faith in creeds like Christianity, Islam, and others. All other conceptions of theism have to retire, leaving the field to the Krishna conception. No aggressors can stand in the fight with Krishna consciousness, the absolute, sweet beauty.

Beauty, sweetness, and charm can capture and defeat power. We are really aspiring after beauty and sweetness, mercy, affection, divine love (*prema*). Self-dissipation—to compensate others with one's own energy and generosity—ultimately conquers everyone. It is more rewarding to give than to take. Divine love means die to live: not to live for yourself, but to live for others. The most generous form of life—self-forgetfulness to the extreme—is found in Krishna consciousness.

Krishna consciousness is so beautiful that one who develops it loses his own identification and existence also. He becomes totally self-forgetful. Such a charm is there. Who will stand to fight against Krishna? Everyone who comes to fight against Him is disarmed. If in any way Krishna enters the heart, there can be no other consequence but that He takes possession of everything. Such a benevolent, generous, and sweet person is Krishna: reality the beautiful.



UNLIMITED NAMES OF GOD

SANSKRIT

नाम्नामकारि बहुधा निजसर्व्वशक्ति-
स्तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः ।
एतादृशी तव कृपा भगवन्ममापि
दुर्दैवमीदृशमिहाजनि नानुरागः ॥१६॥

ROMAN transliteration

nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

TRANSLATION

“O my Lord, Your Holy Name
bestows auspiciousness upon all.
And You have unlimited names
such as Krishna and Govinda
by which You reveal Yourself.

In Your many Holy Names
You have kindly invested
all Your transcendental potency.
And in chanting these names,
there are no strict rules
concerning time or place.

Out of Your causeless mercy,
You have descended
in the form of divine sound,
but my great misfortune is
that I have no love
for Your Holy Name.”

ILLUMINATION

Here it is said, “O my Lord, You have revealed the chanting of Your Holy Names, and all Your power has been invested within those names.” Both the Holy Name of Krishna and its potency are eternal. All potencies or energies are found within the Holy Name of Krishna. And there is no particular time or place which has been fixed for chanting the name. It is not that one can only chant in the morning, or only after taking bath, or only after going to a holy place—there are no such conditions. One may go on chanting the Holy Name of Krishna anytime, anywhere, in any circumstance

In this verse, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “O Krishna, You have given a most sublime opportunity to all. You are so infinitely gracious that You have given us the service of Your Holy Name (*nāma bhajana*). Still, my misfortune is the worst. I don’t find any earnest desire within me to take the name. I have no faith, no love, no tendency to take the name. I do not find any innate hankering to chant the name. What can I do?”

This is the second of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s eight precepts. He says, “O Lord, You have given everything from Your side to lift me up from this mundane world of relativity. Your attempt to deliver me is so

magnanimous that all You require from me is a little cooperation in accepting Your grace, but I turn a deaf ear to Your magnanimous call. O Lord, I am hopeless.”

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has given us great hope in the first verse of his *Śikṣāṣṭakam* or eight precepts. He explains that the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna, when properly undertaken, may progress step by step, revealing seven consequences. The first effect is the cleansing of consciousness; the second is liberation from all mundane relativity. As the third effect, positive goodness awakens within our heart and takes us to Vṛndāvana. Then, under the guidance of *svarūpa-śakti*, the Lord’s internal energy *yogamāyā*, we come to the *vadhū* conception: we are potency, we are to serve Krishna unconditionally. *Vadhū* means that *rasa* which gives full connection with the Lord (*madhura-rasa*).

✽ ECSTATIC OCEAN OF JOY ✽

After attaining that stage, what are the other consequences that come? One becomes a particle in the ocean of joy, and that joy is not stale or static, but ever-new and dynamic; it is purifying to the utmost. Although we are allowed to keep our individual conception, still we feel that all parts of our existence become purified to the utmost when we take the name. And this will not only affect me, but all who

are connected with this *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. They will experience mass conversion, mass purification, the utmost purification. These are the sevenfold results of chanting the Holy Name.

After mentioning this thesis in His first verse, Mahāprabhu now gives the antithesis in the second verse. When such great hope is there in the Holy Name, why are we having so much trouble? Where is the difficulty? Why do we not realize the advantage of the magnanimous sanction of divinity found in the Holy Name? Inestimable grace is coming from Krishna's side. He has given us so many opportunities, with the least requirement from our side. We must have some taste, some earnestness to accept the Holy Name; but there's the difficulty—we have none. So what hope can we have? How can we attain it? We may be approaching the Holy Name formally, but not from the core of our hearts, so by what process can we really benefit and make progress? The third verse answers this question.

Although one may feel that he does not have the minimum required deposit to receive the grant, still it is not a hopeless case. The very nature of this realization takes him to the conception of humility. When one begins to practice devotion towards the infinite Lord, he cannot but feel that in relation to the infinite, there is nothing of value in himself. He thinks, "I have nothing to give in return; even the minimum

requirement for the Lord's grace is absent in me." That takes him to the conception that, "I have no qualification. I am completely empty."

A devotee feels within his heart that he is not only unfit but too despicable for the Lord's service. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī says: "I am lower than a worm in stool and more sinful than Jagai and Madhai (*jagāi mādhai haite muñi se pāpiṣṭha puriṣera kīṭa haite muñi se laghiṣṭha*)."

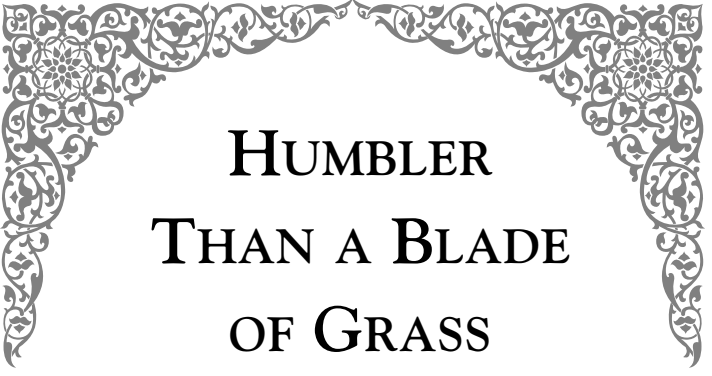
We should not be discouraged when we think we have not even the least bit of merit which is required for the service of the Holy Name of Krishna, for this kind of consciousness is natural for a devotee.

At the same time, we must guard ourselves from an insincere conception of our own devotion; this is our enemy. To think, "I do not have the least liking or taste for the Lord," is all right. But to think, "I have some taste, some earnestness, some devotion for the Lord," is dangerous.

✽ THE EGOISTIC WORLD ✽

If we are going to have a connection with the infinite, we must be fully empty; our self-abnegation must be complete. Worldly attainment is a negative thing, and we must withdraw from it completely. We should think, "I am nothing; I have no qualifications for being accepted or used in the service of the Lord. I am

completely unfit.” We must completely withdraw from the egoistic world and allow ourselves to be captured by *yogamāyā*, the Lord’s internal energy. A slave has no position; the whole position is with the master. Everything is His. Realizing this is our real qualification. As soon as we assert that we have some qualifications, our difficulties begin. So Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu Himself says, “I don’t find a trace of love of Krishna within My heart (*na prema-gandho ’sti darāpi me harau*).” This is the standard of humility. And that feeling must be sincere; it must not be an imitation. We must be careful. We must not venture to imitate the highest devotees. To genuinely feel, to conceive that we possess nothing and that everything is His—that is the only qualification for chanting the Holy Name of Krishna.



HUMBLER THAN A BLADE OF GRASS

SANSKRIT

तृणादपि सुनीचेन तरोरिव सहिष्णुना ।
अमानिना मानदेन कीर्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥२१॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

trṇād api sunīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

TRANSLATION

“One who is humbler
than a blade of grass,
more forbearing than a tree
who gives due honor to others
without desiring it for himself
is qualified to always chant
the Holy Name of Krishna.”

ILLUMINATION

We should mainly couch ourselves in this mood: we should think of ourselves as the meanest of the mean. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given his analysis of the meaning of this verse as follows: even a blade of grass has its value, but we do not even have as much value as a blade of grass. We have no positive value. It is one thing if a man is not educated, but a madman is worse than uneducated. He can think—but only abnormally. Therefore, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “I have some consciousness, some intelligence, but it is all misdirected. A blade of grass has no misdirection. When trampled upon, it has no tendency to spring back in the opposite direction. A blade of grass can be blown here and there by a storm, or by the external environment, but I will always be

reluctant to go in a particular direction. If the waves of the environment want to take me in a particular direction, I'll try to oppose them. If you really consider my value, my position is lower than a blade of grass because I have an opposing tendency."

When we want to bring ourselves in a closer relationship with the infinite goodness, we should think, "I have no value. Rather, my value is negative. It is my tendency to oppose the Lord's grace. If Krishna wants to grace me, I try to resist. I am constituted of such an element that I commit spiritual suicide. Krishna comes to grace me, but I oppose Him: the energy that is within me tries for suicide. This is my position, but a blade of grass won't oppose anyone. I have such a nasty position." We must realize that we are in such a predicament. With this concern we may accept the goodness of the Absolute Truth in the form of His Holy Name.

We should not think that the path will be very smooth; so many troubles may come from outside. When the devotees go to chant Hare Krishna in the street, many people come and shout, "Hey, you monkeys! Red-faced monkeys!" So many forms of hindrances and opposition will come and try to affect us, to dissuade us from this path, but we must practice forbearance like that of a tree. Why has the example of a tree been given? It has been analyzed in this way: if no one pours any water on a tree, it does not

protest, “Oh! Give me water!” If anyone comes to disturb the tree, snatching its leaves, cutting its branches, or even chopping it down, a tree remains silent; it gives no opposition. We should try to see how insult, poverty, punishment, or other unfavorable dealings are necessary to purify us, and with minimal punishment we shall be released from material existence.

Through Krishna consciousness we have connected with the highest object of life, the highest fulfillment of life—what price are we ready to pay for that? It is inconceivable. Whatever little demands may be exacted from us, we must accept with a smiling face, considering the highest goal. If we are really confident, if we have faith in our bright future, then we can gladly pay what little price nature wants to take from us.

✽ “KRISHNA—I SHALL TEACH YOU A LESSON!” ✽

Once, Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, was going through the town of Navadvīpa begging a little rice from different houses. The village people sometimes attack or insult devotees, and as he was going to his quarters they did not spare even such an exalted soul. Some boys were pelting him with stones and throwing dirt at him, and he remarked, “Krishna, You are cruelly dealing with me!

I shall complain to Your mother Yaśodā about You.” That was his outlook, and in that way he harmonized everything. We should learn to see Krishna in anything that comes to disturb or attack us. In philosophical calculation, of course, without God’s will nothing can happen. But in a concrete way, a devotee sees, “O, Krishna! You are backing these children, You are disturbing me, and I shall teach You a lesson. I know how to deal with You. I shall complain to Mother Yaśodā, and she will chastise You.”

The advanced devotees are established in the consciousness that Krishna is behind everything, and they take everything in that way. This attitude is our beacon light, for it will guide us to adjust ourselves with those things that are apparently unfavorable to us. A sweet adjustment is found there, and so we are advised to be more tolerant than a tree. We may not give any opposition; still, opposition will come to disturb us. And we must forbear.

And we must show our respect to others. Prestige is the greatest and most subtle enemy of the devotee of Krishna. Pride is the worst enemy for the devotee of Krishna. And pride ultimately takes one to the conclusion of the *māyāvadīs*, the monists. They say, so ‘ham—“I am!” Not *dāso* ‘ham, “I am subordinate,” but “I am of the Supreme Element; I am That: I am He,” eliminating from their consideration the fact that we are tiny and suffering in misery. All these practical

things are ignored by the *māyāvādīs*, the impersonalists, but position, or ego (*pratiṣṭhā*), is our worst enemy. In this verse, we are advised to deal with prestige and position in a special way.

❀ THE SLAVE AREA OF KRISHNA ❀

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “You must not desire respect from anyone or even from the environment itself; at the same time, you must give prestige to everyone and everything in the environment according to its position. Show respect, but don’t desire any respect from outside.” We must be very particular about this, for pride is our hidden enemy, our worst enemy. If we can somehow avoid or conquer this enemy, we will be able to enter into the slave area of Krishna and join those who have given their lives wholesale in sacrifice to Him. The general meaning of this verse is, “Never seek position or prestige from any quarter. At the same time, give honor to one and all according to your understanding.”

❀ A GREAT INSULT ❀

When our spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, went to Vṛndāvana in the early 1930’s, he rode a motorcar. In those days, this was unheard of for a saint. One day, a priest insulted our

guru by deprecating the position of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī, the preceptor of our highest conception of spiritual achievement. He boasted, “We are not only residents of the holy land, but members of the cast of high priests (*brāhmaṇas*). Therefore we can offer our benedictions to Dāsa Goswāmī. He was born in a low-class family, and he himself asked such a benediction from us.”

Of course, in great humility, Dāsa Goswāmī once prayed,

gurau goṣṭhe goṣṭhālayiṣu sujane bhūsuragaṇe
svamantre śrī-nāmnī vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-śaraṇe
sadā dambhaṁ hitvā kuru ratim apūrvām atitarām
aye svāntarbhṛtaś caṭubhir abhiyāce dhṛta-padaḥ

“O mind—my brother! I fall at your feet and implore you: ‘Give up all pride and always taste ecstatic love while remembering the divine guide, the holy abode of Vṛndāvana, the cowherds and milkmaids of Vraja, the loving devotees of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, the gods on earth or pure *brāhmaṇas*, the Gayātrī *mantra*, the Holy Names of Śrī Krishna and the divine youthful couple of Vraja, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindasundara.’”

That priest remarked, “We are residents of the holy abode of Vṛndāvana, and *brāhmaṇas* as well, so we are in a position to give benedictions to Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī.” Upon hearing these

words, our *guru mahārāja*, who was at Rādhā-kuṇḍa at the time, began fasting. He remarked, “I have to hear this? This fellow is under the control of lust, anger, and greed, and he says that he can show his grace to Dāsa Goswāmī, the most respected preceptor in our line! And I am to hear that?” Without retaliating against his remarks, he decided to fast.

We also stopped eating, and our whole camp began fasting. Then a local gentleman who came to know that the whole camp was fasting managed to find the blasphemous priest and bring him to our *guru mahārāja*. That priest begged to be pardoned. Our *guru mahārāja* was satisfied and, after showing him some respect, finally broke his fast. At that time someone told our *guru mahārāja*, “They are all ignorant fools. Why should you be so much affected by his words? You should ignore it.” Our *guru mahārāja* said, “If I were an ordinary *bābājī* and heard such a remark, I could simply cover my ears and go away. But I am playing the part of an *ācārya*, one who teaches by example. What justification do I have for riding in a motorcar if I do not oppose the remarks against my *gurudeva*?”

Repeatedly he used this expression: “Why am I driving a motorcar here in Vṛndāvana?” he said, “Had I been a *niṣkiñcana bābājī*, a saint living in seclusion and wearing only a loincloth, I would have given no opposition to this man. To save myself, I would simply



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. “. . . because I am riding in a big motorcar in the post of *ācārya*, a teacher—I must defend the dignity of the great devotees.”

leave the place and go elsewhere. But because I am riding in a big motorcar in the post of an *ācārya*, a teacher, I must defend the dignity of the great devotees. I have accepted this charge and can't evade these circumstances. I must face it and do everything in my power that such things may not go on undetected or unopposed.”

Humility must be adjusted or modified in its practical application. Once, when a Hare Krishna temple was attacked, a gun was used by the devotees to defend the temple. Later there was a complaint among the local people. They said, “Oh, they are

humble? They are tolerant? Why have they crossed the advice of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to be humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree? They can't be devotees!" So many complaints were coming to me, but I defended them by saying, "No, they have done rightly. The instruction to be humbler than a blade of grass means one should be humble to the devotee, not to a madman."

The general class of men are ignorant. They are mad. They do not know what is good or bad, so their consideration has no value. Who is qualified to judge whether a devotee is offering respect to all and not expecting any for himself? Who will judge whether he is really humble and tolerant—madmen? Ignorant people? Have they any sense to judge who is humble, who is tolerant, and who is respectful to others? There must be a standard by which to judge humility. We are interested in the criterion given by higher thinkers, not the consideration of the ignorant masses.

✽ THE STANDARD OF HUMILITY ✽

Of course, anyone may deceive the ordinary public with superficial humility. But a show of humility is not real humility. It must come from the heart, and it must have a real purpose. Everything—humility, tolerance, and pridelessness—must be considered by the judgement of a standard, normal person, not by the

ignorant who are like elephants, tigers, and jackals. Should they be allowed to judge what is humility, what is audacity and impertinence? Of course not. Should a devotee think, "The Deity and the temple is about to be molested, but I shall stand by and do nothing. I should be humble and tolerant. A dog is entering the temple; I should show him respect?" No. This is not real humility.

We must have a normal conception of reality. We must not allow these anomalies to continue in the name of offering respects to others. We must not think that we may allow anyone to harm the devotees or molest the temple, that we shall allow the dog to enter the temple, and by doing this we are humble and tolerant, we are showing all respects to others. We are not interested only in the physical meaning of the scriptures, but the real meaning.

That I am humble means that I am the slave of the slave of a Vaiṣṇava. With that consciousness we must proceed. If anyone comes to molest my master, I should first sacrifice myself, thinking, "Because I am of the least importance, my sacrifice is no loss; I must sacrifice myself to maintain the dignity of my *guru*, the devotees, and my Lord and His family."

We must always understand what is to be honored. We offer our respects to the highest truth, the Lord of Lords; our dealings should be in consonance with that. If we always keep the highest conception of

relativity within us, we will see that we are the lowest. If there is danger to our guardians, we shall sacrifice ourselves. All of this should be taken into account when trying to understand the meaning of humility, not physical imitation—but genuine humility; it is a question of practical realization. Fame and honor must be given to the Lord and His devotees, not to anyone else.

In the higher stages of devotion, of course, humility may have to be adjusted in another way for the *paramahansa bābājīs*, the topmost swanlike saints who have given up all connection with this material world. But in the preaching stage, the second class devotee must accept things differently. As our *guru mahārāja* said, “Had I been in the role of a *bābājī*, a nonassertive, reclusive saint, I would have walked away from the place without offering any opposition. But when we are preaching and have taken the responsibility of leading so many souls to the domain of the Lord, our adjustment must be made accordingly.” Generally, we may be indifferent to those who are personally inimical to us, but when we preach on behalf of the Lord in an organized way, our duty changes: we cannot be indifferent to antagonists.

It is mentioned in the scriptures by Jīva Goswāmī that according to one’s own particular status, these things should be taken into consideration and the necessary things should be done. He has given his

decision that if the devotee has a position of power, if he is a king, and if someone repeatedly blasphemes a real Vaiṣṇava, or saintly person, then the king should enforce corporal punishment by banishing the offender from his state or by cutting out his tongue (*vaiṣṇava nindaka jihvā hāta*). That is not the duty for ordinary persons; if they act in such a way, there will be a riot. We should not be eager to inflict physical punishment upon anyone.

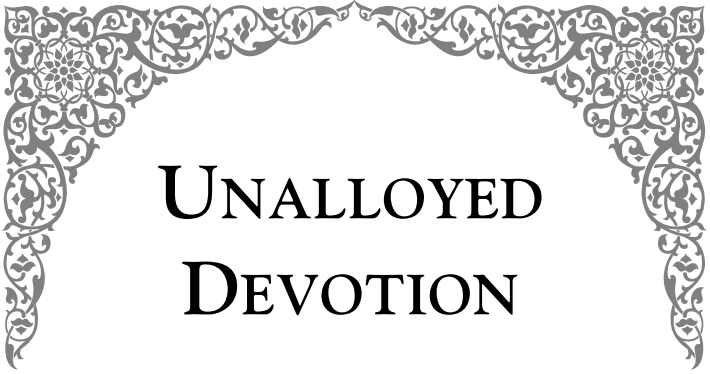
Hanuman is a Vaiṣṇava, but he is seen to destroy so many lives. The same is true of Arjuna and so many other devotees. Even Krishna and Rāmacandra are also seen to kill so many demons in war. Simply a physical show of meekness does not constitute the real meaning of humility. When there is an insult to the *guru* or the Vaiṣṇavas, a devotee will oppose the blasphemers according to his might.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in one of his songs, says that we should not only tolerate the evil-doings of others and a disturbing environment, but we should do good to those by whom we are being tortured. The example is given of a tree. One who is cutting the tree gets shade and comfort from the tree even while cutting it down. In conclusion, he says that humility, mercy, respect for others, and renunciation of name and fame, are the four qualifications for chanting the Holy Name of Krishna.

We are the meanest of the mean. We should

always be conscious that we are beggars. We should think, “Although I am a beggar, I’ve come to beg for the highest thing; let no disturbance dissuade me from my attempt.” At the same time, our attitude toward the environment should be respectful.

In this way, by becoming educated in the Krishna conception of divinity, everyone should be given respect according to his position. It is the guiding instruction in the worship of the Holy Name (*nāma-bhajana*) that we must take the position of the slave of the slave of the slave of the Lord. If you want to chant the name of Krishna, then don’t waste your energy with the trifling things of this world. Don’t allow your attention to be disturbed by tiny acquisitions like prestige or gain which is relative to money or physical comfort. Remember, you are trying for the greatest thing, and all other things are very small in comparison to Krishna consciousness. So, don’t waste your energy and valuable time. Be economical. You have the chance to achieve the highest goal of life.



UNALLOYED DEVOTION

SANSKRIT

न धनं न जनं न सन्दरीं कवितां वा जगदीश कामये ।
मम जन्मनि जन्मनीश्वरे भवताद्भक्तिरहैतुकी त्वयि ॥ २९ ॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani-janmaniśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi

TRANSLATION

“O Lord, I have no desires
to accumulate wealth, followers,
beautiful women, or salvation.
My only prayer is for
Your causeless devotional service,
birth after birth.”

ILLUMINATION

We should try to move in this direction. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “I don’t want any money (*na dhanam*), I don’t want any popularity or manpower (*na janam*), I don’t want the company of beautiful ladies (*na sundarim*). I don’t want a good name, or the fame of a poet (*kavitam vā*).” This is the general meaning of this verse, but it has been deeply dealt with in the commentaries of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Our *guru mahārāja* has commented that in this verse, wealth, followers, women, and scholarship represent duty, wealth, sense pleasure, and salvation (*dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa*). Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained that in this context, “wealth” means the wealth which comes from following one’s pre-

scribed duties. It can also mean *artha*, economic development. He says that “followers” means physical relationship for comforts: wife, children, and so forth. The word *sundarim* means *kāma*, the company of beautiful ladies. And *kavitam*, poetry, represents *mokṣa*, liberation. Liberation apparently has a high value but really, like poetry, it is only flowery words. Liberation is imaginary because the ultimate result of liberation is that one’s existence vanishes.

❀ SERVICE CAPITALISTS ❀

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “O lord of the universe, I only pray for spontaneous devotion to You without motive for any reward. I want a natural serving attitude.” *Prema* means affection, love. *Prema* means, “I shall serve You, and in remuneration You must give me more of a tendency to serve You—more energy and more hankering to serve You. My affection for You will be enhanced and the interest will become capital just as in the money-lending business.” In this way, a devotee prays to Krishna, “I am serving You, and if you want to pay me something, then give me more capital to increase my serving tendency so it may be more enhanced.

“Wherever I am born according to my karma, I aspire only for Your service, my Lord, and I pray for unmotivated service, not for anything else in return.”

The general temptation that surrounds us on four sides is of four classes: money, followers, women, and liberation, and that means *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. In this way, the gradations of different goals of life have been scientifically represented.

But Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “I have no attraction for any of these things, but only for You, my Lord. I don’t even aspire after liberation. I will not even ask, “Give me liberation, for, being liberated, I will be able to serve You better.” That sort of condition must not be placed on divinity. This is the purest of prayers. “According to my karma, I may be bird or beast, here or there, or even in hell—it does not matter. My whole aspiration is concentrated on one thing alone: I pray that my attraction for You may never be lost. I pray that it may always be enhanced.”

Bhakti, devotion, is *ahaitukī*, causeless. It is quite natural and has no other aspiration. Someone may say, “If interest is always being reinvested as capital, I will never enjoy the profit,” but we are interested in enjoyment by self-giving. “Let others enjoy at my cost”—that is the basis of the highest enjoyment. The devotee thinks, “Let Krishna enjoy with others—I will be the scapegoat.”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that when a baby has no knowledge, and an enemy or a disease comes to attack him, he cannot defend himself. In the same way, in the beginning, when one’s realization of the Holy

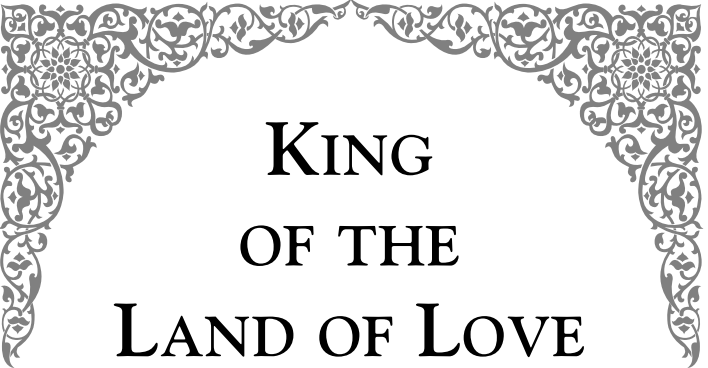
Name is in the childlike stage, then crimes and offenses against the name can prevail. When one's realization is grown up, no offense can approach him, but so many offenses may come and attack the beginner.

✽ THE SUICIDE SQUAD ✽

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “The Holy Name is so beautiful, gracious, and charming. Let me die along with all the offenses against it so others may enjoy its nectar.” He wants to sacrifice himself just as in wartime, with bombs under their armpits, the suicide squad would jump into a ship's chimney. The suicide squad began with Japan's campaign against the British, and when Hitler heard of their fearlessness, he said, “We have something yet to learn from Japan.” So, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prays, “I want to finish myself along with all the offenses against the name, that others may enjoy the nectar of the Holy Name.”

Vāsudeva Datta also prayed, “Give the sins of all souls to me, and throw me into eternal hell, so that they may benefit. Give them love of Krishna.” By that highly generous sentiment, he does not die. It is said, “Die to live.” When we have so much appreciation for the Lord that we feel this kind of sentiment, we find a living attainment of higher life. That is the enjoyment we want.

The last verse of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭakam* will explain this feeling. Another example of this is found when the great sage Narada came to the *gopīs* and asked them for the dust of their lotus feet for the treatment of Krishna's headache. Here we find self-abnegation to the highest degree, and that is the whole point of devotion. The very life of a devotee is based on sacrifice. As much as there is sacrifice, there is benefit. And sacrifice means "Die to live." This is a favorite saying of mine. These are Hegel's words: "Die to live." Krishna is the highest consumer known to the world. We should not hesitate to give ourselves to Him.



KING OF THE LAND OF LOVE

SANSKRIT

अयि नन्दतनुज किङ्करं पतितं मां विषमे भवाम्बुधौ ।
कृपया तव पादपङ्कजस्थितधूलीसदृशं विचिन्तय ॥३२॥

ROMAN transliteration

ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaraṁ
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
krpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūlī-sadr̥śaṁ vicintaya

TRANSLATION

“O son of Nanda Mahārāja,
I am Your eternal servant,
yet because of my own karma,
I have fallen into this terrible
ocean of birth and death.
Accept this fallen soul
and consider me a particle of dust
at Your Holy Lotus Feet.”

ILLUMINATION

Here, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu prays, “O Lord, please consider me; I want to enter into the realm of Your merciful glance. I do not know how to take proper care of myself, and so I invite Your care. Please accept me and give me entrance. You are my guardian. I want to live under Your protection.”

And who is He? We hear of different conceptions of God, but here we have come to a beautiful conception of God—Krishna, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. This is found only in Vṛndāvana.

A great spiritual scholar, Raghupati Upādhyāya, once met Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu near Mathurā. There, they had a discussion and Mahāprabhu asked him, “Whom do we want to have as our master? Who is the final goal of our life?” Raghupati Upādhyāya answered:

śrutim apare smṛtim itare
 bhāratam anye bhajantu bhava-bhītāḥ
 aham iha nandaṁ vande
 yasyālinde paraṁ brahma

“Those who fear rebirth in this world may follow the advice of the Vedic scriptures—others may follow the *Mahābhārata*—but as for me, I follow Nanda Mahārāja, in whose courtyard the Supreme Absolute Truth plays as a child.”

In the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, Vedic social duty, the people in general are under the guidance of the *smṛti*, Vedic law. In this way, they are engaged in bodily duties with a color of godliness. Those who are free from physical demands, however, who are trying to transcend this life of enjoyment and exploitation, generally take their guidance from the *Upaniṣads* because higher advice is given there. Raghupati Upādhyāya says, “I don’t care for all these things, but I feel a need to follow the guidance of my heart. I am not so much concerned with the brain; I consider that real peace has its connection with the heart. And my heart is always attracted by Krishna’s father, Nanda. Krishna is said by authorities to be the Supreme Absolute Truth, and that absolute is crawling in the courtyard of Nanda Mahārāja, so I see concrete reality there.”

How has Nanda attracted the Supreme Absolute Truth? In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.8.46), the

devoted King Parīkṣit Mahārāja asks the boy saint Śukadeva Goswāmī:

**nandaḥ kim akarod brahman
śreya evaṁ mahodayam
yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā
papau yasyāḥ stanaṁ hariḥ**

“O knower of Brahman, you are always merged in the exclusive conscious world. No trace of any mundane objective reference can be found in you, for you are always engaged in the subjective world of spirit. Never is your consciousness thrown towards this objective world of ours. And you say that Krishna is the Supreme Absolute Truth. I ask one question of you, my master: what duty did Nanda discharge, what sort of realization did Nanda have that the Absolute Truth is so intimate with them that He appears as Nanda’s son and crawls about in his courtyard? He seems to be under Nanda’s clutches. What is this? This is a most wonderful thing. Is it possible?

✽ THE SUPREME SUBSTANCE SUCKLES HER BREAST? ✽

“The yogis, the ṛṣis, the great scholars and penance-makers say that they sometimes have a rare peek into their object of aspiration and realization, and then they come back suddenly. They can’t keep their attention in that plane for long periods of time.

How is it possible that the Supreme Substance sits on the lap of Yaśodā and sucks her breast? If such things are real, if it is at all possible, then why should I not be attracted by that method by which I can have so much intimacy with the highest entity?"

In his prayer, Raghupati Upādhyāya expresses a similar ego. He says, "I don't want to be entangled in the subtle discussion and analysis of the scriptures; I just want to surrender myself to Nanda and his party. I want to enlist my name in the group where Nanda is the master guide."

By the exercise of energy (*karma*), we can attain a good destination; without faith in the achievements of *karma*, we may try for salvation by raising our consciousness (*jñāna*). But if we inquire into the solution of life with the help of the experts of that higher spiritual realm like Nanda and his party, we can enter into the land of love and dedication.

My faith, my common sense about religion, tells me that if I see that Supreme Absolute Truth who is so rare and find Him real, concrete, and intimate, appealing directly to my heart, then why should I engage myself in wild-goose chasing? I shall appeal directly to the object of my search. If someone tells me that a hawk has snatched my ear, should I chase the hawk without first touching my ear to see if it is still there? If I can have the Absolute Truth so intimately, why should I allow myself to run hither and

thither? If I find that the Absolute Truth has kindly come with all His charm, and that His charm is not a secret and many personages are being attracted by Him, then should I run after the phantasmagoria of the the meditationists, the abstractionists and renunciationists? Never.

It is common sense. The straight understanding is given by authorities that Krishna, the son of Nanda, is Supreme. So when we have come up to that standard, then we can ask, "O son of Nanda, Krishna, king of the country of love: I appeal for Your affection. I am Your servant. I feel within myself that I have some connection with You. I am subordinate to You, but somehow, I am in adverse circumstances. I feel that there are so many enemies within me that are trying to take me away from You that I can't give my attention to You all the time. At the same time, I feel from the inner plane of my heart that You are my master, You are all in all to me. My heart won't be satisfied without Your companionship. So I appeal to You: I am under unfavorable circumstances; I am suffering, and without Your grace, I don't find any means of relief from my present imprisoned position."

✽ THE SOUL—LIKE A RAY OF SUN ✽

Here it is said, "I feel that I am not eternally connected with You; if it were so, then this separation

would have been impossible. Unlike an *avatāra*, I am not Your plenary portion.” Other incarnations of the Supreme Lord are plenary expansions of him (*svāmśa*), but the *jīva* is a partial representation of his potency (*vibhinnāmśa*). In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna says that the living entities are His eternal parts and parcels. The soul comes from marginal potency (*kṛṣṇera taṭasthā-śakti*, *bhedābheda prakāśa*). And the soul is an atomic fragmental part of the Lord’s potency like a ray of the sun. But here, the devotee prays, “I’m not part and parcel of Your own body, I’m not even a ray, but my representation is nearer to that of a particle of sand, a particle of dust—not even a particle of the ray coming out of the luster of Your body.” In this way, Śrīman Mahāprabhu is representing on our behalf that our petition must be of this type: “I cannot indulge myself in thinking that I possess such fortune that I may be considered an inseparable part of you. I am a separable part, but I also want Your grace. Please be kind upon me; I invoke Your mercy for a special grant. Accept me in any position in Your connection—even the lowest position. At least this must be sanctioned. Consider me a particle of dust at Your feet. This is my prayer.”



HANKERING FOR PERFECTION

SANSKRIT

नयनं गलदश्रुधारया वदनं गद्गद-रुद्धया गिरा ।
पुलकैर्निचितं वपुः कदा तव नाम-ग्रहणे भविष्यति ॥३६॥

ROMAN transliteration

nayanam galad-asru-dhārayā
vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulkair nicitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati

TRANSLATION

“O Lord, when will tears flow
from my eyes like waves?
And my voice tremble in ecstasy.
When will the hairs of my body
stand on end while chanting
Your Holy Name?”

ILLUMINATION

In this verse, the devotee's prayer has been granted and he has acquired a position in Krishna's domain. Now his ambition has no end. Although he is posted in a safe position, he is again praying for further promotion. First he aspired only for an insignificant position as the dust under the soles of Krishna's divine feet. Then, the grant came. The touch of Krishna's holy feet came to the dust and the dust was converted as if by a magic wand. Now a greater, higher demand automatically comes.

The devotee thinks, “What is this? I prayed only to become the dust of the soles of Your feet, but what do I now feel within me? I am the dust of the earth, and You are the Supreme Absolute Truth. But by the very touch of Your lotus feet, dust has been converted into such a great and inconceivable substance. I won-

der, ‘How is it that I have been transformed?’ Now I find that my demand is for greater intimacy. First I aspired for servitude but now, by the touchstone of Your lotus feet, that hope has been converted into spontaneous attraction (*rāgā-marga*).”

✽ THE KING OF AFFECTION ✽

Spontaneous attraction can only mean Krishna, not Nārāyaṇa or Rāmacandra. Krishna means “one who is worshiped by divine love and affection.” He is the king of affection, the center of affection and love. The devotee’s whole conception of devotion changed just by coming in touch with Krishna’s lotus feet, and he was graced by the demand for more intimacy; greater love and affection came to grace that servitor.

He was raised to such a plane of dedication that his prayer has changed. He thinks, “What is this? I can’t check my tears. They are coming incessantly, and when I try to chant Your name, my Lord, I feel that I am losing control. Some interference from another quarter is moving me, disturbing my normal thinking and aspirations. I feel I am in the midst of another plane. I am nowhere. I have lost control; I have become a doll in the hands of some other power.

✿ LOTUS FEET—MAGIC WAND ✿

“My aspiration is taking me towards something else. Now I not only want a connection with You as a servitor from a distance, but coming in touch with the magic wand of Your lotus feet, my aspiration has changed. I see that so many devotees are engaged in Your service and chanting Your name, and seeing this, my hopes have been raised.

“I want to be lifted to that position. I can visualize that position from far away, but now my earnest prayer is that I may be raised to that level. Your connection has given me such thirst. I want to be handled by You. Play with me as You like in Your own way. My heart hankers after such a relationship with You. When I chant Your name with this feeling, I find that my previous conception has changed and my new hankering is for the standard of spontaneous love. I pray that You lift me into that plane of Your divine affection and love.”



FOREVER WITHOUT YOU

SANSKRIT

युगायितं निमेषेण चक्षुषा प्रावृषायितम् ।
शून्यायितं जगत् सर्व्व गोविन्द-विरहेण मे ॥३९॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

yugāyitaṁ nimeṣena
cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṁ
śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ
govinda-virahaṇa me

TRANSLATION

“O Govinda!

Without You, the world is empty.

Tears are flooding my eyes like rain,
and a moment seems like forever.”

ILLUMINATION

Sometimes this verse is translated, “O Govinda, without You, I feel a moment to be twelve years or more.” The word *yuga* is sometimes translated “twelve years.” Some devotees say this is because Mahāprabhu experienced the most intense separation from Krishna in the mood of Rādhārāṇī for twelve years. In the Sanskrit dictionary it is said that one *yuga* means twelve years. That is one conception. Another meaning is “millennium” or “age.” A *yuga* can also mean an unlimited amount of time.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “One moment seems like an unlimited period of time. And my eyes are shedding tears like rain. The rainy season produces so many floods, and now it seems to me that my eyes are flooding. The visible is becoming invisible to me. I am so withdrawn from the present environment that I can’t see anything. My mind feels so much internal attraction towards the center of the infinite that wherever I cast my glance I see nothing.

Everything appears vacant, because I feel as if Govinda has withdrawn from me.

❀ ŚRĪ KRISHNA—REALITY THE BEAUTIFUL ❀

“Such a peculiar sort of feeling is within me—I have no interest in anything. All my interest is drawn towards Govinda, and to such a degree that I am a stranger to my present environment. I have nothing; no consciousness. It has gone somewhere else—towards the infinite. When there is a drought, all the rivers and lakes dry up. The water is drawn towards the gas world. Nowhere is a drop of water to be found. It is something like that. All charm is withdrawn so extensively that everything is empty. My senses, mind, and everything else has been drawn up, attracted by the all-attractive, all-charming, all-sweet Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna, reality the beautiful.” Sometimes it seems that the gap between union and separation is like so many millennia. A devotee thinks, “I have lost the consciousness of meeting Krishna long, long ago.” He has a faint remembrance: “I had some union with Krishna, but I left that so far behind, so far off, that it appears to be an unlimited gap of time. I once had a faint recollection, but now it is gone, perhaps forever.” He feels such a great degree of disappointment and despair.

This is the standard of the infinite world. Just as

we measure the distance of the planets and stars by light years, here the transcendental temperament is being measured by such a standard. What audacity we have to deal with things so great and beyond our jurisdiction.

At first the devotee thought, "If I am raised to that standard of service, my heart will be fulfilled. My thirst will be quenched, and I will feel some ease and satisfaction within me." But the development of his devotion took him to an unexpected plane of life. It is the nature of divine love that when a drop of that medicine is given to a hankering patient, the patient thinks he is cured, but he is taken into a dangerous position.

He thinks, "Seeing the devotees shedding tears incessantly, the hairs of their bodies standing on end, their voices choked up while chanting the name of Krishna, I was charmed. Those symptoms attracted me and I thought that if I could attain this, I would feel real satisfaction, but upon attaining that plane, what do I find? Just the opposite."

Coming into real connection with the infinite, he feels hopeless. He thinks, "There is no limit to progress. Rather, as much as I come in intimate connection with the infinite, I feel hopeless." The more we advance, the more we find it unlimited, and finding it unlimited, we become hopeless but we can't turn back. There is no possibility of retracing our

steps; we can only go ahead. This is the spirit of a genuine devotee.

Finding the infinite characteristic of our prospect, we can't leave—we become hopeless, thinking, "The highest kind of nectar is just before me, but I can't taste it—I am unable to touch it or get it in my fist. Still, its charm is so great that I can't retreat from this entanglement. And without that, a small span of time seems like millions of years."

❀ RIVERS OF TEARS ❀

The devotee thinks, "Oh, long, long ages have passed away; still I am in want! I am trying to get it, but I can't get it, and time is passing. Time is also infinite. So many rivers of tears take birth from my eyes; tears profusely run down from my eyes over my body, but I don't find the position of success within my reach. My mind is fully vacant. I can't find any trace of my future. I have no charm, no attraction for anything else that might seem to console this diseased body.

"I find no possibility of solace from any other quarter. All alternatives have been eliminated. I am fully in the clutches of Krishna consciousness and love of Krishna. If there is anyone who can come to my relief, help me! I am lost. I am helpless. If there is anyone who can help me, please come to my rescue."



O Govinda! "Without You, the world is empty. Tears are flooding my eyes like rain, and a moment seems like forever."

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says that when we are deeply situated in love of Krishna, we can't leave it, but our thirst increases and we feel no satisfaction. We are in the midst of such an apparently horrible position.

The hankering for Krishna which awakens in one's mind takes this direction. When a devotee really comes in connection with Krishna, his position will be all-eliminating and all-exclusive. His complete concentration will be on Krishna.

In this verse, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu describes how a devotee goes further, awakens a higher conception of Krishna, and then, seeing Krishna just before him but not getting Him, feels this kind of separation. The more he progresses, the more he finds himself in this position of hopelessness. This highest advice of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu helps us adjust ourselves to this intense mood of separation. He tells us, "You are going to be lost in Krishna consciousness. And what will be your position? You are a drop and you will be thrown into the ocean of divine love."



UNION IN SEPARATION

SANSKRIT

आश्लिष्य वा पादरतां पिनष्टु मा-
मदर्शनान्मर्महतां करोतु वा ।
यथा तथा वा विदधातु लम्पटो
मत्प्राणनाथस्तु स एव नापरः ॥४७॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ

TRANSLATION

“Krishna may embrace me in love
or trample me under His feet.
He may break my heart
by hiding Himself from me.
Let that debauchee do whatever He
likes, but He will always be the only
Lord of my life.”

ILLUMINATION

This is the greatest medicine for the devotees. We have come to measure the immeasurable, but we must always embrace this principle. In attempting to connect ourselves with the infinite Lord of love and beauty, we must remember that He is the infinite. He is only one to us, but He has many devotees like us to deal with. He may embrace us with much affection and adoration, but we must be prepared for the opposite. We may stick to His feet, but He may cruelly trample us. We have caught hold of His holy feet with great hope, with our whole heart; still we may find that He tramples us and does not care for all our attempts and affection.

We may be giving our best and find that our offering is being hatefully dishonored. He may embrace us, but at the same time we must be prepared that His deal-

ings may be extremely cruel. He may trample all our offerings beneath His feet. We must be prepared for both His adoration and His hateful negligence. We should be prepared for any adverse circumstances.

Krishna may be indifferent. He may not care. And when He is punishing us, He is nearer, but when He is indifferent it is even more intolerable than punishment. The devotee thinks, "Krishna is ignoring me, neglecting me so much that He does not like to keep any connection with me. Doesn't He know me? Am I a foreigner, unknown to Him?" We may accept punishment as a boon, but indifference is even more heart-rending.

The pain of separation felt by a devotee may even go a step higher. Krishna may affectionately embrace another right before our eyes, in front of our face, without caring even a little for us. We may think, "This is my claim, my right," but that may be given to another right in front of our faces. That will be a source of increasing trouble to us.

This is the law of affection. The law of love cannot tolerate indifference. It is too much to tolerate, but we must be prepared for that. We must be prepared from the beginning that this is the meaning of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, divine love for Krishna, because He is an autocrat. He is love. Divine love means mercy, and not justice. There is no law there. And we have selected divine love to be our highest fortune, so we must be prepared

to be treated without justice. There is no justice in divine love; it is free. It may flow anywhere and everywhere. This is the very nature of divine love, so we can't make any claim—we have no rights.

This is the nature of the highest thing, and it is extremely rare. But unhesitating adherence to that principle is required from our side. It is real love, and you must be prepared for that. In all adverse circumstances, this is the real nature of *kṛṣṇa-prema*: die to live. If you can accommodate all these different stages, good or bad, then you can enter this exalted plane.

❀ LOVE IS ABOVE LAW ❀

Justice is within law; mercy is above law. *Prema*, divine love is also above law, but it has its own law. Another verse whose meaning runs parallel to this one is given by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda:

viracaya mayi daṇḍaṁ dīnabandho dayāṁ vā
 gatir iha na bhavattah kācid anyā mamāsti
 nipatatu śata-koṭi nirbharaṁ vā navāmbhas
 tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena

There is a kind of small bird named *cātaka* that only drinks rainwater. It never drinks any water from the earth, whether it is from a river, fountain, or lake. Its very nature is that with its mouth upward, it hankers after rainwater. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī gives this

example to show how a devotee should always be waiting in expectation of the “rainwater” of Krishna-love, and no other love.

The devotee prays to the Lord, “You are the friend of the fallen, so I have some hope. You may grant Your grace, or severely punish me—in either case, I have no other alternative but to wholly surrender to Your lotus feet.”

Our attitude of surrender should be just like that of the *cātaka* bird, who always has his eyes fixed upward, praying for rainwater. Rainwater may come profusely—not only enough to fill up his small belly, but enough to drown his whole body. Thunder may come from above; a bolt from the blue may come and finish his small body, and send him to the nonexistent quarter, but still the nature of that bird is to pray exclusively for rainwater. He won’t take water from any other place under any circumstance. Our attitude towards Krishna should be like that: whether or not He extends His gracious hand towards us, it is our duty to surrender unto Him.

In this connection, one verse comes to my memory. When Śrī Krishna met Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra after a long separation of perhaps a hundred years, He felt that He had committed a great crime by separating Himself from them. Approaching near the *gopīs*, especially Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and remembering their qualities of love and surrender, He

felt like the greatest criminal, so much so that He bent down to touch the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī.

One poet has represented the scene in this way, and that poem has been collected by Rupa Goswāmī in his *Padyāvalī*. Krishna was at that time the paramount king of India. But when He came in connection with the *gopīs* and the atmosphere of Vṛndāvana, He felt like a criminal, and bending down, He was just about to touch the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī, when Rādhārāṇī, drawing back, remarked, “What are you doing? Why are you coming to touch My feet? This is astounding. Have You lost Your mind?”

❀ “I AM THE REAL CRIMINAL” ❀

“You are the master of everything. No explanation can be demanded of You. You are *swāmī*. You are My husband and master, and I am Your maidservant. It may be that for some time You were engaged in some other quarter, but what’s the harm in that? What is the fault in You for that? That does not matter, for that right is given to You by scripture and society. There is no crime, no sin on Your part. You have done nothing wrong.

“I am the real criminal. The meanness is with Me, the defect is wholly with Me. You are not responsible for Our separation, so why do You consider that You are faulty, or that You have committed some wrong?”

The positive proof that I am the real criminal is that I sustain My life; I did not die from the pangs of Your separation.

“I am showing My face to the world, but I am not faithful to You. I could not approach the standard of faith which I should have maintained for Your love, so I am the criminal, not You. It has been written in the scriptures by the saints that the wife should be thankful and exclusively devoted to the husband. This has been ordained in the scriptures. A woman should be devoted exclusively to her husband, her lord. So in this meeting, I should fall at Your feet and beg for Your pardon, for Your forgiveness that I have really no love for You. I am maintaining this body, and showing My face to society; I am not a proper partner for You, so please forgive Me. You are begging My forgiveness? This is just the opposite of how things should be. What is this? Please don’t do this.”

This should be the ideal of our affection for Krishna. We, the finite, should take this attitude towards the infinite. At any time, He may only give a little attention to us, but we should be all-attentive towards Him. And there is no alternative. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu advises that we have exclusive devotion towards Krishna, and as we are insignificant, our attitude must be of this type.

If we want such a great thing, then it is not an injustice that we should be treated hatefully. Our

prospect, understanding, and adjustment must be that of self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, just as when someone goes to fight for his country on the battlefield, there is no room for luxury or excessive desires.

I remember in this connection that when Gandhi formed his nonviolence army, one of the volunteer soldiers asked, "Please arrange tea for us." Gandhi told him, "The water of the river may be supplied to you, but no tea. If you are ready for that then come forward." If we want to connect ourselves with the *ṛndāvana-līlā* of Krishna, we can make no conditions. Then, we shall understand the method recommended by Śrīman Mahāprabhu: humility greater than that of a blade of grass. There should be no complaint from our side. Not only in the external position of our present life, but even in eternal life, any complaint from our side should be carefully eliminated and we must fully accept the ways of the Lord. Krishna may accept us or reject us; we have to take that risk. Only then may we make progress.

In some way or other, if we can enter the group of Krishna's servitors, we will find that everyone has such a nature, and when they meet together, they will console each other in their respective groups. In different serving relationships there are different sections of servitors of a similar nature, and they console

each other with talk of Krishna (*kṛṣṇa-kathā*). In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.9, 12) Krishna says:

**mac-cittā mad-gata prāṇā
bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām nityam
tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca**

“My devotees mix together, talk about Me, and exchange thoughts that give consolation to their hearts. And they live as if this talk about Me is their food. It gives them a high kind of pleasure, and they find that when they talk about Me among themselves, they feel as if they are enjoying My presence.”

**teṣām evānukampārtham
aham ajñāna-jaṁ tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāvastho
jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā**

“When sometimes the feeling of separation from Me is very acute in My devotees, I suddenly appear before them and quench their thirst for My company.”

❀ SWEETNESS WITHIN PAIN ❀

In this last verse of His *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has given another very fine and high type of solace. And this has been confirmed by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī, who has written:

bāhye viṣa-jvālā haya
 bhitare ānandamaya
 kṛṣṇa-premāra adbhuta carita

“Don’t be afraid. Outwardly you may feel a horrible pain of separation, but internally, you will feel an unparalleled type of *rasa*, the most pleasing feeling of peace, joy, or ecstasy.” Externally, there may be pangs of separation, but internally there is the greatest satisfaction.

In this way we are advised by the scriptures, and our practical experience corroborates our faith in this subtle matter. The English poet, Shelley, has written:

“Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 Our sweetest songs are those
 That tell of saddest thought.”

When we are reading an epic where there is cruel separation between the hero and the heroine, it is so sweet to us that although we shed tears, still we cannot leave the book. When we hear about the pangs of Sitā-devī, how Rāmacandra banishes Her and leaves Her uncared for in the forest although She is with child, this is very painful. We shed tears, but still we read on. There is sweetness within pain. It is possible.

Separation from Krishna is like that. The special characteristic of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is this: externally, we feel extreme pain, like lava, but internally our heart is

filled with some extraordinary ecstatic joy. This is what Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has given us. As much as we can catch the meaning of His instructions, we shall be prepared for that kind of life. This is the fare to go to Vṛndāvana, and when we are introduced to so many others like us, then our joy knows no bounds. When we meet others who have the same nature and mind as us, we get solace from them. We need not be afraid. In spite of all these things, we should think firmly that there is our home, and we should want to go back to home, back to Godhead.

We are not foreigners there. Here we are foreigners: every man treats me in any way that he likes. But Vṛndāvana is most hopeful and full of the highest prospect. It is the place of inner satisfaction. We aspire after that; we cannot but continue aspiring for our real home. What is real joy and ecstasy? We are not acquainted with that. This is our present trouble. Yet as much as we progress in Krishna consciousness, we shall become conscious of a practical feeling of real joy and ecstasy, beauty and charm, and in this way, we shall become more and more encouraged.

Yāmunācārya says:

yad-avadhi mama cetah kṛṣṇa-padāravinde
 nava-nava-rasa-dhāmany udyataṁ rantum āsīt
 tad-avadhi bata nārī-saṅgame smaryamāṇe
 bhavati mukha-vikāraḥ suṣṭhu niṣṭhīvanam ca

“Before I came in touch with the Krishna-love of Vṛndāvana, worldly pleasure was of much importance to me; but now, if any mundane taste comes in my memory, my face becomes disfigured, and I spit at the thought.”

So if we get a slight taste of that ecstasy, then at once we come to the conclusion that there can be no comparison between that and any peace or pleasure here in this mundane world. At the same time, once we are settled in that atmosphere, no pain can disturb or affect us in any way.

There is another side also: although we are advised to be prepared for painful separation, the fact is not so cruel in reality. Krishna says, *mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*: “I am always with My devotees.” Wherever there is an exclusive devotee, Krishna is there like his shadow, always invisibly moving after him. This is the Lord’s nature:

ahaṁ bhakta-parādhīno
 hy asvatantra iva dvija
 sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo
 bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ

The Lord tells Durvāsā, “I am the slave of my devotees; I have no freedom apart from their will. Because they are completely pure and devoted to Me, My heart is controlled by them, and I reside always in their hearts. I am dependent not only on My devo-

tees, but even on the servants of My devotees. Even the servants of My devotees are dear to Me.”

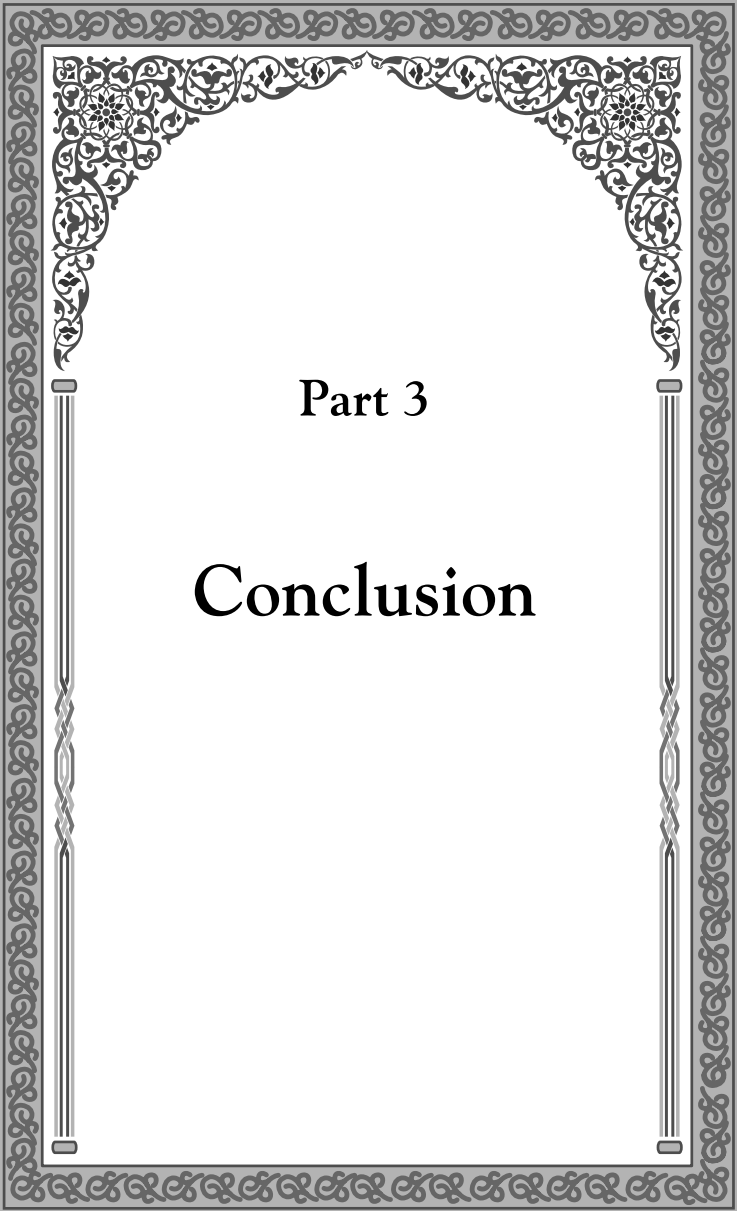
❀ KRISHNA IS NOT A SWEETBALL ❀

We must be prepared for any unfavorable circumstances, but we must not be discouraged. Krishna is most affectionate; His care towards us is most acute and sincere. His affection towards us has no rival. Still, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has given us a warning in this verse: “You are coming to search after Krishna? Krishna is not a sweetball from the market that you can purchase and finish so easily. You are trying to attain the highest of the high, so you must be prepared for anything.”

At the same time, the devotees will come to us saying, “Have no fear. We are all like you. Let us all walk together in a straight line. Don’t be afraid—we are here.” We are told that Krishna’s devotees are even more sympathetic to us than Krishna Himself. The solace of our life and our fortune is his devotees, and Krishna says: *mad bhaktānām ca ye bhaktāḥ*, “One who is a servant of My servant is My real servant.” *Sadhu-saṅga*, the association of saints, is the most important and valuable thing for us. To make our advancement and progress towards the infinite, our association is our guide; it is all-important. We must stick to this conclusion:

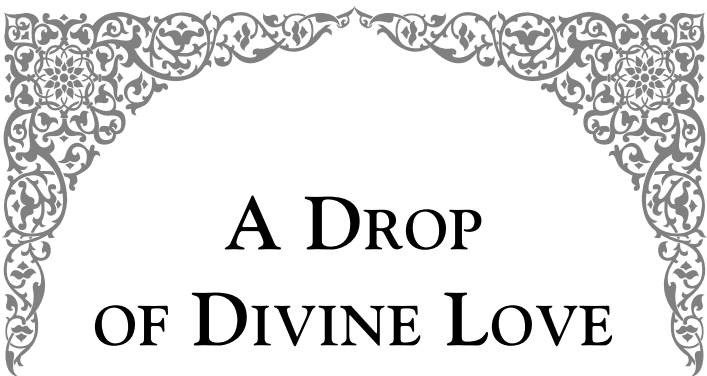
**‘sādhū saṅga,’ ‘sādhū saṅga,’—sarva śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhū saṅge sarva-siddhi haya**

“The conclusion has been given in the scriptures that all perfection can be attained by the help of the saints. Good association is our greatest wealth in reaching the supreme goal.”



Part 3

Conclusion



A DROP OF DIVINE LOVE

Only Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu can give the conception of full-fledged theism. It is His grace, His sweet will. It is His own wealth, not the property of many. Krishna is an autocrat. He is the highest. And whomever He selects to receive His own wealth will get it. No one can raise the question of “no taxation without representation”—there is no room for that sort of slogan here.

In order to explain this for our benefit, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, taking himself as a fallen soul, says, “My position is that of a servant of Krishna, but I am devoid of Krishna. What am I? I am a slave of Krishna, a slave of the Lord, but I am devoid of my master? What an ironic thing it is.” You can wail, you can repent, you can mourn, but all rights are reserved by Him. And when you awaken to that higher stage of self-surrender, you will get that wealth. But still, we must conceive that Krishna is above all law. Otherwise, surrender is meaningless.

If we analyze the very basis of surrender, we must ask where does surrender begin? In full surrender, there are no rights. Whenever any rights are established, surrender becomes unnecessary. We cannot think, “We must fight for our innate rights.” To a certain extent we may try for our rights in this world, but in Krishna’s pastimes this mentality has no place.

✽“ALL RIGHTS RESERVED”✽

Even the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmīdevī, cannot enter there, what to speak of others. It is inconceivable. Krishna is not under any law or within anyone’s fist. “All rights reserved.” Everything is His sweet will. But He is absolute good; that is our solace. We cannot enter His domain as a matter of right. Even Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Lakṣmīdevī cannot enter there. But still, if we take the path chalked out by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, we can enter and achieve a position there.

It is so dear, so rare, so valuable and desirable. We must look for the magnanimity of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu which is aspired for by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. They are praying for a drop of His mercy, but Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu brought that here in a flood and inundated everyone with that nectar, a drop of which is rarely to be had or even thought of. We must approach His mercy with such an attitude of hankering and expectation. His gift is

so great and magnanimous—who can understand it?

With two verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, one from the mouth of Krishna Himself, and the next from the mouth of Uddhava, He takes us straight to that highest place, eliminating so many external things. Krishna says:

na tathā me priyatama
 ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
 na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr
 naivātmā ca yathā bhavān

“O, Uddhava! Neither Brahmā, nor Śiva, nor Baladeva, nor Lakṣmī, nor even My own self are as dear to Me as you are.”

And Uddhava says,

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
 vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
 yā dustyajaṁ svajanam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
 bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām

“The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons, and other family members, who are very difficult to renounce, and they have sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna, which are sought after even by the *Vedas*. O! Grant me the fortune to be born as a blade of grass in Vṛndāvana, so that I may take the dust of those great souls upon my head.”

✽ THE PROGRESSIVE MARCH TOWARDS DIVINITY ✽

The gradation of theism can be traced from Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, to Krishna's intimate friend Uddhava in Dvārakā. And Uddhava takes us directly to Vṛndāvana to reveal the highest devotion, eliminating various prospects in our progressive march towards divinity. We have to march on. And the way is that of surrender, of loving devotion, not mere formal devotion.

**vaikuṇṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhā-kunḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevām vivekī na kaḥ**

“Superior to the spiritual realm of Vaikuṇṭha is Mathurā, where Śrī Krishna first appears. Superior to Mathurā is the Vṛndāvana forest where Krishna enjoyed the *rāsa* dance. Better still is Govardhana hill, which was the site of even more confidential pastimes of love. But best of all is Rādhā-kunḍa, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana hill, and holds the supreme position because it is overflowed with the nectar of the highest kind of divine love. Who is acquainted with the science of devotion who will not aspire for the divine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī at Rādhā-kunda?”

❀ THE HEART OF KRISHNA ❀

We must place our faith in these subtle things. Only through faith of a finer order can we be led to that highest quarter. The highest conception is in the heart of Krishna, and we have to enter into the heart of Krishna, not any other place.

Although Krishna's conjugal pastimes with the *gopīs* (*mādhurya-līlā*) are supreme, they cannot stand alone: there are many other things which are present in His pastimes. Krishna's pastimes with His friends and parents are essential in supporting His pastimes of amorous love. Conjugal love is, of course, the main thing, but still it is dependent on the other paraphernalia of Krishna's pastimes. There must be Krishna's family and friends and all the different groups of servitors. Even the environment of Vṛndāvana itself also has its valuable part to play.

And what is Vṛndāvana? The sands of the river Yamunā, the jungle, the birds, peacocks, and deer, the cows, cowboys, and caves of Govardhana hill, the motherly relatives—everything is there, and it is well-designed and most suitable for the pastimes of Śrī Krishna.

Vṛndāvana is necessary for the pastimes of Rādhā and Govinda. When Rādhārāṇī meets Krishna in Kurukṣetra, Her mind runs to Vṛndāvana. She thinks,

“Krishna is here and I am also here,” but Her mind runs to Vṛndāvana. In Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is hankering for the environment of Vṛndāvana; She wants to have Śrī Krishna’s company there. All of Krishna’s paraphernalia and divine associates have their own unique value, and cannot be eliminated.

Rādhā-Govinda cannot be taken away from Vṛndāvana anymore than Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu can be taken away from Navadvīpa. The whole thing is a system. One part cannot be snatched away from the other parts. All the devotees have a necessary part to play in order to create the harmony of Krishna’s pastimes. Otherwise, it would not be living, but dead, artificial, useless. It cannot even be imagined. *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is an organic whole.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī says, “My mind is running straight towards Vṛndāvana. I have the main object of pleasure, Krishna Himself, but it is useless without the favorable paraphernalia of Vṛndāvana.” So Rādhārāṇī’s pain of separation rises to the highest point in Kurukṣetra, where She has attained the object of Her union after a long separation. There, Krishna is very close, but, without being surrounded by the favorable paraphernalia of Vṛndāvana, She cannot have the real advantage of union. In this way, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Kurukṣetra.

✽ A REVOLUTIONARY GURU ✽

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once revealed the importance of Kurukṣetra in a unique way. The words of our *guru mahārāja* were mostly very revolutionary. When I was a beginner with only two years or so in the Gauḍīya Maṭh, I was in charge of the Kurukṣetra temple. Once, I came to the Calcutta headquarters at the hired house in Ulṭā Dāṅgā for the yearly preaching festival. After the festival I was to return to Kurukṣetra. Śrīla Prabhupāda was thinking of opening a “Theistic Exhibition” in Kurukṣetra, showing with dioramas how Krishna and His friends came there from Dvārakā, and the *gopīs* came there from Vṛndāvana.

It is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that during the solar eclipse, they came to bathe in Rāma-hrad, a sacred lake in Kurukṣetra. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to show that pastime with a diorama, and so the exhibition was arranged. He ordered handbills to be printed, and twenty thousand circulated in the area, inviting people to come for the exhibition.

✽ VRNDĀVANA—FOR SHALLOW THINKERS? ✽

In this connection, he told us, “You all know that only the bogus, hollow people and men of shallow



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. “I would like to spend the last days of my life in Kurukṣetra.”

thinking like Vṛndāvana.” I was very much perplexed to hear this. I had been told that Vṛndāvana is the highest place of spiritual perfection. I had heard that one who has not mastered his senses cannot enter Vṛndāvana. Only the liberated souls can enter Vṛndāvana and have the opportunity of discussing *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Vṛndāvana is for the liberated souls. Those who are not liberated from the demands of their senses may live in Navadvīpa, but the liberated souls may live in Vṛndāvana. Now Prabhupāda was saying that the shallow thinkers appreciate Vṛndāvana, but a man of real *bhajana*, real divine aspiration, will aspire to live in Kurukṣetra.

Hearing this, I felt as if I had fallen from the top of a tree. “What is this?” I thought. I am a very acute listener, so I was very keen to catch the meaning of his words. The next thought he gave us was that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, after visiting many different places of pilgrimage, remarked, “I would like to spend the last days of my life in Kurukṣetra. I shall construct a cottage near Rāma-hrada and pass the rest of my life there. Kurukṣetra is the real place of *bhajana*.”

✽ SHREWD MERCHANTS ✽

Why? Service is more valuable according to the intensity of its necessity. Shrewd merchants seek a market in wartime because in that dangerous posi-

tion, money is spent like water, without any care for its value. They can earn more money if a war comes. In the same way, when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's necessity reaches its zenith, service to Her becomes extremely valuable. According to its necessity, service is valued. And in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is in the highest necessity because Krishna is so close, but Their Vṛndāvana līlā is impossible. In a football game, if the ball is just inches from the goal, but again comes back, it is considered a great loss. In the same way, after a long separation, Krishna is there in Kurukṣetra, so the hankering for union felt by His devotees must come to its greatest point, but because He is in the role of a king, they cannot meet intimately. The circumstances do not allow the Vṛndāvana līlā to take place. So at that time, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī needs the highest service from Her group, the sakhīs.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that in that situation, a drop of service will draw the greatest amount of *prema*, divine love. In the pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda, there are two aspects: *sambhoga*, divine union, and *vipralambha*, divine separation. When Rādhā and Krishna are very near to each other, but can't meet intimately, service at that time can draw the greatest gain for the servitors. Therefore, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "I shall construct a hut on the banks of Rāma-hrad in

Kurukṣetra and contemplate rendering service to the Divine Couple. If I can achieve that standard where the prospect of service is so high, then there is no possibility of returning to this mundane plane at any time.”

✽ THE FIFTH NOTE ✽

Upon arriving in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī said:

priyaḥ so 'yam kṛṣṇaḥ saḥacari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pancama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spṛhayati

“O My dear friend, now I am at last reunited with My most beloved Krishna in Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī, and He is the same Krishna. We are enjoying Our meeting, but still I wish to return to the banks of the Kālindī, where I could hear the sweet melody of His flute sounding the fifth note beneath the trees of the Vṛndāvana forest.” (*Padyāvalī*)

Wherever Rādhārāṇī and Krishna are, Vṛndāvana is necessary. And Vṛndāvana means the favorable paraphernalia. In this way, Vṛndāvana is unique.

When Krishna met the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana in Kurukṣetra, He first came to Nanda and Yaśodā's camp after their long separation, to show parental

respect to them. In the midst of their great disappointment, they felt, “Oh, our boy has come to see us at last.” It was as if life had returned to the dead. After some courtesy was shown to them, Krishna made arrangements to meet privately with the *gopīs*, and suddenly He appeared in their camp. Externally, Krishna was the leader of so many kings in India. And the *gopīs* had come from some unknown quarter, where they lived in the jungle in the society of milkmen. Externally, they had no position, and Krishna held the highest position in the political and royal society. He was the central figure, like the eyeball in every eye. And they were in a helpless, poor and neglected condition. The *gopīs* pleaded with Krishna, saying:

āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam
 yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
 saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
 gehaṁ juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

The group of *gopīs* told Krishna, “O You who have a lotus navel, we know that the great master yogis who have nothing to do with this mundane world try to meditate upon Your holy lotus feet. Their interest is in higher realization in the conscious world. They are said to center their highest attention on Your lotus feet. And those who are busy elevating their life in this world of exploitation are also busy worshipping

Your lotus feet to escape the entanglement of action and reaction. The center of interest for the elevation-ists (*karmis*) and the salvationists (*jñānis* and *yogis*) is Your lotus feet.

❀ KRISHNA COUNTRY ❀

“And what are we? We are simple people from the country with cows as our wealth. We are animal traders who live in the country, trade in the cow business, and sell curd and milk on the outskirts of society. We are neither scientific exploiters, nor are we the kind of exploiters who do research in the world of consciousness. We only know family life. We have no other qualifications. We are busy with our family life in the lower section of society. But in our audacity, we pray that if at any time You would kindly condescend to extend Your lotus feet to our negligible hearts, we would think ourselves blessed. We are busy in our family matters. We do not know scriptural life or the methods of the salvationists. We know nothing of *yoga*, *jñāna*, *Vedānta* or the *Vedas*. Our ultimate concern is neither with scriptures or moral standards. We hold a negligible position in society and simply pray that in the midst of our family life we may remember Your holy lotus feet. Please grant this to us. We can’t expect anything more from You.” That was their petition.

Krishna replied to them, saying:

mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām
 amṛtatvāya kalpate
 diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho
 bhavatīnām mad-āpanaḥ

“Yes, I know. People want devotion to Me to achieve eternal life. To cross the limit of mortality and to have eternal life, they come to Me and worship Me. For these reasons they want My service, but fortunately for you, you have some natural affection towards Me. That will ultimately bring you to Me.”

That is the formal or superficial meaning of what was spoken by Krishna and the *gopīs*. But the great preceptors of our line have squeezed out another meaning from these prayers. They are conscious of the real, private relationship between the two parties, so they have drawn out another meaning based on the divine sentiment between the lover and beloved.

When the *gopīs* prayed to Śrī Krishna at Kurukṣetra, their real meaning was this: “Oh, we remember that one day You sent Uddhava to console us. He recited many scriptural references about how the whole world is mortal, how it is nothing, how we shall all have to die—affection has no great value; attachment must be cut out. He said that we must try to liberate ourselves from any attraction for the environment and attain salvation. You wanted to tell all

these apparently sweet things to us through Uddhava.

“Now, You Yourself are also showing us the same path. You say that You are great and that everyone should try, for their highest interest, to think of You.” This explanation is found in *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*. The *gopīs* tell Krishna, “Do You think we are yogis who will be satisfied with abstract meditation on You? Can we be satisfied by imagination? We are not a party to that. Neither are we *karmīs*, fruitive workers who are incurring a great debt from nature, who come to Your door to get relief, praying, ‘O God, please relieve us from all our previous sins.’ We do not belong to either of these two sections.

“What are we? We want to live with You as Your family. We are interested neither in abstract thinking, nor in using You to clear off the faults of *karma* to nullify our sinful activities. We don’t want to use You for any other purpose. We want to have a direct family life with You. Don’t You know that? And still You send messages through Uddhava, and now this! Aren’t You ashamed of Yourself?” This is their inner meaning.

❀ KRISHNA’S INNER ANSWER ❀

Krishna’s answer also has an inner aspect. He replies, “You know, everyone wants Me. Through devotion they want Me to help them attain the high-

est position in the world of eternal benefit. If they have a connection with Me, they consider themselves fortunate. But on the other hand, I consider Myself fortunate because I have come in touch with the valuable affection that I found in your hearts.”

The *gopīs* read the inner meaning in that way. And when Rādhārāṇī could see into the inner meaning of Krishna’s reply, She became satisfied. “Wherever He may be in the physical sense,” She thought, “At heart, He is mine alone.” She composed Her troubles within and returned to Vṛndāvana thinking, “He cannot but come to join our party again very soon.”

In *Padyāvalī*, Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī reveals the inner meaning of this verse. When Krishna came to the camp of *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra, He suddenly found Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and stooped down as if to touch Her feet. Rādhārāṇī began backing away, saying, “What are You doing! You are trying to touch My feet?” she shuddered, “You have done nothing wrong. You are my master. You are at liberty to do whatever You want. I am Your maidservant and should try with every nerve to satisfy You. You have committed no crime. I am the criminal. How? I still drag on My body and life. This is My crime—I could not die from Your separation! Still, I show My face to the public—I am not worth Your divine affection. The whole burden of breaking the law of love is on My head.”

✽ NOT A BIT OF DIVINE LOVE ✽

In this way Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī spoke. And in a similar verse, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says:

**na prema-gandho 'sti darāpi me harau
krandāmi saubhāgya-bharaṁ prakāśitum
vaṁśi-vilāsy-ānana-lokanaṁ vinā
vibharmi yat prāṇa-pataṅgakān vṛthā**

“I have not even a bit of divine love for Krishna within Me. Not even a scent of love for Krishna is to be traced within Me. You may ask, ‘Then why are You shedding tears profusely, uninterruptedly? Day and night, You are always shedding tears for Krishna. How do You explain this?’ Oh, you don’t know. I only do this to make a show and deceive the people in general into thinking that I have divine love for Krishna. In this way I want to become famous as a great devotee of Krishna. But I am a hypocrite. Why do I say so? The positive proof is this: I still live. I could not die! If I had any real love for Krishna, I would have died from His separation. That is the positive proof that I have no trace of *kṛṣṇa-prema* within Me.”

Kṛṣṇa-prema is so high and attractive that once coming in contact with it, no one can maintain his life without it. It is so high, so beautiful, so enchanting—it is heart-swallowing! It is impossible even to conceive

of it. Divine love of such a high degree is known as *prema*. That divine love for Krishna is not to be traced in this mundane world. If by chance someone had any experience of that high and vital kind of devotion, then by any separation from that, he would die instantly. It is so beautiful and magnanimous. We are out to search only for that divine love in this world. And Śrīman Mahāprabhu came to distribute that to the world for our sake.

✽ “LET US TAKE POISON . . .” ✽

I have heard that a group of people in South America committed collective suicide because they felt that their faithful way of life was going to be destroyed by the present civilization. They could not tolerate that, but rather, they thought, “Let us take poison and leave this world behind. Then we can live safely in the world of our faith. We have no charm for anything in this mundane world. Let us go with peace. We are members of the peaceful world. Let us enjoy that peace which is independent of material acquisition.”

We can agree that there is no charm here that shall make us hesitate to withdraw from this world, but we must also disagree and say that our life in this world is valuable. Why? With this life we can acquire a higher aspiration. We can have the chance of

acquiring the goal from this plane. This human life is so valuable that with it we can take the path of the highest divine conception. This human body is highly valued and rarely achieved. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.29) it is stated:

**labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viśayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt**

“The human form of life is very rarely attained, and although temporary, gives us a chance to achieve the supreme goal of life. Therefore, those who are grave and intelligent should immediately strive for perfection before another death occurs. There are so many forms of life: the aquatics, the vegetable kingdom, the animals, the birds, ghosts and other living beings, but only in this human position do we hold the key to the complete solution of the problems of life.”

If we can use this human life in a valuable way, we can acquire the key by which to become free from the whole chain of life in this troublesome world. We can get rid of the bondage of all sorts of physical and mental troubles. The key is here, in this human form of life. Jīva Goswāmī says that lower life-forms have insufficient understanding to realize the highest truth. And in the higher life-forms, such as demigods,

because previously acquired energy or *karma* has accumulated on all sides, the chief enjoying elements are surrounding the living being. It is difficult to escape the charm of those influences and begin the prospect of a fresh life in a higher plain of consciousness. This human form of life is the most advantageous position to escape this entanglement and reach the highest object of our divine life.

❀ THE HIGHEST CONCEPTION OF MAGNANIMITY ❀

Sometimes people ask, “Why did Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu choose to give the highest conception of divine love—*kṛṣṇa-prema*—to the lowest class of people, to the people of Kali-yuga?” But that is the very nature of Śrī Chaitanya-*avatāra*. Why did the *gopīs* who are considered to be in the most exalted devotees come from a neglected social position? What is the meaning of the highest conception of magnanimity? What should be its nature? To help the most needy.

And because Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu comes from the highest position, He cannot give ordinary things, and His attention must be drawn to the most needy. Is it unnatural? The highest magnanimity must take notice of the lowest and most needy. And if He wants to help them, He will do so with His own coin. He cannot distribute to them

only glass or stone chips. When He has the opulence of jewels and gems, why should He search for stone chips to distribute to the lowest level? He must extend to the lowest and poorest people what He thinks to be real wealth.

✽ MAHĀPRABHU—THE GREAT MESSIAH ✽

So we should all fall at the feet of the great Messiah, Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. His devotees say, “If we had to conceive of a place where Gaurāṅga had not appeared, we could not maintain our lives. We shudder to think of living without such a magnanimous friend as Śrī Gaurāṅga,” How could one live his life without Gaurāṅga? It is impossible. The world is not worth living in without Gaurāṅga.

Śrī Gaurāṅga is most magnanimous. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates the Panca-tattva have come to raise all souls from their fallen condition. Generally, only deserving persons can gain entrance into Vṛndāvana, into *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. But as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Krishna Himself has come down to cure the offenders of their offenses and grant them entrance into Vṛndāvana. Simply by chanting the names of the Pañca-tattva and by remembering Their *līlā*, we can be purified even from the lowest position and prepare for participation in Vṛndāvana *līlā*.

In Goloka Vṛndāvana, Rādhā-Govinda are enjoying Their pastimes of divine love within Their own circle. And there is another quarter, where Rādhā-Govinda are combined as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu—Krishna Himself in the mood of Rādhārāṇī is tasting His own sweetness with His entourage. We have to realize this through the recommended process. Who is Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu? He came here to bestow upon us the gift that will promote us to the highest goal of life.

❀ GAURA CONSCIOUSNESS ❀

To bring Śrī Gaurāṅga nearer to our soul is to get, even unconsciously, a guarantee of our achievement in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. For the fallen souls it is more useful to cultivate devotion for Śrī Gaurāṅga. That will give us the complete fulfillment of life with the least trouble. Devotion to Gaurāṅga will not lead us to any haphazard or misconceived Krishna consciousness, but real Krishna consciousness. We can have full Krishna consciousness—plus something more. What is that? The distribution of Krishna consciousness.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī, the giver of Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the most valuable theological literature that has ever seen the light of day, has written:

**kṛṣṇa-līlā amṛta-sāra, tāra śata śata dhāra,
daśa-dike vahe yāhā haite
se caitanya-līlā haya, sarovara akṣaya,
mano-haṁsa carāha' tāhāte**

“What is *kṛṣṇa-līlā*? It is the real essence of nectar. It is the gist of sweetness, happiness, and ecstasy. The sweetness of the sweetest thing that can ever be conceived is represented in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Then what is *caitanya-līlā*? In *caitanya-līlā*, that sweet nectar of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is flowing in all ten directions in hundreds of streams as if from a fountain. That fountain is *caitanya-līlā*.” Although *caitanya-līlā* appears later than *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, *caitanya-līlā* is the source, the foundation. We see that Krishna appeared in Dvāpara-yuga, in the previous age, and then Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu appeared later, in Kali-yuga. Still, Their *līlā* is eternal. First there is the giver, then the gift. And the gift of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is that in all the ten directions, He is distributing unlimited streams of sweet *kṛṣṇa-līlā* to the world.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī concludes, “O devotees, come! Like so many swans, you must swim in the lake of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s pastimes. From that lake *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is flowing to the world in different streams. Devotees, like clouds, take nectar from that lake, and distribute that nectar freely to the fortunate souls. Come and live in that lake. Ask the swan of

your mind to take shelter in that lake. May that swan swim in the nectarine lake of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's life and precepts, from where so many hundreds of streams of nectar are flowing in all directions. O devotees, I offer this humble prayer to you."

All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga

The Loving Search for the Lost Servant

by Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja



Sri Krishna and Gopakumara

Preface

A Christian theologian predicted that Christianity is on the verge of a Copernican revolution. Prior to Copernicus, it was believed that the earth was at the center of the universe, and that the sun and other planets orbited the earth. Until recently, in the Western world it has been thought that Christianity was the central conception of divinity in the theistic universe. But as Western man has begun to gaze Eastward, he has discovered a plurality of theistic conceptions orbiting the Supreme Truth.

Accepting that plurality, we must also accept the accompanying gradations of theism, superior and inferior. As the planets are situated

according to their gravitational attraction for the sun, the varieties of theistic conception are situated higher or lower according to their attraction toward the Absolute Center. The Krsna conception of divinity is one of being irresistibly drawn in attraction toward the infinite center of all love, beauty, and harmony.

The infinite can make Himself known to the finite, and the divine agent through whom this function manifests is Sri Guru or the divine guide. His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Deva Goswami is an agent of divinity and a messenger of that supreme reality. He has reminded us that we are all "sons of nectar, " and that we shall have to "die to live," "dive deep into reality," and enter the "land of dedication." As much as we sacrifice ourselves in this plane, we shall become released from its influence and be drawn through dedication into the higher plane of reality where the divine pastimes "move in a crooked way." And there we will find the "hidden treasure of the Sweet Absolute" in the service of Srimati Radharani.

His Divine Grace has informed us that the heart's inner hankering for ecstasy, charm, and sweetness, leads it in the search for Sri Krsna - Reality the Beautiful. The Krsna conception of divinity is so irresistible that even Krsna Himself becomes overwhelmed by His own potency and is madly engaged in tasting His own sweetness, ecstatically dancing, and thereby distributing that sweetness to others.

In Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami describes that while dancing at the Ratha-yatra, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would sometimes fall in an ecstatic swoon and appear like "a golden mountain rolling on the ground." Srila Sridhara Maharaja describes that "In the agony of separation from Krsna, ecstatic eruptions of ecstasy flowed like lava from the heart of the Golden Volcano of Divine Love, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu."

And now in The Loving Search for the Lost Servant, we find that the Lord's heart is such that He also feels the agony of separation from His fallen devotees, and as they are engaged in searching for Him, He is also engaged in a loving search for His lost servants.

Bhakti Sudhira Goswami

Invocation

*amnayah praha tattvam harim iha
paramam sarva-saktim rasabdhim
tad bhinnamsams ca jivan prakrti-
kavalitan tad vimuktams ca bhavat
bhedabheda-prakasam sakalam api
hareh sadhanam suddha-bhaktim
sadhyam tat pritim evety upadisati
harir-gauracandro bhaje tam*

Here, in one verse, Bhaktivinoda Thakura has given the very gist of Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy. He says, "We are not interested in the opinion of anyone ordinary: there is no value to any opinion other than what is revealed truth (amnaya)." Amnaya means revealed truth or scripture that is coming through a reliable source: the guru-parampara, a genuine succession of gurus.

And what do they say? They enumerate these facts: Hari is all in all (harim iha paramam). What is His nature? He is the master of all potencies (sarva-saktim). And He Himself is the ocean of rasa, ecstasy (*rasabdhim*).

And the jiva soul is not a direct part of Him, but a part of His potency (tad bhinnamsams ca jivan). Not a plenary portion (*svamsa*), but a partial portion (*vibhinnamsa*). Everything is a part of Hari, but *svamsa* means an avatara and *vibhinnamsa* means a part of His potency, *tatastha-sakti*. And by nature, some souls are engrossed in the external potency, and we find some in the lap of the internal potency (*prakrti kavalitan tad vimuktams ca bhavat*). By their very existence some souls are within the *svarupa-sakti* and some are outside the *svarupa-sakti*. Some souls are liberated and some are nonliberated (*mukta* and *amukta*). Everything is a part of Hari and has something in common with Him and something different (*bhedabheda-prakasamsakalam api hareh*). And the only means to attain Him is pure devotion, exclusive devotion (*sadhanam suddha-bhaktim*). Hari Himself, in the form of Gauracandra, is giving us the understanding that divine love is the highest goal of life (*sadhyam yat pritim evaty upadisati harir-gauracandro bhaje tam*).

Introduction

"Why did you stay away? Why have you been living away from home for so long? How was it possible for you? How could you bear My separation? You left Me, and you have been passing lives after lives without Me? Still, I know what trouble you took to return to Me. You searched for Me everywhere and went to beg from house to house, and you were chastised by many, ridiculed by many, and you shed tears for Me. I know all these things. I was with you. And now, after great trouble, you have again come back to Me."

The Lord's Loving Search for His Lost Servants: Great intensity is expressed here in a simple way. It is a mad search - an urgent campaign. With great earnestness Krsna comes to deliver His lost servants. Krsna comes to take us home.

In Brhad-Bhagavatamrta, it is written that once, as Krsna and the cows were returning from the Vrndavana forest at the end of the day, a boy had just attained spiritual emancipation and entered Vrndavana as a cowherd boy (*sakhya rasa*). Seeing His long lost servant, Krsna embraced him and both of them fainted in ecstasy.

All of Krsna's other cowherd friends were astounded, thinking, "What is this! Krsna has lost His senses by embracing this newcomer? How is it possible!" Then, as all of the cowherd boys looked on astonished, Balarama came to Krsna's relief and somehow managed to rouse Him. Then Krsna addressed His friend with great affection: "Why did you stay away? Why have you been living away from home for so long? How was it possible for you? How could you bear My separation? You left Me, and you have been passing lives after lives without Me? Still, I know what trouble you took to return to Me. You searched for Me everywhere, and went to beg from house to house, and you were chastised by many, ridiculed by many, and you shed tears for Me. I know all these things. I was with you. And now, after great trouble, you have again come back to Me." In this way, Krsna addressed His long lost servant and welcomed him. And when Krsna returned home, He took the newcomer by His side to take prasadam. In this way, a new recruit is earnestly welcomed by Krsna Himself.

So the Lord's search for His lost servants is a loving search; it is not ordinary, but from the heart. And the Lord's heart is not an ordinary heart. Who can estimate what type of search He is engaged in? Although He is full in all respects, still He feels pangs of separation for every one of us, however small we may be. In spite of His supreme position, He has room for us in a corner of His loving heart. This is the nature of the infinite. Such an absolute autocrat, absolute good is Krsna.

An autocrat is not under law. It is not that if Krsna gives Himself to one, another will be lacking. The infinite is not like that; rather there is an infinite supply at His command. So He is the emporium of rasa (*akhila-rasamrta-murtih*). And He is searching for His lost servants, to bring them home.

Otherwise we have no hope. Our solace, our consolation in life, is that ultimately we are under the care of such a loving Lord. Krsna's friends think, "What do we care for others? We have our Krsna, our friend. " That sort of inner encouragement, that desperate encouragement, comes from within. "Krsna is there, He is our friend. What do we care about anything? We can take poison, we can jump on the head of that big serpent Kaliya, we can do anything. With Krsna behind us, what do we care? This sentiment is expressed by Bhaktivinoda Thakura in his *Saranagati*.

raksa koribo tuhun niscaya jani
pana korobun hama yamuna pani

"Fearless and confident of Your protection, I shall drink the waters of the Yamuna, whether they are poisoned or not.

"I am Your property. You must take care of me; You can't leave me."

kaliya-dokha korobi binasa
sodhobi nadi-jala badobi asa
bhaktivinoda tuwa gokula-dhana
rakhobi kesava! korato jatana

"Although the Kaliya serpent's venom has poisoned the Yamuna's waters, I know that poison will not act. Your presence will cleanse the waters and so increase our confidence in Your protection.

Bhaktivinoda is now the property of Gokula, Your holy abode, O Kesava. Kindly protect him with care."

How are we to enter into such a loving relationship with the Lord? Through the grace of Sri Gauranga. One devotee has said, "If Gauranga had not come, how could we live? And who would inform us about our ultimate prospect in life?" We have such a great prospect. And yet, without Gauranga, who would have come to inform us that we have so much wealth within? And Sri Gauranga says, "You do not know, but you have such a great magnitude of wealth." His coming to inform us of our prospect is like the astrologer who reads a poor man's horoscope and tells him, "Why are you living a poor life? You have immense wealth buried underground. Try to recover it. You are so great and your guardian is so loving and so high, and yet you are wandering like a poor fellow in the street? What is this! You are not helpless; it is not that you have no guardian. You have only to remember your merciful guardian."

In the Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.5.32), where the Kali-yuga avatara is mentioned, we find evidence of the advent of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. There it is said:

1. *krsna-varnam tvisa 'krsnam*
2. *sangopangastra-parsadam*
3. *yajnaih sankirtana-prayair*
4. *yajanti hi su-medhasah*

"In the age of Kali, persons of great piety and intelligence will worship the Lord as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He will appear in a golden form chanting Krsna's name, accompanied by His associates and entourage."

After that, there are two other verses about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu:

dhyeyam sada paribhava-ghnam abhista-doham
tirthaspadam siva-virinci-nutam saranyam
bhrtydrti-ham pranata-pala bhavabdhi-potam
vande maha-purusa te caranaravindam

Srimad Bhagavatam (11.5.33) explains here, "That same personality who came as Ramacandra and Krsna has again appeared. He has come

to direct us to the real fulfillment of life. He is drawing the sweetest nectar from above for the sake of everyone. Meditate only on Him and all your troubles will be finished. He purifies all holy places of pilgrimage and great saintly persons by His touch and by His sankirtana. He draws the highest things down from the highest plane. And even Brahma and Siva, puzzled by His noble gift, will begin to praise Him. They will eagerly aspire to take shelter under His lotus feet in surrender. The pains of all who come to serve Him will be removed, and their inner necessities will be fulfilled. And He will take care of those who take shelter of Him; they will be given protection as well as everything they may need. In this world where mortality rules, where we are continually experiencing the undesirable changes of repeated birth and death, in this area where no one wants to live, a great ship will come for us and take us within, and carry us away from this unpleasant position. Let us fall at the feet of that great personality who comes to give us the highest nectar."

*tyaktva sudustyaja-surepsita-rajya-laksmim
dharmistha arya-vacasa yad agad aranyam
maya-mrgam dayitayepsitam anvadhavad
vande maha-purusa te caranaravindam*

"O Supreme Lord, You gave up the goddess of fortune and her great opulence, which is most difficult to abandon and is sought after even by the gods. In order to perfectly establish the principles of religion, You left for the forest to honor a brahmana's curse. To deliver the sinful souls who chase illusory pleasures, You search after them and award them Your devotional service. At the same time, You are engaged in a search for Yourself, in a search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful."

This verse generally applies to Lord Ramacandra, who left His kingdom, and after going with Sitadevi to the forest to discharge the duties designed by His father, chased after the maya-mrgam - the golden deer. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, however, shows how this verse also applies to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He says that the word maya-mrgam means that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ran after the souls that are enveloped by maya or misconception. The word maya-mrgam, when applied to Ramacandra, means that He ran after

Marici, who had taken the form of a golden deer. When applied in the case of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the words maya-mrgam anvadhavat mean "He chased after those souls who are in illusion in order to deliver them. He ran in pursuit of the fallen souls as a savior, to deliver them from maya or illusion."

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has also given another interpretation: he says that dayitaya ipsitam means "it is desired by the beloved," that is, the search for Krsna. In this way, He identifies two qualities in the Caitanya avatara: He relieves the fallen souls, and He searches out Krsna in the mood of His beloved (*dayitayepsitam anvadhavat*). Inspired by the mood of dayita, His beloved, Srimati Radharani, He ran after the souls in bondage to deliver them. Here we find the scriptural reference, the seed of this conception. He is in quest of the lost souls, absorbed in a loving search for His lost servants.

And throughout the whole life of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His other self, Nityananda, it is very clear that They, being the Supreme Entity Themselves, are hunting after the fallen souls to deliver them. This will be the backbone of our conception of the Lord's loving search for His lost servants.

And it is also said:

*yada yada hi dharmasya
glanir bhavati bharata
abhyuthanam adharmasya
tadatmanam srijamyaham*

*paritranaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge*

"Whenever and wherever religion declines and irreligion becomes prevalent, I advent Myself. In order to protect the saintly and punish the wicked, as well as to reestablish religious principles, I appear millennium after millennium." Here, Krsna says, "I come here now and then to help reestablish the scriptural injunctions, as well as to do away with the demoniac." These are the references from the scriptures describing how Krsna comes in search of His servants. By accepting

these statements as our starting point, we can see that He is always coming to this world to help the fallen souls, His own servants.

What is the position of the fallen souls? In Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja records Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructing Sanātana Goswami:

*jivera 'svarupa' haya - kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dasa'
kṛṣṇera 'tatastha-sakti' bhedabheda-prakasa'
kṛṣṇa bhuli sei jiva anadi-bahirmukha
ataeva maya tare deya saṁsāra dukha*

"The constitutional nature of the jīva soul is that of an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa; the jīva soul is a manifestation of divinity which is one with Kṛṣṇa and different from Him. The jīva souls are the marginal potency of the Lord. Though in reality they are servants of Kṛṣṇa, from time immemorial, they have been engaged in misconception, as exploiting agents." In order to deliver His lost servants, the Lord comes now and then to take them up to His own home.

In other religions we find many messiahs coming to help us to retrace our path from worldly consciousness back to God consciousness. Yet although we see this conception in other countries and other religious traditions, in India it is found in a most profuse and systematic way.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.3) Kṛṣṇa says:

*kalena nasta pralaye
vāṇīyam veda-samjñita
mayadau brahmane prokta
dharmo yasyam mad-atmakah*

"By the influence of time, the transcendental sound of Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Again, at the time of creation, I first inspired Brahma the creator from within his heart. And then, through Brahma, so many disciples were enlightened. They in turn enlightened their disciples. And in this way, the line of revealed truth descends from Me." And in Bhāgavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa says:

*imam vivasvate yogam
proktavan aham avyayam*

*vivasvan manave praha
manur iksvakove 'bravit*

*evam parampara-praptam
imam rajarsayo viduh
sa kaleneha mahata
yogo nastah parantapa*

"First I instructed the sun-god Surya in this knowledge, and from Surya it passed to Manu, and from Manu to Ikshvaku; so from the beginning of time, I am giving My tidings to others, transmitting the truth that I am the goal through this system of disciplic succession, generation after generation."

In this way, Kṛṣṇa appears again and again to reclaim His long lost servants. And, as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa is also tasting His own sweetness. When He wants to distribute it to the devotees, the cause is His ecstatic potency (*hladini-sakti*). When Kṛṣṇa combines with His potency as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He becomes the ācārya. So Kṛṣṇa says, ācāryam mam vijaniyan: "Know that I am the ācārya." His ācārya-līlā is His self-distribution, and thereby He is taking His lost servants home. His recruitment is to distribute knowledge about Himself and devotion for Himself, and then to take them home.

In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa is tasting rasa within His own circle, and in Navadvīpa, as Śrī Gaurāṅga with His group, He is tasting Himself and distributing that taste to others. His distribution and recruitment are one and the same. By distributing Himself He is drawing our hearts to Him, taking us home. The self-distribution of the Absolute is meant to draw us back home, back to Godhead, and in this way, the Lord is eternally engaged in His loving search for His lost servants.

First Chapter

Planets of Faith

The Gradation

"Just as in the tangible world there is the sun, the moon, and so many other planets, in the world of faith there is a gradation of planetary systems. We have to scrutinize the scriptures, take advantage of the guidance given by saints, and understand how the progress of faith to the highest plane is achieved by eliminating the lower planes."

Faith is the only means through which we can see, hear, or feel the higher world; otherwise it is all meaningless to us. To understand that plane, an inner awakening is necessary. We can connect with the upper world only through a higher source. Therefore divyam jnanam, knowledge of the higher plane, is not ordinary knowledge; it is transcendental, supramental feeling and sense.

But to realize this, surrender is compulsory. After that, we may go on hearing and chanting, remembering and worshiping and praising the Lord, or rendering so many other kinds of service, but the first thing - the foundation of devotion - must be self-surrender. Otherwise nothing will be effected; our show of devotion will all be imitation.

We must sincerely feel, "I shall be faithful in my service to the Supreme Lord. I am meant for Him. I am ready to die to live. I want to live for Him only and not for fulfilling any separate interest. I want nothing less than the absolute. I want to be His completely." This sort of intensity is an indispensable necessity for a devotee. A devotee has to conceive, to feel, that he is meant for Krsna. He is not an independent entity; He is dependent on Krsna - the highest absolute center - and nothing else.

To identify with the interests of our family, society, or country is extended selfishness, but all false identification must be eliminated. We must be neither selfish nor entangled in extended selfishness. Rather, all sorts of foreign contamination must be eliminated from our conception of self. All outside demands must be canceled. Then we shall feel in our innermost hearts that we are connected with the whole of the infinite, the absolute.

And nothing external is required for our success. The only thing required of us is that we dismantle the ego's cover. The ego is collecting some foreign elements, but that foreign collection box must

be dissolved - finished - and then, in our innermost hearts' we shall find our connection with the fundamental plane of loving service to the organic whole.

Both enjoyment and renunciation are abnormal. They are two kinds of demons: enjoyment or exploitation, and eternal rest or renunciation. These two tendencies are our enemies. A higher, positive life is possible only when we become fully independent of both exploitation and renunciation.

Everything will help us if we can see it in connection with the center. On the other hand, the kind of exclusive renunciation practiced by the Sankarites and Buddhists is not recommended by our line. We are concerned to harmonize things so that everything will remind us of our duty towards the absolute, and encourage us to dedicate ourselves to Him.

*prapancikataya buddhya
hari-sambandhi-vastunah
mumuksubhih parityago
vairagyam phalgu kathyate*

*anasaktasya visayan
yatharham upayunjatah
nirbandhah krsna-sambandhe
yuktam vairagyam ucyate
(Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu)*

To neglect the environment, thinking that it is filled with undesirable material things, won't help us. That is not correct. Everything within the environment should remind us of the absolute. In that spirit we should move, thinking: "Accept me and connect me with the service of our Lord." When the environment is seen with the correct vision, everything will help encourage and excite us in our service to the center. We are living in an organic whole, a system. And that system is composed of the owner and the owned, the possessor of the potency and the different types of potencies (sakti-saktiman).

Emporium of Rasa

The Lord's potency is dynamic, and that dynamicism is always producing rasa or the flavor of ecstasy. The whole lila is producing ecstasy (anandam, rasam). Krsna Himself is the emporium of rasa (akhila rasamrta murtih...anandamaya vilasa). Dynamic movement is a necessity in His lila; it cannot be eliminated. And that movement is always producing a novel ecstasy which feeds every atom of the spiritual world. In that transcendental abode, Krsna is the center who attracts everything and enthuses rasa and anandam, ecstasy and joy within everything. This is the nature of the movement of the absolute. It is not static, but dynamic - filled with movement. And that movement is prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam: at every point, every step, it produces a new type of joy which is infinite. It is not the stale and sterile joy we find here.

This is the proper conception of the absolute. The organic whole, which is always working and moving, is full, and its fullness is ever-new. It is not standing or static. It moves in such a way that at every second, every minute, it is always producing new, unknown, infinite joy. And we can purchase that joy only by paying the highest price: self-sacrifice. That ticket is very valuable which can give us admission into the plane of automatic moving joy which is ever-new at every second. And the ticket is wholesale self-sacrifice.

That sacrifice is joyful, and one may taste that wonderful joy even here in this world, where at every moment everything is dying. It is give and take. If we want to gain something noble, we must also give. We must be generous in our dedication, and then we shall receive amply from that side. Wholesale self-dedication is the price, and in return, we shall be filled up with ecstasy: anandam budhi-varadhanam. We shall feel that we are in the midst of an ocean of joy. At present, we are searching after a joyous feeling - like one who searches for a glass of water in the midst of the desert. But by dedication, we shall find that we are in an ocean of joy whose soothing sweetness is increasing at every moment.

The quality of joy has variety, and it comes to help us in our serving attitude, so that at every moment we may feel new encouragement. So we have to inquire from a proper agent, follow his advice, and try to

understand how to improve our condition. At the same time, we should be conscious that the chance we have to render devotional service is rarely found. It is not very cheap. Therefore, we must utilize every minute, every second, every moment. We should be very much alert that a moment not be lost, that our attempt to dedicate ourselves may continue constantly without being interrupted. That stage of dedication is called nistha, and when we attain that stage, our taste is further improved and we will be more and more encouraged to go forward and make progress towards ultimate fulfillment.

Seven days to live

Sukadeva Goswami told Pariksit Maharaja that seven days of longevity is enough to achieve perfection. He said, "You have only seven days left to live; do you think it is a short time? It is enough time. What is all-important is the proper use of every second." What time we have in our hands is uncertain, but we must try our best to properly use every second. This must not be neglected. We should not think, "The future is before me; any time I like, I can engage in the profitable affair of spiritual life. "Not one second should be lost. Longfellow wrote:

Trust no Future howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act, - act, in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

The present is at our hand. We don't know about our future. We must try to use the time at hand to its best advantage. And how will our time be best used? In the association of saints and scriptures. Purity is to be measured by the unit of sacrifice. And not sacrifice to any partial interest, but sacrifice to the whole. The absolute whole has been shown to us as the emporium of rasa (akhila rasamrta murtih) - the absolute good, the autocrat, the designer and destiner of everything we see. Our ideal of sacrifice should be so high that we can give up even the corresponding results of sacrifice. Self-abnegation, or self-

surrender, is generally known as atma-nivedanam. However, atmaniksepa is a stronger word for surrender. It means "to throw oneself desperately towards the infinite." One must be desperate in self-sacrifice. In self-sacrifice we must be very careful not to aspire for any greater or extended selfishness, but to surrender only to the center. Sacrifice is meant for the center - Krsna - the all-attractor.

In realizing that position, we are concerned about two things - transcendental knowledge (sambandha), and the means for reaching the goal (abhidheya). If we realize these correctly, then the fulfillment of the ultimate goal (prayojana) will come automatically. We shall be very conscious about the center to whom we are dedicating everything. The object of our fulfillment (sambandha), and our dedication or purity of purpose (abhidheya) these two things are most important. This can be understood from the scriptures and the saints. And if we concern ourselves with the purest end and highest sacrifice, the end will come of itself. We are not to bother for any remuneration. We have only to do our duty and the remuneration will come. To whom we will dedicate ourselves and what we shall receive - these things should be discussed, thought out, meditated upon, and put into practice. In this way, we must try to live in the infinite. We must always stay engaged in the cultivation of infinite love and infinite beauty as recommended by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Ocean of Faith

Although the object of our heart's faith is infinite, still, some conceptions of Him have been given by the men of experience in the ocean of faith. In the ocean of faith, many have had their special experience, and that has been recorded in the scriptures. Through that we can approach the saints who stand like lighthouses to help us cross the ocean of nescience. But that must be bona fide and not merely a concoction or an imitation. It may also be possible to imitate the real thing by taking our mundane experience and thrusting it into the world of faith. So we must approach that plane very carefully through the line of reliable saints.

We must be careful to know the qualifications of a real saint. Their symptoms are given in the scriptures. And who is a disciple and what should be his attitude? All these things are given in the scriptures.

And faith is required in order to work in that substantial conscious world which is subjective. This is the most important thing that we have to remember: the infinite is subjective. It can guide us and be affectionate to us. All these things are to be reckoned with. He can guide us. The revealed truth stands on this foundation: We cannot approach Krsna by the ascending method, but He can descend to our level to make Himself known. We must understand this very fundamental and substantial point: He can come to us, and only through faith can we come to Him.

Sraddha - faith - is more important than calculative truth. The example of great souls is more valuable to us than our human calculation. The external, material, physical truth does not have much value. Rather, it is a false attitude of mind which is very strong. That physical truth should not be given greater respect than the intuitive practices of pure devotees; rather, the intuition of a pure devotee should be given preference to the calculations of truth made by ordinary men.

Faith has no connection with the so-called reality of this world. It is completely independent. There is a world which is guided only by faith (sraddha-mayam-lokan). Faith is everything there, and it is infinite and all-accommodating. In the world of faith, everything may be true by the sweet will of the Lord. And here, in the land of death, calculation is inconclusive and destructive in its ultimate goal; it has no ultimate value. It should be rejected. The knowledge that materialists come under, the fallible calculation of exploiting souls, has no value whatsoever. But in the world of the infinite, faith is the only standard by which everything moves.

*svayam samuttirya sudustaram dyuman
bhavarnavam bhimam adabhra-sauhrdah
bhavat padambhoruha-navam atra te
nidhaya yatah sad-anugraho bhavan
Srimad Bhagavatam (10.2.31)*

Here, Srimad-Bhagavatam says that just as in the vast ocean, when nothing else can be seen, the compass is the only guide, so in the

world of the infinite, our only guide is the footsteps of those great souls who have traveled on the path of faith. The way has been marked by the holy footsteps of those who have gone to the highest quarter. That is our only hope. Yudhisthira Maharaja also says that the real secret is concealed in the hearts of saints, as treasure is hidden in a mysterious cave (dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhayam). The broad line towards the truth is chalked out by those who are going to the divine world. And that is our surest guide. All other methods of guidance may be eliminated because calculation is fallible.

Guidance comes from the absolute infinite. And His guidance can come in any form, anywhere, any time. With this broad view, we should realize the meaning of Vaikuntha. Vaikuntha means "without limitation. " It is as if we are in a boat floating on the infinite ocean. Many things may come to help or hinder us. But only our optimistic good faith may be our guide, our gurudeva. The guide is Sri Guru.

*nr-deham adyam sulabham sudurlabham
plavam sukalpam guru-karnadharam
mayanukulena nabhasvateritam
puman bhavabdhim na taret sa atma ha
Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.20.17)*

In the infinite ocean we have boarded our small boat, the human form of life, and our destination is uncertain and inconceivable. But it is conceivable to our gurudeva (guru karnadharam). Our guru is our guide - the captain of the boat. And we must progress with sincere faith. We are trying to cross a horrible ocean with huge waves and dangerous sharks and whale-swallowing whales. It is full of danger. The guidance of saints is our only hope. We must depend on them. They stand like lighthouses in the infinite ocean to guide us to the land of faith. Faith means "hope in the infinite." Vaikuntha means "infinite." And sraddha means "good faith." Just as there is a place called the Cape of Good Hope, sraddha means surcharged with good hope in the infinite. Vaikuntha is infinite, and if we wish to draw the attention of the infinite, the only way open to us is sraddha.

By sraddha alone, we can attract the infinite. And when sraddha develops a definite form, after progressing through bhava, ecstatic emotion, sraddha becomes prema - divine love. Columbus set sail, and

after a long voyage, finally arrived in America; he reached the land of good hope. In the same way, with hope, sraddha, faith, we may, after crossing Vaikuntha, arrive in the highest plane of the spiritual cosmos. Sraddha is our light in the darkness.

Only sraddha can guide us when we are travelers in the infinite. "I have heard that this is the way to that place" - that spirit will keep our hearts enlivened. The definition of sraddha is given in the Caitanya-caritamṛta: "Faith is the firm conviction that by serving Kṛṣṇa, all other purposes are automatically served." No risk, no gain. Greatest risk, greatest gain. Kṛṣṇa reassures us, "I am everywhere - there is no need to be afraid at all. Just realize that I am your friend. I am all in all, and you are Mine. To believe this is your only fare for the journey to the land of faith."

The Absolute Truth, the transcendental substance who is the object of our inquiry through faith, is endowed with all power and all consciousness. He is kind, benevolent, and sweet. His power is infinitely higher than ours, and we are infinitely smaller than Him. Our attitude should be that compared to Him, we are insignificant.

What, then, will be the real symptom of a disciple? Who is a real seeker of truth? What is the qualification of one who is searching after the truth - what is his attitude, his nature? And what will be the symptom of the guru, the guide?

In Bhagavad-gītā Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*tad viddhi pranipatena
pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darsinah*

"One can learn the truth only by submissively approaching and inquiring from those who have seen and experienced the truth. And by rendering service to them, one becomes initiated into transcendental knowledge."

What is required? Pranipat, submission, and seva, service. Then the inquiry will be bona fide; otherwise it is a false transaction: it may have no value. It may all be a waste of energy. Genuine faith does not allow us to think ourselves at liberty to do anything and everything. If

it is a real transaction, there must be some guidance from above. So sraddha, faith, is the most important thing for a devotee.

When one develops faith, he will do anything to approach the higher subjective realm. One who has faith wants to connect with that higher substance which is composed of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. Faith moves in consideration of existence, knowledge, and love. And when these three main points are realized, our existence is fully satisfied. Faith asks us to approach the higher world, not the lower. And to think, "In every way Krsna is superior, He is our guardian and well-wisher," is the basis of faith.

The rationalists are always searching with their scientific brains for different ways to utilize and command the things they have discovered in their research. But faith is concerned with a substance far higher in all respects than even the searcher himself. One who is an inquirer about a higher substance must inquire with what is generally known as faith.

Proper guidance in faith is also necessary, and that guidance is given by the higher plane. That must be the attitude of our inquiry or search if we are to be successful. So Bhagavad-gita advises: pranipat, pariprasna, sevaya - "Surrender, inquire, and serve." In the Upanisads it is said:

*tad vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet
samit panih srotriyam brahma-nistham*

"To understand the Absolute Truth, one must approach a guru who is fixed in spiritual knowledge and well-versed in the scriptures. And he must approach the guru being prepared for sacrifice." This is the general instruction of the Upanisads.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.3.21) similarly advises:

*tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jijnasuh sreyah uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam
brahmany upasamasrayam*

"One seriously inquisitive to search for his highest prospect should take complete shelter of a guru who has deep realizations of the

Supreme Lord and the inner meaning of the scriptures. Such spiritual masters have left aside all relative considerations in favor of the supreme absolute consideration."

We should be very attentive to these things. We should try to understand through self-searching whether we are really approaching divinity through faith. We must also see to it that our faith is real. Proper faith and credulity are not the same. Whether one is a bona fide searcher with real faith or one whose faith is adulterated must be considered. And there are symptoms of real faith. We have to consult higher authorities to guide us, because faith is a most important thing. If we are searching for truth, we are dissatisfied with our present acquisition. We are taking a risk to jump into a higher prospect. We must therefore take guidance carefully. We must be attentive as far as possible. We are told that our present reason is not sufficient to help us; that more than reason, sraddha is needed, and sraddha also has its symptoms. Still, as far as possible we shall apply our reason.

When I first came to the mission, I thought, "The transcendental truths that I hear from these devotees do not come within the clutches of worldly intelligence, but still, when I want to throw myself into that association, I shall use my reason and intellect as far as possible, understanding that I am going to jump into something which will be beyond my control, beyond my calculation." So we must carefully understand what sraddha is, with guidance from saints, scriptures, and gurus.

Of course, even if we are going the right way, it is never certain that the path will be free from obstacles. Even if we are making progress, unexpected hindrances may trouble us and delay our advancement. Though we see many around us falling or retreating, we must go forward. We should have the conviction to think that although many began with us on the path and are now going back, we shall have to go on. We shall have to strengthen our energy and go forward alone if necessary. Our faith should be so strong that we have the conviction to go on alone if necessary and by the grace of our Lord cross whatever difficulties we find on our way. In this way we must make ourselves fit. We must develop exclusive devotion. Of course, we shall always try to find good association. Yet sometimes it may seem that there is no association, that we are alone. Still, we must go on and search out the beacon light of the truth.

Progress means eliminating one thing and accepting another. Yet we should be able to see that there are so many others who can help us in our progress in the line of dedication; we must go forward with our eyes open. And the scriptures describe many levels that we shall have to cross beyond in our progress. By elimination, the path of progress is shown from Brahma to Siva to Laksmi. At last Uddhava is shown to be superior to all. But it is his opinion that the gopis are the highest devotees. This is confirmed by Rupa Goswami:

*karmibhyah parito hareh priyataya vyaktim yayur jnaninas
tebhyo jnana-vimukta-bhakti-paramah premaika-nisthas tatah
tebhyas tah pasu-pala-pankaja-drsas tabhyo 'pi sa radhika
prestha tadvad iyam tadiya-sarasi tam nasrayet kah krti
Sri Upadesamrta (10)*

"There are those in the world who regulate their tendency for exploitation in accordance with the scriptural rules and thereby seek gradual elevation to the spiritual domain. However, superior to them are those wise men who, having given up the tendency to lord over others, attempt to dive deep into the realm of consciousness. But far superior to them are the pure devotees who are free from any mundane ambitions and are liberated from knowledge, not by knowledge, having achieved divine love. They have gained entrance into the land of dedication and are engaged there spontaneously in the Lord's loving service. Among all devotees, however, the gopis are the highest, for they have forsaken everyone, including their families, and everything, including the strictures of the Vedas, and have taken complete shelter at the lotus feet of Krsna, accepting Him as their only protection. But among all the gopis, Srimati Radharani reigns supreme. For Krsna left the company of millions of gopis during the rasa dance to search for Her alone. She is so dear to Sri Krsna that the pond in which She bathes is His very favorite place. Who but a madman would not aspire to render service, under the shelter of superior devotees, in that most exalted of all holy places?"

Go Deeper, Go Higher

In His talks with Ramananda Raya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu repeatedly says, *eho bahya, age kaha ara*. Go further, go deeper, go higher! There are so many who consider their position to be the highest, who, achieving a particular stage, stop there. But we find in Sanatana Goswami's *Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam* how Gopa-kumara, beginning from the lowest stage of devotion, gradually makes progress through different levels, and at last comes to the Krsna conception in the mellow of friendship - *sakhya rasa*. There it is described how he gradually eliminates one stage and makes further progress to the highest stages of devotion.

As he progresses from one level to the next, everyone seems to be very helpful to him, but gradually, their company seems to him to be stale. At that time, a higher chance is given to him through an agent of divinity, and, leaving that plane behind, he goes to a new and higher plane. In this way, the progress of dedication is shown in *Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam*.

Higher Light

Just as in the tangible world there is the sun, the moon, and so many other planets, in the world of faith there is a gradation of planetary systems. We have to scrutinize the scriptures, take advantage of the guidance given by saints, and understand how the progress of faith to the highest plane is achieved by eliminating the lower planes. And whenever there is any doubt, we should consult with some higher agent in order to make progress.

Spiritual reality is eternal existence, complete consciousness, and ecstasy. Mere existence cannot fulfill us. Even our inner hankering and feeling, consciousness, is not sufficient. We require *rasa* and *ananda*, ecstasy, to give us fulfillment.

Spiritual realization is also of different types. We have to distinguish between different spiritual conceptions, and our choices improve as we dive deeper and deeper into reality. We must die to live. And the consideration of death is also deep, deeper, and deepest. The gradation of higher and lower is always there. If we are to progress, there must

be elimination and new acceptance. The duties that we find ourselves in the midst of may be left for higher duties.

In this way we must progress, while always consulting the saints and scriptures. They will guide us in the ocean of faith. Otherwise the spiritual world is unknown and unknowable. The Absolute Truth is known and knowable to a particular section, and they have given us direction. If we take advantage of that, then by the guidance of saints and scriptures we shall gradually eliminate our faults.

First we must eliminate this mortal existence. Then, we must satisfy our reason, our consciousness. And finally, we must satisfy our heart. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says that the heart is the most important thing within us. We should follow the direction of the heart. The highest fulfillment is fulfillment of the heart, not the fulfillment of consciousness, or the attainment of eternal existence. Eternal existence has no meaning if it is not conscious, and consciousness has no meaning if it does not give any fulfillment. So sat, eternal existence, cit, consciousness, and ananda fulfillment, ecstasy, are the three principles of our ultimate destination. And considering these as our goal, we shall progress further and further in our spiritual life.

In the Manu-samhita it is stated:

*vidvadbhih sevitaḥ sadbhir
nityam adveśa-ragibhiḥ
hrdayenabhyānujnato
yo dharmas tam nibhodhata*

We can feel within our heart whether we are gainers or losers. That tasting machine is within us. As we progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, our karma, our connection with this material world, will evaporate in no time, and spacious knowledge will come to satisfy us. At that time, we shall feel the object of our life everywhere (mayi drste 'khilatmani). When we can see that the fulfillment of life has embraced us, we shall see that everything within the environment is helping us, everything is sympathetic to us from all sides. In that spiritual domain, everyone shall take interest in loving us. We may be careless about our own interest, but the environment there is more favorable and affectionate to us than we can even estimate, just as a child cannot estimate the extent of his mother's affection. In this way,

friends and home comforts will surround us, and with this realization we shall go back to God, back to home.

Second Chapter

The Environment

"We must try to look deeper and then we will find our friend; if we are liberal in our attitude towards the environment, we cannot but come in connection with the plane which is really liberal. Prahlada saw that Krsna is everywhere. And Krsna consciousness is commanding the whole. So we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged under any circumstances, however acute they may apparently seem to us. Krsna is there. If only we can develop the right vision, the smiling face of the Lord will appear from behind the screen. Krsna is beautiful, and He is eagerly awaiting to accept our services."

Devotion to Krsna means sacrifice - "die to live." By devotion to Krsna, our whole conception of mundane, self-centered, self-interested life will be finished totally.

*sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam
tat paratvena nirmalam
hrsikena hrsikesa
sevanam bhaktir ucyate
Narada Pancaratra*

"Pure devotion is service to the Supreme Lord which is free from all relative conceptions of self-interest."

In his Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, Srila Rupa Goswami quotes this verse from the ancient Puranas. Upadhi means "all relative conceptions of self-interest." We must be totally free of all upadhis.

And Rupa Goswami also gives us a parallel verse describing bhakti:

*anyabhilasita-sunyam
jnana-karmady-anavrtam*

*anukulyena-krsnanu
silanam bhaktir uttama*

"Pure devotional service is the favorable cultivation of Krsna consciousness free from all traces of ulterior motives, such as karma, self-promoting activities, jnana, mental achievement, and so on." Bhakti, devotion, must be free from any fleeting desires (anyabhilasa), such as karma - the organized attempt for self-elevation - and jnana, the attempt to depend on our own ability, knowledge, and consciousness to reach the ultimate goal. To attempt to put one's own self as the subject, to become the judge of one's own fate - that is jnana. Here adi means yoga and other external things. These are all overcoatings (avrtam). In the soul proper, however, these elements are not found. The soul is an eternal slave of Krsna (krsna-nitya-dasa).

Mahaprabhu said: Jivera 'svarupa' haya - krsnera 'nitya-dasa': "Slavery to Krsna is the innate nature of the jiva soul."

In order to realize the absolute, we must come to the standard of slavery; it will take nothing less than that. We must submit ourselves as slaves to the play of His sweet will.

Once, the British government had to entertain the Persian Shah, the king of Persia. They invited him to England and tried to please him in various ways to gain his sympathy so that he would not be converted to the side of the Russian Czar. They showed him many things, and at one point, he was taken to the place where men condemned to capital punishment were beheaded. There the Shah was shown the place of execution. They explained to him how that was the place where so many great men, including even one king, Charles the First, had been beheaded. When that place was shown to the King of Persia, he asked, "Oh, bring someone there and behead him! Let me enjoy how it was done."

They were astonished. "What is he saying! For his pleasure, we shall have to murder a man? No," they said. "We cannot allow this; British law cannot allow that a man can be beheaded like this." The Shah said, "Oh, you do not understand the position of a king? I am a Persian king, and for my satisfaction you cannot sacrifice a human life? This is dishonor. Anyhow, if it is not possible for you, I will supply one of my own men. Take one of my attendants and show me how you execute people here in your country."

With humility, they submitted to him, "Your Highness, the law of our country cannot allow this. You may do it in your own country, but here, your men also cannot be murdered simply for the pleasure of a man." The Shah replied, "Then you do not know what a king is!"

This is the meaning of slavery: A slave has no position; by the sweet will of his master he may be sacrificed. Of course, in the lower material plane such things may be quite abominable and unthinkable, but we should understand that in the higher realm of divinity, in principle, such a degree of sacrifice is shown by the servants of the Lord. The depth of their love is such that they are prepared to sacrifice themselves wholesale, to die to live, for Krsna's slightest satisfaction or whim. But we should remember that whatever is His pleasure, He is the absolute good. So by such sacrifice we do not actually die, but live by gaining entrance into a higher plane of dedication.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.5.23-24) it is written:

*sravanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam pada-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-nivedanam*

*iti pumsarpita visnau
bhaktis cen nava-laksana
kriyeta bhagavaty addha
tan manye 'dhitam uttamam*

"Hearing, speaking about, and remembering Krsna, serving His lotus feet, worshiping His Deity form, praying, becoming His servant, cultivating His friendship, and surrendering to Him utterly are the nine processes of devotion. One who cultivates these nine processes of devotion, offering himself completely to Krsna, can easily attain the ultimate goal of life." What are the forms of sadhana? What are the means to attain krsna-bhakti? How can we revive our innate love for Krsna? We are told to hear about Him, to talk about Him, to meditate upon Him, to praise Him, and so on. But in his commentary on this verse, Sridhara Swami has explained that we should not anticipate what benefit we shall derive from sravanam-kirtanam, hearing or talking or thinking about Krsna. Rather we should pray, "May

whatever service I do go to my Lord. I am not the enjoying party - He is the sole proprietor." All these functions (sravanam, kirtanam etc.) will be considered devotion only if one condition is fulfilled; otherwise they may be karma, jnana, yoga, or anything else. They may even be vikarma, polluted misdeeds. One condition must be there to insure that all these different forms of devotional activity are actually bhakti: We are His property; we are not the owners of any wealth or property. We must think, "My Lord is the possessor and I am in His possession. Everything is His property."

Krsna says, aham hi sarva-yajnanam: "I am the only enjoyer of every action. You must be fully conscious of this fact." The stern reality is that devotion is not a cheap thing. Pure devotional service, suddha-bhakti, is above mukti, liberation. Above the negative plane of liberation, in the positive side, He is the only master. He is the Lord of everything.

He is the Lord of the land of dedication. We must try to obtain a visa to enter there. There, His sweet will is the only law. It is very easy to pronounce the word "absolute." But if we are to enter into the meaning of the word, then it must be recognized that His sweet will is all in all. To get a visa to the world of reality we must recognize this.

And this is especially true in Goloka, where complete surrender is demanded. In Vaikuntha there is some consideration of justice; for those who are entering there, some sort of lenience is given. But Goloka is very tight. Complete surrender is demanded in that place. Otherwise, the atmosphere there is very free. After one has been tested and the superiors are satisfied that the souls who have come there are wholly sacrificed, then we gain their confidence. And when it is seen that one is fully surrendered, there is complete freedom; one may do anything.

Whipping Krishna

And freedom there is so great that Krsna's mother Yasoda is whipping Him! If we inquire deeply into where Yasoda is taking her stand, we will come to the "die to live" plane. Yasoda can embrace death millions of times to remove a bead of sweat from the brow of her son;

she has so much affection for Krsna that she is ready to die a million times rather than find the sweat of labor on His forehead. And that consciousness is in the background of everything she does. This is why she is given so much independence as to be able to whip Him. Such is the play of the absolute.

If we have an idea of the infinite broadness and depth of the absolute, how can we value anything here? The Himalayas may be very big according to our standard, but from the standard of the infinite, the Himalayas are so small that they can't even be seen. This world is all relative. We must not allow ourselves to be cowed down by any events here. We must go forward in our march towards the truth. We may fail anytime, anywhere; it does not matter. It may be our master's will. Still, we have no other alternative than to try for His mercy, His grace.

This is our natural position. Even constitutionally, there is no possibility of living separately from Him. If, in ignorance, we sometimes think that it is possible to live separately from Him, that is only temporary insanity. To attempt to do so is only to create further disturbance, to be covered with ignorance.

While ignorant, we may be concerned for many things that have no value. But actually it is as in play: so many parties are playing - one must win, another must be defeated - but we are told that we must accept victory or defeat in the mood of a player. And everything is the play of Krsna. He is playing His lila. When we think that something is a great loss or gain, we are not seeing the lila of the Lord. Then we are outside the divine flow, we are not in harmony with the flow of lila. Then it appears that reality is not His lila, and we find some other reason for being, see some other objects, conceive of relative interests, and find loss and gain, victory and defeat, and so many other misconceptions. But everything is His lila, and that is nirguna, without fault. In that plane, everything is all right. Everything is perfect. Every inch of movement there is fully perfect.

"I Shall Curse You!"

Once, after the Kuruksetra war, the brahmana Utanka came to Krsna and said, "Krsna, I curse You!" Krsna said, "Why, My dear brahmana, do you want to curse Me?" Utanka said, "Because You are the cause of all the disasters of Kuruksetra. Because of You, so many widows and orphans are crying in distress. The bounds of their sorrow knows no end, and You are the cause."

Krsna answered, "You may have collected some power by your penances in sattva-guna, but that will all be finished when you curse Me. It won't produce any result in Me because I am situated in the nirguna plane." This is the nature of the nirguna plane. It is ahaituky apratihata: it is causeless and it cannot be checked - it is irresistible. The wave of the most fundamental plane is bhakti, devotion, where everything follows the sweet will of the center - nirguna. That divine flow is causeless and can never be opposed. We should try to take our stand in that plane. Bhakti is nirguna, beyond the influence of material nature, and it is ahaituki, causeless - that divine flow is eternally going on. And it is apratihata: bhakti can never be checked by anyone. It is irresistible.

This is the nature of the flow of devotion. Anyone who takes their stand in consonance, in harmony with that flow, will find the same thing: it can never be checked or given any successful opposition. This is the nature of bhakti according to Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.2.6):

*sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati*

Bhakti is the highest function of the soul (paro dharmo). Our duty here must have its origin in the plane of bhakti; we must be able to read and catch and utilize that flow. We must dance in the waves of that flow. Everyone's highest duty will be full submission to the unseen, undetectable causal power, which has no cause, no rhyme, no reason. It is automatic, eternal, and can never be opposed by any forces here.

And then only will we find our soul's greatest satisfaction. We will feel real satisfaction only when we come in touch with that most

fundamental harmonious wave. Then we can feel the highest ecstasy. That is bhakti.

So in coming to such a great idea of life, whatever obstacles we must cross are only small losses and gains, victories and defeats. We should not allow them to disturb our march towards the truth.

Bhagavad Gita

Krsna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gita (2.47):

*karmany evadhikaras te
ma phalesu kadacana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur
ma te sango' stv akarmani*

"Give your full concentration to discharging your duty and not to the result of your work. The result is with Me; all responsibility is with Me." Higher calculation is like that. The generals say, "March! Go forward. Onward! You have to go. You are my soldiers; whatever I shall ask, you must do. You may die and the victory may come afterward; that is not your concern. You are soldiers; many of you may be finished, but the country as a whole will gain." In this way, so many important lives may be sacrificed.

And as soldiers, we have no right to calculate whether we shall gain or lose in the long run. There are two things we must be very careful about. We shouldn't think that if we can't enjoy the fruits of our labor, then there is no reason to work. At the same time, we shouldn't think that we must get some share of the fruits. Remembering this, we should go on discharging our duty to Krsna. That is devotion, and that is the meaning of Bhagavad-gita.

Bhagavad-gita says, "You can't change the environment. If you want peace, you must regulate yourself according to the environment." The whole gist of Bhagavad-gita's advice is found here: Try to adjust yourself with the environment, because you are not the master of the environment. All your energy should be devoted to regulating yourself and not the outside world. This is the key to success in spiritual life.

Bhakti does not depend on the environment or on the dealings of others. It is ahaituky apratihata. Nothing can obscure that flow except our own ego. I am my own greatest enemy.

*uddhared atmanatmanam
natmanam avasadayet
atmaiva hy atmano bandhur
atmaiva ripur atmanah*

"We can elevate ourselves or degrade ourselves. We are our own best friend or worst enemy." No force outside can check us if we are sincere. Of course for beginners there is some concern about a proper environment for spiritual cultivation, but even that is also dependent on the nature of their sincerity, or sukrti: na hi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati. The assurance is given here by Krsna. He says, "I'll be there to look after you in any unfavorable circumstance. I am omniscient. And I am omnipotent also. So if anyone is directed towards Me, I'll look after him." And it has also been seen in history, in the cases of Dhruva, Prahlada, and so many others. Sincerity is invincible. Even obstacles may improve our position if we can take them in the right way. From a higher angle of vision it may be seen that everything is coming to help us.

Srimad Bhagavatam

*tat te 'nukampam susamiksamano
bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam
hrd-vag-vapurbbhir vidhadhan namas te
jiveta yo mukti-pade sa daya bhak*

Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.8) gives us a most hopeful suggestion for all stages of life: blame yourself and no one else. Maintain your appreciation for the Lord, seeing everything as His grace. At present we think our circumstances undesirable because they do not suit our present taste. But medicine may not always suit the taste of the patient. Still it is conducive to health. This verse is the highest type of regulation given by the sastra. If you can follow this law, then in no

time you will have a very good position. We must be careful not to blame the circumstances, but to appreciate that Krsna is behind everything. Krsna is my best friend; He is in the background of everything. Everything is passing through His attentive eyes. So there cannot be any defect there.

Even Srimati Radharani says, "He is not to blame. This long separation from Krsna is only the outcome of My fate. He should not be blamed for this." Although outwardly it is admitted by all that He had cruelly left the gopis, Radharani is not prepared to blame Krsna. "No wrong can be found in Him," She thinks. "There must be something wrong in Me which has brought about this unfortunate situation." The competition between the groups of gopis in the service of Krsna is also harmonized in this way by Radharani.

Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami has explained this most important point. According to him, it is not that Radharani does not like any other party to serve Krsna in competition with Her, but She feels that they cannot satisfy Krsna as well as She can. And this should be noted very carefully. She knows that they cannot give proper satisfaction to Krsna, so She cannot appreciate their trying to take Her place. That is Her contention. She thinks, "If they could serve Krsna well and fully satisfy Him, I would have no complaint. But they can't. And still, aggressively they come to serve? I can't tolerate this."

The Brahmin Leper

Kaviraja Goswami has cited as an example of this sort of devotion a historical reference from the Puranas. There was once a chaste wife whose brahmana husband was a leper. She always tried her best to serve Him. One day, while she was bathing her husband at a holy river, he became infatuated with the extraordinary beauty of a prostitute by the name Laksahira. Her name indicated that she possessed the luster and beauty of a hundred thousand diamonds. The leper brahmana was irresistibly charmed by her.

Upon returning home, his chaste wife detected some dissatisfaction within her husband, and inquired, "Why are you so unhappy?" Her husband replied, "I felt some attraction for the beauty of that

prostitute. And I can't take my mind off her." "Oh. You want her?" "Yes. I do." "Then I shall try to make the arrangement."

Then, because she was poor, the chaste lady, although a qualified brahmana, began to go to the house of the prostitute every day and work as a maidservant. Although she was aristocratic by birth, she accepted the work of a maidservant without any remuneration. And she did her duties so diligently that she attracted the attention of the prostitute, the mistress of the house, who began to inquire. "Who cleans everything so neatly and beautifully?" And she came to know that a brahmana lady was coming every morning and performing many menial tasks. The other attendants said, "We tried to stop her, but she would not hear of it. She wants to meet you."

The mistress replied, "All right. Tomorrow, you may bring her to me." Then, the next morning, when she was taken to the prostitute, the brahmana lady expressed her inner motive. "My husband is so attracted to you that it is my desire that you may satisfy him. It is my concern as his devout wife that he be satisfied, and this is his aspiration. So I want to see him happy." Then the prostitute understood everything and said, "Yes. Bring him tomorrow. I invite both of you to dine in my house."

This was intimated to the brahmana and the following day they came. Many dishes were prepared fitting the occasion. Two entrees were served. One was prasadam on a plantain leaf accompanied by Ganges water in an earthen pot - all pure vegetarian food. Side by side with that in gold and silver pots were so many meats and rich dishes. They were served with a very nice table arrangement and sitting places. Of the two kinds of foodstuffs, one was sattvik, pure, and the other was rajasik, filled with passion. Then, with folded palms, the prostitute invited the brahmana and his wife and indicated, "This is bhagavata-prasadam, and those are rich dishes prepared with meat. Whichever you like you may take at your sweet will."

Immediately the leper brahmana chose the prasadam, and began to take his meal. After he had finished taking prasadam, the prostitute said, "Your wife is like this prasadam - sattvik - and all these rajasik things - meat, rich dishes, gold, silver - this is like me. I am so low and your wife is the purest of the pure. Your real taste is for this sattvik prasadam. Externally, the meat is very gorgeous, but internally it is

very impure, filthy. And therefore you are repulsed by it. So why have you come here to me?"

Then the brahmana came to his senses. "Yes, I am wrong. God has sent a message to me through you. My fleeting desire has ended and now I am satisfied. You are my guru!"

Kaviraja Goswami has quoted this in the Caitanya-caritamṛta. The chaste lady went to serve the prostitute. Why? For the satisfaction of her husband. So Radharani says, "I am ready to serve those in the opposition camp, if they can really satisfy My Lord. I am completely ready to serve them if they can really satisfy Kṛṣṇa. But they can't. Yet still they have some demand. But I differ on that point. It is not that I am concerned that My share is being lessened. That is not My attitude. Whenever any unfavorable circumstances come, I think it is always coming from within Me (*durdaiva vilasa*); I don't find anything corrupt to be traced outside."

That should be the attitude of a true devotee of Kṛṣṇa. With this attitude, we shall be able to see within ourselves that everything is ultimately part of the absolute good. Although it is not very easy, still, our energy should be devoted only to collect good will from external circumstances. In this way we should take care to see things in such a way as to purify our own position.

Deep Vision Reality

And so, we are encouraged by Srimad-Bhagavatam to look deeper. We must try to look deeper and then we will find our friend; if we are liberal in our attitude towards the environment, we cannot but come in connection with the plane which is really liberal. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness in its ultimate reach. If we look deeply into reality with this sort of vision, we will find our real home. Prahlada boldly met all adverse circumstances and ultimately he was victorious. The calculation of Prahlada's demonic father about the environment was falsified, but Prahlada's deeper vision saw reality correctly.

He saw that Kṛṣṇa is everywhere. And Kṛṣṇa consciousness is commanding the whole. So we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged under any circumstances, however acute they may

apparently seem to us. Krsna is there. As much as the circumstances appear to oppose us, it is really not so. If only we can develop the right vision, the smiling face of the Lord will appear from behind the screen. That is Krsna consciousness. Krsna is beautiful, and He is eagerly awaiting to accept our services.

God And His Men

Our inner wealth can be discovered only by the help of sadhu, guru, and scripture. Our vision should be that it is all nectar, but we have drawn a screen between the nectar and ourselves and are tasting poison, thinking that it is very useful. On the whole, we must think that no blame is to be put on others, and it is actually the truth. We are responsible for our disgrace, our fallen condition. And the path to self-improvement is also similar: we must learn to critique ourselves and appreciate the environment. Our appreciation should especially be for Krsna and His devotees, and then gradually everyone else. He has not given anyone the authority to harm us. If it appears that way, it is only superficial and misleading. That anyone can do harm to anyone else is misleading. It is only true on the superficial plane. Of course, this does not condone harming others or ignoring oppression, but from the absolute standpoint there is no harm. When we reach the highest stage of devotion, we shall see that everything is friendly and that our apprehension was wrong. It was a misconception.

Misconception: maya means "what is not" (mriyate anaya). When everything is measured from the standpoint of selfishness and not the universal interest - that is the cause of all our troubles. We must gradually realize, "My angle of vision was guided by selfish, not absolute, consideration. So I am suffering. But now I have come to understand that my interest is included in the absolute interest."

To parody an old saying, "A bad workman quarrels with his stools." According to our karma we produce the environment. What I am blaming was produced by my own karma. When I take food, stool comes as a natural reaction. It would be foolish to blame the stool for appearing. It is the effect of my having eaten. In the same way, I have acted in different ways, and the karmic result is my present

environment. So to quarrel with the reaction to our own misdeeds is a useless waste of energy.

The advice of Srimad-Bhagavatam should be our guiding principle under all circumstances. Whatever is coming to us is under His sanction, under His eye, so it cannot but be good. Everything is perfect. The only imperfection is within us, and therefore we should try with all our energy to do our duty. In no time, we shall find ourselves released from all troubles. That is the key advice of the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Our Guardian's Eye

The environment is not dead - an overseer is there. Just as the sun is over our heads, every action is under our guardian's eye. This comparison is given in the Rg Veda: Om tad visno paramam padam sada pasyanti suraya diviva caksur atatam. We should approach any duty thinking, "My guardian's eye is always vigilantly watching over me, seeing everything I am doing, and whatever is happening to me. I need not worry about this environment or circumstance."

So Bhagavatam says, "Don't worry about the environment. Do your duty. Concentrate fully on what you are doing, and in no time, you'll be relieved of the black box of the ego and will join in the universal flow of dancing and chanting, singing and rejoicing. You will gain entrance into the lila or pastimes of the Lord."

We are all suffering from separate interest, clash and reaction, good and bad, pleasure and pain, happiness and distress, but there in the spiritual domain, everything is conscious and filled with happiness. So not only total self-forgetfulness is required, but the whole good will of the Lord should be invited. We shall merge in the flow of the good will of the Lord. That is Vrndavana.

Our guardians say: "Do this," and according to our capacity we shall try to execute their order. And accepting that what they say is really coming from Krsna, the more we are able to follow their instructions, the more benefit we shall accrue. Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita, the Vedas and Upanisads, and so many agents who represent divinity are all helping us go back to our real home. At present we are living in

different stages of the consciousness of separate interest, but our guardians are all trying to take us into that higher plane of dynamic movement, lila, to enter into the pastimes of Krsna.

Enemy Ego / Real Ego

Here, everything is but a reflection of the perfect world. Originally everything is there, including all types of service, but here we have only a perverted reflection. Leaving this variegated world behind, we should not attempt to merge into non-consciousness so that we won't be able to feel any pleasure or pain. At present we are under the influence of our enemy ego. Real ego exists in the spiritual world. All experience is found there, but it is full of beauty and charm.

Krsna consciousness means full-fledged theism. This means that we can have a relationship with the infinite up to consorhood. Everything that we need to help us and lead us in the right direction is really to be found in the spiritual world in its purest and most desirable position. What we find here is only a shadow, a black imitation. But reality means full-fledged theism - Krsna consciousness - where the infinite embraces the whole finite. The infinite comes down to welcome, to fully embrace the finite - that is Vrndavana. And this is full-fledged theism: through Krsna consciousness, one negligent part of the finite may experience the blissful embrace of the whole infinite. And in Vrndavana, not a corner is left neglected. Every grain of sand, every blade of grass, is well-represented there with personality. Here, what to speak of a particle of sand, so many things are insignificant. But in Vrndavana, everything is cared for. Nothing is ignored. That is full-fledged theism. This is explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.21.5):

*varhapidam nata-bara-vapuh karnayoh karnikaram
bibrad vasah kanaka-kapisam vaijayantin ca malam
randhran venoradhara-sudhaya purayan gopavrndair
vrndaranyam sva-pada-ramanam pravisad gita-kirtih*

Sukadeva Goswami reveals something astounding to Pariksit Maharaja. When Krsna enters the forest of Vrndavana by the touch of

the soles of His lotus feet, the earth feels the pleasure of His embrace - the personal embrace of the Sweet Absolute (vrndaranyam sva-pada-ramanam). This is inconceivable! By the touch of the holy feet of Krsna, the sand and the earth feel the pleasure of consorthood! Glorified by His cowherd friends, He enters the forest of Vrndavana, and the earth, the forest, and everything that comes in connection with Him feels a higher, closer sense experience of pleasure to the happiest degree.

Consorthood

In Vrndavana, the earth feels the mood of consorthood. So the vrndavana-lila of Krsna is so wonderful that even Brahma, the creator of the universe, said, "How can we understand You, my Lord? I know something about my Lord Narayana, who is near to me. He and I have some direct connection so that I may discharge my official duties. But You have come within my circle and I can't understand You. What is this?" He tried his best to test Krsna by kidnapping His cowherd boyfriends and calves, but he was astounded to find that, "Although I have removed them, everything is as it was before; Krsna is still surrounded by His friends and their calves, engaged in their pleasure pastimes. So He is infinite. Even as the lord of the universe, my interference could not disrupt anything under His control. By His own sweet will He conducts His play. I tried to test Him, but now I am bewildered by His inconceivable potency. I could not understand that although an apparently human cowherd boy, He is nonetheless the suprememost, higher than even Lord Narayana. " He pleaded with Krsna, "Now I have come to my senses; please forgive me, my Lord." What use is a particle of our intelligence? How much can it measure the infinite? Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "Don't try to apply your brain to the infinite. The brain is not a unit for measurement in that plane. Your intellect is canceled by the infinite. Try to measure it only by feeling, by taste, by heart - the brain will be your enemy. It will always deceive you in its measurement, and that will disturb you and limit your progress."

Only faith can help us. Otherwise nothing can reach that plane. We can reach the sun or moon only with the help of advanced technology. We can't reach out and touch it with our hand or with a long stick. In the same way, to connect with the highest reality, faith alone can help one. Faith is the most spacious medium. But even that is very meager in consideration of the high thing with which you would like to connect, the supreme cause of all causes.

We are teeny souls. How much can we accommodate with our faith? How wide and how broad is our faith? What can we catch within our faith? What we are seeking is infinite, and we are very much afraid; "Oh, if I rely on faith, something may go wrong. I may be deceived." But within our teeny hearts, how much faith can we contain? Only by analogy with the sky or the ocean may we understand anything about the infinite, but what is that in comparison? Nothing.

And what is the infinite? That from which everything is coming, by which everything is maintained, and into which everything is ultimately entering; the all-comprehensive, all-permeating, all-controlling, all-attracting, all-feeling Absolute.

So everything is all right with the infinite and the environment. We have only to correct ourselves, to adjust ourselves. This is the conclusion - "Try to adjust yourself; everything is all right with the environment. We must leave everything to the Supreme Lord and conduct ourselves accordingly." That will bring us real peace and progressive realization in spiritual life.

Third Chapter

Beneath the Loving Eye of God

"Neither existence nor consciousness are complete in themselves. Consciousness alone hankers for ecstasy. And existence without consciousness is to exist with no purpose. But when existence is endowed with consciousness, it can search for its own good: ecstasy."

Vishnu Padam

"The divine feet of our holy Lord are like the vigilant eye of a grand guardian hanging over our heads like the sun, and we are living beneath the glance of that vigilant eye. We shall always try to live not in the objective but in subjective relativity. We should think, Above my consciousness is Superconsciousness; the vigilant guardian's eye is always watching over me."

The Rg Veda mantra says: Om tad visno paramam padam sada pasyanti suraya diviva caksur atatam: The divine feet of our holy Lord are like the sun above our heads. His holy feet are like the vigilant eye of a grand guardian hanging over our heads like the sun, and we are living beneath the glance of that vigilant eye.

We are interested not in objective, but in subjective reality. We shall always try to live not in objective but in subjective relativity. We should never think, "Under my feet I have firm ground to stand on; I am big. I shall stand erect." Rather we should think, "Above my consciousness is superconsciousness; the vigilant guardian's eye is always watching me. I am living under the glance of that eye." Our support comes not from below, but from above. He is our shelter. We are hanging from that substantial upper world wherein He resides; our support is found there. We must always be conscious of that.

This is a principle mantra in the Rg Veda. Before anyone approaches a new duty, he should think about his own position. We have been instructed by this verse from the Vedas to think in this way: "You are under the vigilant eye of your guardian, and that great eye is as living as the sun; its glance is just like that of the sun which is over your head. Like a light that can pierce through to see anything within you, His piercing glance is upon you." With this understanding of identity we should approach our duty. We are never encouraged to think that we stand firmly here on solid earth, and that on the basis of a strong position, independent of His grace we can carry out our dharma.

Actually, in our subjective relationship with divinity, we are just like the rays of the sun. Where do the sun's rays stand? They stand on the sun - that is their source. In the same way, we should think that our stand is in the realm of divinity; we are so many particles of

consciousness, and our stand, our motherland, is that conscious area. God consciousness means Krsna consciousness. We are consciousness and we are meant for Krsna consciousness - that is our relationship. We should always be conscious of this fact. We are connected with Krsna consciousness. We are members of the Krsna conscious world. And we have come to wander in the foreign land of material consciousness, mayika misconception, thinking that we are units of this material world, but it is not so.

We are units of the conscious world - the Krsna conscious world - and somehow we have come within this material conception of existence, the world of matter. Matter is what we can exploit, the objective side of reality, and the subjective side is the element we should revere. Our relationship with the subjective is that of reverence and devotion to the higher entity, and not that of exploitation or enjoyment. Real enjoyment, divine enjoyment, comes from service - not from exploitation.

We must understand all these basic principles. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja once remarked to me that although the engineers in New York have built so many skyscraper buildings that will stand for ages, they were never mindful of how long their own bodies would last. The buildings will stand for a long, long time. But those who will live in those buildings have forgotten how long their bodies will stand. In this way people are very busy on the objective side, but they are neglecting the subjective values. Their concern is with objects and not with who will use them. They think that no subjective cultivation is necessary for the user of the objective world. In this way they give all importance to the objective side, neglecting totally the subjective side.

Consciousness Rays

Our real position is like the rays of the sun. A sun ray touches the earth. Where is its home? A sun ray comes to our plane and touches the hills and the water, but what should be considered as its home? Necessarily the sun, and not the earth it touches. Our position is similar. As rays of consciousness, we pertain not to the material

world, but to the conscious world. Our home connection is there: in the sun - the spiritual sun.

We are advised by the Vedas to consider: "Although you have been cast in a hole of this earth, still your native soil is the conscious sun. You emanate from there, you are sustained from there, and your prospect is there. You have to conceive of reality in that way. Because you are conscious, your home is the source of consciousness. Whether you are bird or beast, whether you are in the mountains, earth, or water - wherever you are, whatever position you hold, your source is in consciousness, existence. Your source is in consciousness just as the rays of light have their home in the sun."

The Vedas tell us: "You are not a child of this soil. You may be a captive here, but this is not your home; this is a foreign land. All your hopes and prospects can be supplied from that higher soil, because your nature is of that order. Your food, your sustenance, your everything should be made of that higher stuff. But what is found within this material world is all poison to you."

Again, although what is pertaining to consciousness is the immediate, nearest realization of our nature, if we are to go deeper into the conscious world, we shall find something more substantial. If we cross beyond the vision of light-consciousness, we shall find the real necessity of our existence: happiness - ecstasy - and divine love. After establishing ourselves in the realm of consciousness, we must establish ourselves in the realm of divine love, ecstasy and beauty. We must search for our fortune there, and never in this material world. Ecstasy is above light; transcendental mellow is above consciousness. Beauty and charm are above mere consciousness and understanding. Feeling is not complete in itself. Feeling must be for something. So the fullest conception of a perfect thing is something which is full in beauty or ecstasy. Mere existence or consciousness alone cannot be the highest perfection. Ecstasy is the most perfect thing. Ecstasy, divine love, and beauty presuppose consciousness and existence.

Spiritual reality is composed of three substances: sat, existence, cit, consciousness, and ananda, ecstasy. And of these three, ananda or ecstasy is the final conception of spiritual substance. Ecstasy can exist by itself. Neither existence nor consciousness are complete in themselves. Consciousness alone hankers for ecstasy. And existence without consciousness is to exist with no purpose. But when existence

is endowed with consciousness, it can search for its own good: ecstasy. Ecstasy is an independent and concrete substance. Both existence and consciousness are subservient to ecstasy.

And one who realizes the ecstasy of Krsna consciousness becomes free from this mortal world. When one realizes that, he need not be afraid of anything. He need have no apprehension from any fear that can arise here in this material world where there is the constant threat of nonexistence. Here in the material world we not only have no fulfillment, but our very existence is also at stake. At any moment we may be devoured by nonexistence.

Dive Deep Into Reality

But to come to the plane of ecstasy, we shall have to dive deep into reality. We must not be satisfied with the formal, the superficial. If we concentrate our attention on the outward form of a thing, neglecting its inner substance, then we shall find that we are looking in the wrong place. When Mahaprabhu would look at the Deity of Jagannathadeva, apparently it seemed that His aim was fixed on the same thing we see when we look at the Deity. To our vision, however, the Deity of Jagannatha is only a doll made of wood. And yet when Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would fix His eye there, He would shed tears of joy, and His tears flowed in an incessant current. Where is His vision of reality connected? What we see as a wooden doll, He sees in a completely different way. And just by looking at that, an incessant current of tears pours from His eyes. Where is His connection with reality located? He is viewing things from the opposite side, from the subjective world.

So how should we approach the Deity? When we have a look at the Deity, what should be our attitude? The Deity form of the Lord is not a mundane thing, and so we should learn the proper way in which to see the Deity. And more than this, we must try to look at this from the other point of view. As we are trying to see the Deity, He sees us. He has come down to help the fallen souls in this material world, and He has come down in such a way as to take us up to His domain.

Ramanuja has classified the expression of the Supreme Entity in five forms: para, vyuha, vaibhava, antaryami, and arcana. Para, the central

conception of the highest entity; vyuha, His extended self in different functions, in different figures; vaibhava, His appearance in this mundane plane as avataras like Matsya, Kurma, and Varaha; antaryami, His presence in every heart and every soul, every conscious unit; and arcana, His appearance in the plane of our physical perception as the Deity. In His form as the Deity, I can touch Him, I can see Him, and I can serve Him. In a concrete form He has come to help our understanding.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu looked at the Deity and His eyes were flooded with tears. It is not that His eyes were fixed upon the superficial characteristics of wood when He saw the Deity form of Lord Jagannatha, but He was connected on a vastly higher level with Krsna consciousness. His thoughts were deep with Krsna consciousness. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu thought, "Lord Jagannatha has come here and is making arrangements to deliver millions of fallen souls, especially by extending His own prasadam to one and all in great magnitude. His magnanimous presence has manifest here for the relief of this world."

And Krsna consciousness is the highest relief work. Our guru maharaja used to say that there is a famine of krsna katha. There is a famine at present. But is the world suffering from a lack of food? No. The world is suffering from the famine of Krsna consciousness, Krsna talk, krsna kirtan. So we must try to open offices of food distribution so that we may distribute the food of Krsna consciousness to all souls. Mahaprabhu said "Whoever you come across, talk of Krsna (yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa)." Give them the food of Krsna consciousness, krsna katha. The world is filled with famine-stricken people. We must distribute food, give the life and breath of Krsna consciousness to whomever we meet by speaking about Krsna.

That was the feeling of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, and Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja carried that out in the West. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta used to say, "I do not admit any other conception of famine. The only famine is that of krsna katha, krsna smrti, Krsna consciousness." With such seriousness he conceived of our necessity for Krsna consciousness.

Krsna is of vital importance to our existence. Only Krsna can give us vitality. And as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Krsna Himself distributes Krsna consciousness. Vasudeva Ghosh says, therefore, "Sri Gauranga

is my life and soul, my only vitality. If Gauranga had not come, how could I live? (yadi gaura na ha'ta tabe ki haita kemane dharitam de.) By His grace I have tasted such valuable food that without this, my life would be completely impossible."

Krsna consciousness is the vitality of vitality. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada did his best to give Krsna consciousness to the people of India, and Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja distributed that vitality all over the world. It is by their grace and by the grace of Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself that so many have come to Krsna consciousness. Haridasa Thakura once told Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "By Your chanting of the holy name of Krsna, both the animate and inanimate world has been supplied with the food of Krsna consciousness. Whatever position they may occupy, their life is fulfilled. I heard of how, when You traveled through the jungle and chanted and danced, the elephants and tigers also danced and chanted the holy name of Krsna. What wonder, then, should there be if I say that the stones and trees have also attained their highest end - Krsna consciousness - when You are chanting. What an intense degree of Krsna consciousness has been produced here by Your chanting!"

But in order to chant the holy name of Krsna, something is required from our side also. Amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih. We should resort to kirtana always, but our attitude should be as Mahaprabhu recommends: Trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna amanina manadena. Our attitude should be one of humility, and if we think that we are being done wrong, still we should be patient, and under no circumstances should we work for our own position and prestige; that should not be our aim.

When the lower stands against the higher, offense arises. That tendency should be shunned. Primary education is also education, but that should not compete with higher education; we must be careful about that. At the same time, the differentiation between higher education and lower education must be genuine. Still, primary education must not be thought of as the highest education. That will be dangerous. There is a saying in Bengali - alpavidya bhayamkori - "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." We must be careful about that, otherwise our attitude will be suicidal. The question of offense arises whenever primary education stands against higher education. That sort of assertion is offensive.

Slow and steady wins the race. Our march towards the infinite is a long journey, not a journey to be finished within a few hours, a few days, or a few years. And we have to adjust accordingly. It is not that we shall run quickly to make progress and then stop and sleep. It is a long way we shall have to go. We will only be successful if we develop humility - *trnad api sunicena*. We should not create any circumstance that invites resistance. Still, if any resistance unexpectedly approaches us, we should try our best to forbear. And we must always be conscious that our guardian's eye is always over us, eager to help us in our campaign. We are not alone. We may go on confidently: there is a person above us to redress the wrong that may be shown to us, so we should not take the initiative.

We must not allow any ulterior purpose or temptation to induce us to give up our search for Sri Krsna. Let the satisfaction of guru, Gauranga, Krsna, and the Vaisnavas be our only objective. Let no other element enter upon our path. Our purity of purpose must always be very scrupulously maintained. We should think, "Alone I shall go on with my duty. I won't be always searching for someone to come and help me. Let them do their own duty. This is my duty."

With this attitude we shall go on. With this sort of adjustment our concentration may become more intense, our confidence in Krsna will be increased, and our duty will be pure and clear. We should be conscious that hindrances and obstacles are almost sure to attack us, but we must deal with them with humility and forbearance. So this life is not a life of comfort.

Holy Feet of Vishnu

But in order to develop this kind of humility and forbearance, we must learn to see the Lord's hand in everything. And therefore the Vedas tell us to remember that the glance of the Lord is always upon us. *Om tad visno paramam padam sada pasyanti suraya*: We are asked to see the holy feet of Narayana as we see the sun in the sky. Why the sun? The sun is described as *pradarsaka*: the seer, the witness. Apparently we see the sun, but really the sun helps us to see. The holy feet of Visnu means the lowest part of Visnu - *yoge vidhayam yasya vidyate*

kvacit. His lower part to us is the beginning of realization for us. The beginning of realization is to think that God is always seeing us. As the sun helps us to see, Visnu's holy feet are like the sun. So we should try to always see everything by the rays of the holy feet of Visnu.

From another point of view, His holy feet are like a big eye spread over the sky. He sees everything. Whatever we do, our guardian's vigilant eye is over our head like the sun. Before we enter into any action we must remember this Vedic mantra. The Rg Veda is the first Veda and this is the most important mantra of the Rg Veda. The brahmanas of the Vedic school are told that whenever they do any service pertaining to religion or varnasrama, they must first remember this Rg Veda mantra: "Visnu's feet are over you and they are looking at you like a guardian's vigilant eye. Always remembering this, do your duty."

If you always remember that He is seeing everything you do, you can't do anything wrong. You won't be able to venture to do anything offensive to the Lord as long as you remember that through everything, the searching eye, the all-knowing, omniscient eye of the Lord is always watching over you. This remembrance cannot but purify your heart and understanding and the whole of your mental system, and help you to approach divinity in the right way. It is not that you can do anything and everything without His knowing; not that you are the master wire-puller of both your own life but of the world; not that you are going to exert your mastery, your influence over the environment in a selfish attempt. Always remember that one big eye is spread over your head seeing everything like the searching light of a strong x-ray. What even you do not know about yourself, He knows. What is underground in the innermost subconscious region of your heart, He can also see. If you remember this as you move and live, you cannot but be purified. Just as cancer can be removed from the body by a laser ray, the whole disease of material existence will vanish from our hearts by this purifying influence of the divine rays of light from the holy feet of Visnu.

Fourth Chapter

Lord of the Cows

The King Of The Cows

"May that lord of the cows be satisfied by us. Who is Indra when compared to Krishna? Krishna is the master of Indra. And yet He has appeared as the master of cows; the Supreme Absolute Truth has accepted a simple position as the keeper of cows. Superficially, He is a mere cowherd boy. But let that cowherd boy, who holds within Him the power of controlling the whole universe, be satisfied with us. We want to worship that Lord who has taken the humble position of the king of the cows."

*deve varsati yajna-viplavarusa vajrasma-varsanilaih
sidat-pala-pasu-striyatma-saranam drstvanukampy-utsmayam
utpatyaika-karena sailamavallo lilocchilindhram yatha
bibrad gothamapan mahendram adabhit priyan na indro gavam
Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.26.25*

The very gist of the Govardhana lila, the very substance of the pastime, is represented in this verse. The milkmen in Vrndavana used to observe a sacrifice to satisfy the king of heaven, Indra, at whose command the rain, clouds, and other subtle elementary powers move. The main wealth of the cowherd men is the cow, and the cow's main food is grass. Only rain can produce grass, and so the cowherd men used to perform sacrifice to satisfy the subtle power who is supposed to be in command of natural substances like rain.

By satisfying Indra, favorable rains would come and there would be sufficient grass. The cows could then graze easily on the grass and generate milk profusely. The gopas, the cowherd men and their families, used to make different preparations from the milk, sell them in the marketplace, and in that way earn their livelihood.

As the grazing ground in one place was finished, they would move from one forest to another. Only for the purpose of obtaining grass for

the cows, Krsna's father Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men would wander from one place to the next. In this way, they lived sometimes in Vrndavana, sometimes in Nandagrama, and sometimes in Gokula. Once, Krsna wanted to assert Himself and modify the worship of Indra. He wanted to establish His own domain, Vrndavana, in its pristine glory.

Although He was only a boy, He was a boy of extraordinary capacity. He was only seven years old. But in the Padma Purana it is said that the development or growth of special personalities is one and a half times that of ordinary persons. Although Krsna was only seven years old by ordinary calculation, He was eleven according to general calculation.

Krsna said, "Why should we perform this sacrifice to Indra? We have a direct concern with Govardhana Hill and not Indra." He announced this idea to the gopas, and somehow, willingly or reluctantly, the gopas submitted to the advice of Krsna. Nanda Maharaja was influenced by affection for his son, and, because he was the king, he told them, "This time we shall worship Govardhana Hill and not Indra."

Indra Insulted

And so the gopas, the milkmen of Vrndavana, followed Krsna's advice - some reluctantly and some willingly - and they began the sacrifice for Govardhana Hill. This news reached Indra, who thought to himself: "A boy of special capacity lives there. Now He has taken the leadership of Vrndavana and stopped this ancient sacrifice to me. For a long time it was the tradition of the gopas to perform sacrifice to satisfy me, and now one boy is the cause of stopping my sacrifice!" He was very much enraged. Indra ordered the clouds and the wind and the lightning to attack the residents of Vrndavana.

According to Vedic understanding, all the elements are personified. In ancient days, the Aryans and Rajarasis, elevated human beings and great sages, used to see everything as persons. They saw everything in a personal way. They thought of the creepers, the trees, and everything else in the environment as persons. They understood that they were all

persons who, according to karma, are wandering through the different species of life.

Once I was asked by a professor of biology about alternatives to Darwinian evolution. I advised him that evolution from consciousness to matter may be understood on the basis of Berkeley's theory. Whatever we think of is really part of our consciousness. And consciousness means person. Everything that we may be conscious of is a person. We may think of the wind as an inanimate object, but it was thought of in the Vedic line as a person. Lightning, wind, clouds, and rain are all persons. Whatever we consider to be elementary matter, gross and subtle, were all considered by the ancient seers of the truth to be persons.

Indra commanded the wind, the clouds, and the rain to go and devastate the whole area of Gokula Vrndavana. "The residents of Vrndavana have insulted me!" He said. "They have rejected me, have stopped worshiping me, and are instead worshiping that mountain, that hill of Govardhana. I can't tolerate this insult! Go and devastate them." By the order and wrath of Indra, the master of all the higher subtle elements, heavy rain began to fall. And so thunder, hail, and rain simultaneously attacked the whole of Vraja Mandala.

Consequently, all the residents of Vrndavana were thrown into a great disaster. Misery, pain, and sorrow afflicted the animals and the protectors of the animals, the gopalas. So the helpless - the women, children, and animals of Vrndavana - had no alternative but to take refuge of Krsna. They all came to Krsna for relief. They cried, "O Krsna! Now what are we to do? You influenced us to stop the sacrifice meant for Indra, and now Indra, being vindictive, has begun to afflict us in this very heavy way. How can we live? Please save us!" They all came to Krsna for protection. Seeing this, Krsna had much pity for them. Being merciful upon them, He smiled a little, thinking, "They have all come to Me for relief."

At that time, with only one hand Krsna lifted up the Govardhana mountain. For Him, it was a very easy thing; with only one hand, He uprooted the hill and lifted it up as a child lifts a toy ball. And holding up that great mountain, Krsna gave protection to all those who were living in Gokula. The men, women, and children of Vrndavana brought the cows and all their worldly goods and took shelter beneath Govardhana Hill.

The whole cowherd society was given shelter under that hill. In this way, by lifting Govardhana Hill, Krsna gave protection to the residents of Vrndavana, and crushed the pride of the lord of heaven, Indra himself.

And so Nanda Maharaja prays in this verse, "May that lord of the cows be satisfied by us. Who is Indra when compared to Krsna? Krsna is the master of Indra. And yet He has appeared as the master of cows; the Supreme Absolute Truth has accepted a simple position as the keeper of cows. Superficially, He is a mere cowherd boy. But let that cowherd boy, who holds within Him the power of controlling the whole universe, be satisfied with us. We want to worship that Lord who has taken the humble position of the king of the cows."

From this verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam, we can understand the position of the Lord's pastime at Govardhana. It is also described here that when the Vrajavasis worshipped Him and engaged in sacrifice for His satisfaction, they saw Govardhana Hill as the Supreme Person, extending His hands, accepting the things offered to Him, and feeding Himself.

At that time, Krsna pointed out, "You see! You thought that Govardhana Hill was only a heap of stone. No - it is living, it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead." At that time, Krsna revealed Himself as Govardhana Hill and showed how it is also His extended self. According to authorities in our line, Radha-kunda is the extended self of Srimati Radharani and Govardhana is the extended self of Krsna. And so we worship a stone from Govardhana Hill, a part of Giridhari, as Krsna Himself. We may understand from this that a part of the infinite is infinite. And yet so feeble is our ordinary vision that although Govardhana-sila is a part of the infinite, and therefore also infinite, to our material vision it is only a piece of stone.

This pastime shows that a thing may appear to be ordinary stone, but its possibility is infinite. In the general sense, Einstein's theory of relativity has announced that anything we see is that thing plus something more. In his own scientific way he explains that the reality of a thing includes its possibilities, its prospect - reality is not at a standstill.

Reality is not limited to what is seen or conceived by our senses. Our vision or estimation of anything may be limited, but unknown to us, its prospect may be unlimited. Everything has infinite possibility. We

do not even know what infinite possibility a particle of sand may have. We do not know what sort of possibility may exist within a leaf of a plant. It may appear ordinary, but it may contain invaluable medicinal properties.

God The Beautiful

A part of the infinite is also infinite. The Govardhana-sila represents Krsna as the master and keeper of cows. Within Govardhana is that mild and soft conception of God the Beautiful. We beg for His mercy, His affection, and His gracious glance upon us.

That may save us from the negative influence of this material environment. When we try to put a stop to our material form of life and take our course towards Godhead, Krsna consciousness, neglecting the imperative duties that are upon us, so many difficulties may come to trouble us, to trap us in our journey towards the ultimate truth. But if we stick to the order of Krsna, He will protect us. Krsna confirms this in Bhagavad-gita:

*sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
moksaisyami ma sucah*

He says, "Abandon all other conceptions of duty and just surrender unto Me. Have no fear. I shall protect you and free you from all sinful reactions that might arise from neglecting your ordinary duties."

Different material tendencies and mental impulses may attack us - even Indra himself, the king of heaven and the controller of all ordinary activities, may attack us - but if we are attentive towards our goal, if we are careful to read the order of Krsna, He will protect us in the shade of His lotus feet. He will give us shelter under the shade of Govardhana Hill, where no Indra will be able to touch our heads. And with full faith that Krsna will give us protection, we should try to take shelter under Govardhana Hill and pray: "O Krsna, give me protection

from all the difficulties that may come to attack me because of my leaving behind my ordinary obligations."

Although many anomalies may try to catch us, Krsna will protect us. And in His representation as Govardhana Hill, that wonderful master of the cows will save us from all sorts of difficulties. How is this possible? God works wonders. His ways are unknown and inconceivable.

Fifth Chapter

Brahma's Illusion

"Krishna is infinite; He is the wonderful wonder of wonders. As much as we search Him out, we will find no end to His wonders. Even Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe and the original guru of our sampradaya, was astonished by the wonders of Krishna."

Lord Brahma

"I offer my prayers unto You, O praiseworthy Lord who are the child of the cowherd Nanda. Your complexion is the dark-blue color of a thundercloud and You are clad in silk garments that shine like lightning. Your charming face is adorned with gunja-mala ornaments, and Your hair is decorated with a peacock feather. You look beautiful wearing a garland of forest flowers, and that beauty is enhanced by the morsel of food in Your left hand. You carry a buffalo horn and a stick for herding cows tucked beneath Your left arm. You hold a flute and other emblems, and Your feet are as soft as a lotus."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, the ultimate cause of all harmony, is so wonderful that simply by approaching Him, we will be charmed by His ways. He is known as Urukrama, for His strides are wonderful, unthinkable, unknown, and unknowable. There is no end to His wonders. Ascaryavat pasyati kascid enam ascaryavad

vadati tathaiva canyah: At every step towards Him, one feels wonder. We find no end to that feeling. Krsna is infinite; He is the wonderful wonder of wonders. As much as we search Him out, we will find no end to His wonders.

Even Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe and the original guru of our sampradaya, was astonished by the wonders of Krsna. Once when Krsna was living in Dvaraka, He heard that Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, had come to see Him. Krsna asked His messenger, "Which Brahma?" When the messenger put this question to Brahma, Brahma thought, "Are there other Brahmas also? How is it possible?" He told the messenger, "You just inform Krsna that I am the father of the four Kumaras: the four-headed Brahma." The messenger went to Krsna with the news.

"Yes, show him in," Krsna said, knowing Brahma's temperament. Brahma went in, but he was astounded to see that so many Brahmas had gathered there from all of the universes in the creation. There were hundred-headed, thousand-headed, million-headed Brahmas - all present there. Because the whole creation is based on Krsna's hypnotism, the four-headed Brahma could see Krsna and all those other Brahmas, but the other Brahmas could not see each other. Each one of them saw only Krsna. Each one of them thought, "Krsna has come in my universe and called for me out of some necessity." But the Brahma of this universe could see everything because he had inquired, "Which Brahma?" What is the meaning of "Which Brahma?" Are there any other Brahmas? I wonder...." In this way, Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, was baffled by the wonderful ways of Krsna.

Previously, in Vrndavana, Brahma had also had some doubt about the position of the Lord. He thought, "Who is this cowherd boy? His ways are very questionable. He moves in such a way that it appears that He does not care for anyone. He is within my brahmada, my universe, but He does not care to know me. What is this attitude? Who is He? He is not Narayana. Only Narayana is above me. And I am a little accustomed to His ways and manners. But this boy is not Narayana. That anything can exist above Narayana is impossible. Then who is He?"

To test Krsna, Brahma took away the cowherd boys and calves accompanying Him and hid them in a cave. After a year he returned to see how life was continuing in Vrndavana, to see how Krsna was

doing without His calves and cowherd boys. And he found that everything was as before. The Lord, surrounded by His cowherd boyfriends, was carrying His flute under His armpit and a morsel of food in His hand. He found everything going on as it had been.

Then Brahma began to think, "What is this? Have the calves and cowherd boys come back without my notice?" He again checked the cave where he had hid them and found that they were all there. Then he thought, "How is this possible? I stole the calves and cowherd boys and hid them here and now that I have returned, I find they are all still here just as before."

Finally, perplexed, he fell at Krsna's lotus feet, praying, "My Lord, I could not recognize You. You have come to play such a plain and ordinary part, that of a cowherd boy. How can anyone believe that You hold an even greater position than that of Narayana? Please forgive whatever I have done."

In many places in Srimad-Bhagavatam, we find Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, being tested by Krsna. And still, Brahma is our gurudeva. He is the original guru of our line. That he could become bewildered is so perplexing and difficult to understand that Madhvacarya eliminated that section from the Srimad-Bhagavatam. He could not accept those two chapters of Srimad-Bhagavatam where Brahma was under illusion, where he had some misunderstanding about Krsna. But Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted everything in toto.

This is a very peculiar thing. How can the original guru of our sampradaya become bewildered about Krsna? It is acintya, inconceivable. Still, everything is intelligible through the philosophy of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva, "inconceivable oneness and difference." How can we accommodate that our original guru becomes perplexed, not only once, but twice? That is lila, a divine pastime. An example of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva is found in the way Krsna deals with His devotees. Krsna Himself is independent of everything. Still, sometimes He shows Himself to be completely subordinate to His servants and must do whatever they want Him to. Then again, sometimes He completely ignores them. These are the spontaneous pastimes of the Sweet Absolute. Sometimes He shows absolute submission to Srimati Radharani, and again, sometimes He ignores Her. This is the very nature of Krsna's lila.

Crooked Pastimes

Rupa Goswami has supplied a verse from his Ujjvala-nilamani as the basis of the proper understanding of krsna-lila. When we think about the pastimes of the absolute, we, the finite, will have to wear this armor: *aher iva gatih premnah svabhava-kutila bhavet*. We must understand that Krsna's pastimes are naturally crooked, just like the movement of a snake. A snake cannot move in a straight line; he moves in a zig-zag way. The waves that flow from the absolute move in the same way. That characteristic of krsna-lila is always maintained above everything else. Krsna can never be ruled by any law. With this initial consideration we should approach any study of the absolute. We must always keep in mind that He is absolute, and we are infinitesimal. He is *adhoksaja*, transcendental, beyond the world of our experience.

Once I asked our Prabhupada, "Why is there a difference between Sanatana and Rupa in their conception of the final part of krsna-lila? Sanatana closed his summary of Krsna's pastimes in his *Krsna-lila-stava* in Mathura, and Rupa took it another step towards Dvaraka in his *Lalita-madhava*. He wrote two plays dealing with krsna-lila: one about Dvaraka and one about Vrndavana. *Vidagdha-madhava* takes place in Vrndavana; *Lalita-madhava* takes place in Dvaraka. But Sanatana Goswami liked to complete Krsna's pastimes in Mathura.

According to Sanatana Goswami, after a long separation between Krsna and His family and friends, like a wheel the pastime moves from Mathura again to Vrndavana. After Krsna has gone to Mathura, the residents of Vrndavana, overwhelmed by separation, begin to think, "Krsna has been gone for such a long time. Nanda and Yasoda have lost their child!" The separation intensifies and develops further until they begin to think, "Oh, Nanda and Yasoda have no child!" Then they think, "They must have a child," and begin to pray for the appearance of Krsna. Then Krsna appears as the son of Nanda and Yasoda. The cycle is complete and everyone is happy thinking, "Oh yes, Yasoda has got a child." In this way Krsna's pastimes again begin

developing in Vrndavana and move to Mathura, where He kills Kamsa.

In his Krsna-lila-stava, his summary of krsna-lila, Sanatana Goswami did not take Krsna into Dvaraka from Mathura Mandala. But Rupa Goswami, in his play Lalita-madhava, showed the parallels between krsna-lila in Vrndavana and krsna-lila in Dvaraka. And so, in his Lalita-madhava, Rupa Goswami draws a parallel between Lalita as Jambavati, Radharani as Satyabhama, and Candravali as Rukmini. In this way, he shows the transformation between Vrndavana and Dvaraka.

Beyond Experience

I asked Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada about this difference between Rupa and Sanatana. He simply said, "It is adhoksaja, beyond our understanding. So krsna-lila is "un-understandable" (acintya). Everything is not bound to come within our fist. The Supreme Lord has "All Rights Reserved." This must be understood if we at all want to be in connection with that plane of reality.

So Srimad-Bhagavatam says: jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva: It is a defect to want to understand everything about divinity. Knowledge may be a qualification here in this world, but in relation to the transcendental truth of the highest order, the tendency to want to know everything is a disqualification.

We want to know the value of everything. We want to have the key to everything in our possession. But this is really a bar to progress. If we assert ourselves in this way, we rather lose what confidence we might have in divinity, and there will be some delay in extending the key to us. If a servant, upon getting employment in the master's house, is very eager to be entrusted with the house keys, then the master will suspect him. So to want to know everything is a type of disease, it is an enemy to our progress.

This is, of course, difficult to accept. But still, it is true. Surrender is everything. What cultivation of knowledge do we find in the gopis -

the most exalted devotees of Krsna? What was their acquaintance with scripture? Nothing.

What we understand to be "standard purity," what we think to be knowledge - all these things are disqualifications in giving pleasure to the absolute. An example of how our misconceived standards of "purity" and "chastity" are a disqualification can be seen in the following story.

A Mystic Physician

In order to prove the supreme position of Srimati Radharani, one day, Krsna appeared to suddenly fall ill. As He lay sick, He came in another form, disguised as a physician, and said:

"O Yasoda, I have heard that your boy has caught some disease. Is it true?

"Yes, yes, who are you?"

"I am a physician - a mystic physician. I would like to see your son. What is His disease?"

"He fainted; perhaps He has a headache."

Then Krsna in the dress of the physician told Mother Yasoda, "This is a very serious disease. I want to cure Him. But I can only do so if I can have some water brought in a porous pot. Some water should be brought from the Yamuna in a pot that has many holes in it. Only a chaste lady can do this. A chaste girl must bring some water in a porous pot. With the help of that I shall give some medicine to this boy, and He will come to consciousness immediately."

Then Yasoda madly began to search Vrndavana for a chaste lady. Jatila and Kutila were Radharani's mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Because they naturally preached that there was doubt or suspicion about the chastity of the other girls among the gopis, they themselves were generally considered to be chaste. So Yasoda appealed to one of them, Jatila, first. "Take this porous pot and fetch some water from the Yamuna."

"How is it possible? To fetch water in a porous pot is impossible."

"No. The physician says that if one is really a chaste lady, then she can fetch water in a porous pot."

Jatila could not avoid the mad request of Yasoda. Her request was so intense that she had to go. But she could not fetch water from the Yamuna because there were so many holes in the pot. Then Kutila was requested to fetch water in the pot, but she dared not venture to try it, seeing the attempt of her mother. Still, Yasoda was so earnest in her request that Kutila also could not avoid the task. Yasoda couldn't tolerate for a second that her son was in such a condition. And so her request was so intense that Kutila had to go. But she could not fetch water either, because there were so many holes in the waterpot that the water just poured through.

They were astonished, thinking, "What can we do? Among all the girls in Vraja, not a single chaste girl is to be found? What a horrible thing!" So Krsna, in the garb of a physician, singled out Radharani, saying: "I think that She is a chaste lady. Request Her to fetch the water."

And at the request of Yasoda, Radharani could not avoid the task. She had to go fetch water, but She was thinking of Krsna: "If You come to My relief, then only it may be possible; otherwise it is impossible," She prayed. Radharani dipped the porous pot in the water as Krsna touched the pot from within the water. And Radharani with great suspicion took the pot from the water and in great wonder She said, "The water is there!" She had taken some of Her maids, the sakhis, Her chief friends, with Her, and they were all astounded to find that She drew the water from the Yamuna. The holes were there but still the water remained within the pot. So She brought the water to Yasoda and everyone was astounded. And that water with some fictitious medicine was given to the boy Krsna, and Krsna arose from His "unconscious" state.

This was a tactic by Krsna to show the position of Radharani, to show what chastity is. What is chastity? Ordinary "chastity" is not real chastity. Real purity, real chastity, is far above all relative considerations of chastity. And that is inconceivable, beyond our knowledge and reason, just as how a porous pot can contain water. It is a miracle.

But God works wonders. His ways are filled with miracles. We, should be prepared for that. We should be prepared that all the knowledge of this world, all our experience, will prove to be wrong. So it is said, *jñāne prayasam udapasya namanta eva*: Be clear of your

past experiences, what you have drawn from the world of the senses, empiric knowledge (pratyaksa-jnana). Your tendency will always be to try to push your way into the transcendental world on the strength of mundane knowledge. But this verse is saying, "You fallen people, your capital is the experience of this world, of the senses. But it won't do, it won't have any value in that higher plane. What is found there is a new thing, so approach that world with an open mind; understand that everything is possible with the infinite. All your expectations, your past experience, has no value. Why don't you give up trying to dodge this point?"

The transcendental world is something quite new to us. It is very difficult to get out of this superstition of so-called "truth" here. But still it is necessary that we accept that anything and everything is possible with God. He is the master of impossibilities. Possibility and impossibility are found only in our dictionary, yet even Napoleon wanted to remove the word "impossible." He said, "'Impossible' is a word in a fool's dictionary."

How are we to understand that the original guru of our sampradaya becomes bewildered? It is "impossible." We must suspend our "knowledge" (jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva). We may take it that Krsna is playing hide and seek, perhaps, with Brahma, our gurudeva. It is like a game of hide and seek. Sometimes Krsna is defeating others and sometimes He is defeated.

Krishna Balarama

When Krsna and Balarama are playing with Their friends in the jungle, They generally play in two groups. Krsna is in one group and Balarama is in another. Krsna is considered to be less strong than Balarama. Balarama was the strongest person there, and the next strongest was Sridama, so Sridama used to play on the side of Krsna.

Whenever Balarama was defeated, He would become enraged. Krsna would diplomatically help His own team, and when Balarama saw that His own team was disloyal due to Krsna's tricks, He would turn to His younger brother Krsna and say, "I shall punish You!" But Krsna

would say, "No, You cannot punish Me; Mother Yasoda has entrusted Me in Your care. You can't mistreat Me."

One day, Balarama slapped Krsna, but Krsna went to Mother Yasoda and told on Him. Balarama was very disturbed and said, "I slap You once, and You complain to Your mother that I do not love You? Krsna, how could You do this?" At last Krsna was perplexed and accepted His defeat.

So krsna-lila moves in a crooked way (*aher iva gatih premna. . .*). This fundamental point, the foundation of our understanding about krsna-lila has been given by Rupa Goswami in this verse. He says, "Don't be eager to find reason everywhere in the pastimes of divinity. They are naturally crooked. In krsna-lila we shall find that although no party is defective, still, one will find fault with another and begin a quarrel. No defect can be found there. But still, for the necessity of lila, false defects are found, and some quarrel begins. This is the meaning of lila, pastimes: what we find here by necessity flows there automatically. We can't try to apply our reason or our standard of measurement to the movements of the infinite. And whatever gain we have made by connecting with that flow of lila will be lost in our attempts to measure it; that will be the only consequence of our analysis. So we should try to have a taste of lila with a submissive attitude. Sometimes reason, logic, and analysis are necessary, but only to preach to the people in general who have a lower understanding. Only for the purpose of preaching to people addicted to reason do we have to take the help of reason. But when devotion becomes automatic, anuraga, then both reason and scripture are left in the subterranean position. There is no place for scriptural arguments there. To a certain extent, reason is necessary for our development up to vaidhi-bhakti, the elementary stages of devotion. But above that, it has no use.

Anuraga-bhajana is automatic; that is the nature of lila: *aher iva gatih premna*. Everything there moves by His sweet will. Sweet will means that it is not a fixed program. It moves in such a way that we can't say, "It will pass by this road."

When the Maharaja of Mysore used to drive into town, he would not speak to his driver, giving him directions which way to go, because if any fixed program were arranged, then his life might be in danger. So whenever he would come to a crossing in the road, he would touch his

stick to a particular shoulder of the driver. If at the crossing, the Maharaja wanted to go to the right, he would touch the driver on his right shoulder. In this way, he would never disclose which way he would go, but only at the last moment he would beckon the driver to take a particular course.

So Krsna's divine movements are kept in reserve by His sweet will: "All Rights Reserved." We want to search for some law above His sweet will, but this is inconsistent. It is self-contradictory. On the one side we say that Krsna moves by His own sweet will, but on another side we try to find some law governing His movement. This is a contradiction. Lila moves by sweet will. When we say it is lila, then we can't give any shape to that. We can say that it was shown in a particular place in a particular way. But we cannot be sure whether today the same course will be taken.

This is why we find differences in the explanations given about different lilas in different ages. Jiva Goswami has explained that the reason for different descriptions of the pastimes of the Lord in the Puranas is because at one time that lila was played in one way, and another time it was played in another way. So we find differences even in the explanations of the same pastime.

Scholars may challenge: "Why is it that somewhere in Padma Purana the lila is mentioned in this way, but the Bhagavata Purana reveals the description in another way? Why does Harivamsa differ from Mahabharata?" We say that in different kalpas, or ages, the pastimes are enacted in different ways. In infinite ways a particular lila of the Lord may be represented within this world, because He is infinite, independent, and absolute. So leaving aside all doubts and suspicions, we shall be most generous in approaching the absolute, free from all inhibitions. We shall approach Him with that spirit, and try more and more to leave aside our past prejudices and precedents, the records of our past experience.

Is God Dead?

We shall approach Him remembering that He is still living. It is not a stereotyped thing. We should not expect only what was done once

before. If we expect the same thing it will only reassure us by its repetition that He is not a living thing; that Divinity is under historical law. Should we think that in the past He showed Himself in a particular way, so He is compelled to show Himself in that way always? Is He not living today? Can He not show anything new?

At every moment, every second, He can show everything in quite a new way. So our heart should open wide when we approach the highest authority of the absolute plane of play. That means surrender must be increased to no limit. Surrender is limitless, and His play or lila is also limitless. With that sort of deep vision, we shall try to read His lila. So although Brahma and the other gods and gurus and the givers of many sastras may have given some description of His pastimes, we shall have to realize that Krsna's pastimes are not bound by their descriptions. Krsna is not confined within a cage.

So for this reason, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu did not hesitate to give a description of the bewilderment of Brahma (brahma-vimohana-lila). Brahma was bewildered in krsna-lila in Vrndavana, and again when Brahma went to have an interview with Krsna in Dvaraka, we find the same condition. The boundary of the sweet will of the infinite is such that anything can be accommodated there, and even Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, can be perplexed by Krsna.

All these pastimes are like so many lighthouses showing us which way to go. Brahma is our guru, but he was bewildered by Krsna. And Vedavyasa, the universal guru, was also chastised by Narada. Narada was put to the test many times. All these examples are showing us the way, they are pointing out the direction. It is said, *srutibhir vimrgyam*: The authentic books about the revealed truth are only showing the way. They say: "Go in this direction. Where? We do not exactly know, but you may go in this direction." They are only showing the direction. All the *srutis*, the guidance given by the scholars of revealed truth, give some direction: "Go this way, in this direction, and perhaps you may find it."

Krsna says: *Vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyo*: "All the Vedas are intended to reveal Me, the infinite." They mean to show how the infinite is moving. If I analyze one atom within my fist, I can analyze it again and again and reanalyze it to no end. It is already within my fist, and yet it is infinite. So it has been said that we may get the maximum benefit by surrendering. Krsna says, "Give up all your

prejudices and the limitations drawn from the limited world and be open. Then it will be easy for the infinite to cast different shades of light on your soul and your knowing faculty. And then it will be easy for you also to cleanse your plane of understanding, cleanse your glass, the mirror of your heart."

In connection with the infinite you will find that everywhere there is center, nowhere circumference. But to realize this, you must try to live in eternity, in Vaikuntha. Kuntha means "measurement." Vaikuntha means "no crookedness, no limit, no measure." That is Vaikuntha.

When Krsna opened His mouth, Yasoda was astonished to find the entire universal creation. Yasoda was nonplused. "What do I see? The whole universe? The infinite in the finite?" At that moment she almost fainted, but then her cat cried aloud. And Krsna, as if He was very much afraid of the sound of the cat, caught hold of His mother out of fear. Then at once, Yasoda's apprehension disappeared. She thought, "Oh, no...He is my son! There is no representation of the infinite within Him; He is my son." And she embraced Him.

When Brahma took away the cowherd boys and calves, he thought that he had created some want in the lila, but he came to find it flowing just as it had been. Not even the least part of it had been disturbed. Krsna had expanded Himself to become the calves and the cowherd boys. When Krsna Himself took the form of all the calves and cowherd boys, then the mothers felt an infinite type of affection, so much so that they could not understand, but were rather entranced, thinking, "How beautiful these boys are!" And the cows were also mad to show their affection to those calves. Then, Brahma thought, "Have those cowherd boys and calves that I have stolen come here stealthily to join Him?" Again he went to see where he had hidden them. He saw, "No, the boys and calves are where I kept them in the caves of the mountain. They are there!" Again he returned to where Krsna was and saw everything continuing as it had been. At that time Brahma surrendered and was reassured. He spoke the following prayer:

*naumidya te 'bhravapuse tadidambaraya
gunjavatamsa-paripicchala-sanmukhaya
vanyasraje kavalavetravisana-venu-
laksmasriye mrdupade pasupangajaya*

Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.14.1

"I offer my prayers unto You, O praiseworthy Lord who are the child of the cowherd Nanda. Your complexion is the dark blue color of a thundercloud and You are clad in silk garments that shine like lightning. Your charming face is adorned with gunja-mala ornaments, and Your hair is decorated with a peacock feather. You look beautiful wearing a garland of forest flowers, and that beauty is enhanced by the morsel of food in Your left hand. You carry a buffalo horn and a stick for herding cows tucked beneath Your left arm. You hold a flute and other emblems, and Your feet are as soft as a lotus." That is the general meaning of this verse. The internal meaning of this verse, however, is this: "O venerable one, we submit our prayers to You. Who are You? You are un-seeable, un-feelable, unknown, and unknowable. Your complexion is the color of a black cloud, and therefore You are very difficult to see, but You can be seen because of Your yellow garb." Yellow is Radharani's color. So only by the help of Krsna's potency can it be ascertained who He is. Tadit means lightning. By the help of lightning we can see a black cloud at night. So although Krsna is unknown and unknowable, His potency can reveal Him to us. Brahma says, "You are the venerable entity I have come to know. Now I bow down to You. Your body is like that of a black cloud, and that is some mystic representation. Black generally cannot be detected. But Your dress of yellow color helps us to know what You are. It is carrying some similarity to the yellow dress of Narayana. Your black body and yellow dress hints towards the personification of Narayana. You are unknown and unknowable Yourself. But Your yellow dress - Your potency - makes You known to us.

And You come down to our level as if You were one in our position. You are dressed as a cowherd boy, playing in the jungle with a lump of foodstuffs in Your hand. That deceives us in ascertaining who You are. And You adore ordinary things. Even the garland that You wear is collected from ordinary jungle flowers. Your taste appears to be for lower things.

"And all these signs are misleading us. You take a morsel of food in Your hand and run after cows. That is a sign of being low-class. The higher-caste people like brahmanas and ksatriyas cannot move like

this or behave in such a way with their food. The instrument you carry - a bamboo flute - is also unsophisticated. And Your stride is short. All this is misleading us to have a lower conception of You. You are hiding Yourself, so how can we understand You? What fault is there on our part, then, for not recognizing Your supremacy? It is difficult to accept that You, Krsna, are the master of everything.

"You have so many plain ornaments. We don't find anything that is gorgeous or filled with splendor here in Vrndavana. We are accustomed to find those things in Vaikuntha. But this is new. You have come here to show Your playful pastimes. Here in Vrndavana we have come across a new conception. And it is wonderful, plain, and charming. Plain, yet most attractive.

"With simple ordinary things You have decorated Yourself, but You are so extraordinarily charming. It is impossible to understand and to describe. Generally in this world, the position of cowherd boys is of no real significance. They represent the lower section of society. But here in Vrndavana, such a position is so wonderful and charming that we find You all-attractive - hypnotizing us.

"And Your movement is very slow but sure. Your movement is such that You don't care for anything else in this world. Though You are in a lower position, Your posture is such that apparently You don't care for anything in this world. In You we find the highest conception garbed in a very plain way - but a very wonderful way. In connection with You, things of ordinary value become charming. Although I am the Creator and have created everything, I fail to understand this sort of creation. I am proud that I have created so many things in the world, but I am overwhelmed to see the beauty of the environment here in Vrndavana. Here Your movement is slow, but sure and beautiful. You may be the son of that human being who keeps the cows; this is not a very high status in society or in the scriptures, but it is the nature of Your personality that whatever You do, You make it hold the highest position. What is this! Whoever You may be, my vanity is defeated. I take refuge at Your holy feet - I surrender. Please help me to understand what You really are." In this way, Brahma surrendered. And so, Krsna is beyond the understanding even of the creator of the universe. He is infinite. And He is infinite not only in the consideration of space, but also in the consideration of time - He is infinite in every sort of consideration. Infinite. His infinite potency is

represented in consciousness, in existence, and then in dealings of love.

Absolute Sweetness

The scriptures give us three conceptions of the infinite: Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan. The Brahman conception is the all-comprehensive infinite. Whatever we can conceive is within it. Paramatma is the smallest of the small: anor aniyan. Whatever you can conceive of that is small, it is smaller than that. And the Bhagavan, or personal conception of Godhead, is of two types: one is as the master of infinite majesty and power, and the other is of absolute sweetness.

Jiva Goswami has given the essential meaning of Bhagavan in his Bhakti-Sandarbha. He says, bhagavan bhajaniya-sarva-sad-guna visistha. By Bhagavan, he describes this aspect of infinite: bhajaniya, worshipable. When we come in touch with Him, then we want to surrender ourselves for His satisfaction - that type of infinite. There are various types of infinite. The highest conception of the infinite is bhajaniya guna visistha: He is so beautiful and attractive that He is attracting all to surrender to Him. No other conception of the infinite, neither infinite space, nor time, nor anything else can approach this highest conception of the infinite: the all-attractive infinite. All the other aspects of the infinite - infinite time, infinite space, infinite power - are external. But infinite love which attracts love and self-surrender is the highest type of infinite. And that is Krsna.

Attraction is the most fundamental element everywhere. All else can be eliminated and forgotten if we come in touch with attraction and love. Everything can be ignored if we are in connection with love. The fulfillment of our existence, of all existence, of everything, is in love. Love is the principle in the center which is the only fulfillment of all existence. The very gist of existence is there; it can't be ignored or challenged by any other forms or aspects of our substantial existence. It is unchallengeable and absolute.

Whatever we may experience, the most central need for fulfillment remains: love. The absolute king of everything is love. Nothing can

stand in comparison with it. Coming in clash with the principle of love, all will have to accept defeat. Mahaprabhu pointed out that this is the most substantial thing in this world.

Madhvacarya, in his conception of how one should see the acarya, the spiritual master, could not harmonize Brahma's bewilderment. After all, he is the sampradaya guru, the foremost guru of the tradition, the Brahma-Madhva-sampradaya. So Madhvacarya omitted these two chapters on the illusion of Brahma from Srimad-Bhagavatam. But Mahaprabhu did not. He accepted Sridhara Swami's edition, which is in accordance with the suddhadvaita philosophy of Visnuswami. The Visnuswami sampradaya are followers of ragamarga, spontaneous devotion. Sridhara Swami included those two chapters with his commentary, and Mahaprabhu accepted that, and it is corroborated in Caitanya-caritamrta. Madhvacarya could not accommodate the idea that guru may be seduced. He could not tolerate that guru may not know everything, may not be omniscient, but Mahaprabhu could.

Sixth Chapter

Sonhood of God



Sri Govinda

"Love's power is unthinkable. Although it is impossible, the infinite is defeated by the finite. What is that unthinkable position? It can. only be attained through love. And how adorable and precious and valuable love is! To acquire a drop of that divine love, no sacrifice is sufficient. So we are encouraged to die to live."

Bala Krishna

"We are worshipers not of the fatherhood of Godhead, but of the sonhood of Godhead. We don't worship Him as the creator or as the controller, out on the circumference, but in the conception of sonhood, He is in the center. He is not on the circumference, but in the center. That is the conception of Srimad-Bhagavatam: sonhood, and then consorthood, a more heavenly expression, is found there. He is there in the center, and His extensions emanate from Him. So in our conception of the absolute, His father is controlling Him, His mother is abusing Him and punishing Him, and He is also seen to fall at the feet of His beloved."

This can be understood by considering that we are worshipers not of the fatherhood of Godhead, but of the sonhood of Godhead. We don't worship Him as the creator or as the controller, out on the circumference, but in the conception of sonhood, He is in the center. He is not on the circumference, but in the center. It is not that from one side He is furnishing everything, creating everything in the background. No; He is in the center. That is the conception of Srimad-Bhagavatam: sonhood, and then consorthood, a more heavenly expression, is found there. He is there in the center, and His extensions emanate from Him. So in our conception of the absolute, His father is controlling Him, His mother is abusing Him and punishing Him, and He is also seen to fall at the feet of His beloved. What to speak of guru, even Godhead Himself may appear to become bewildered about His absolute position.

And why? Love divine. Prema. So how highly precious a thing divine love must be. After liberation, beyond calculative devotion, in the highest plane of the whole creation, eternal love reigns supreme. And that divine love emanates from Him just as rays of light emanate from the sun.

So He is at the center and His extension is on all sides. Baladeva on one hand supplies the energy of existence, maintaining everything in the background, and the ecstatic side is controlled by His potency Srimati Radharani, who can make the Absolute Independent a ball in the play of Her hand.

It is inconceivable, it is incalculable, but this is the very nature of divinity. The Lord says, aham bhakta-paradhino... "Yes, I have freely accepted subjugation to My devotees. I have no independence of My own. The way My devotees treat Me is so wonderful that it makes Me subservient to them." Divine love is so charming that it is considered to be the ultimate goal of life, and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu personally came along with Nityananda Prabhu to broadcast that news to the world.

Ocean Of Love

We may have a taste of that divine life only in that plane of nectar. That we may live in the waves of that ocean of love is the highest objective of our lives.

In that divine realm our individual personalities can be maintained. It is not necessary that if we dive deep into the plane of consciousness, we must lose our own personality, our own individuality. It is not necessary at all. And yet the nature of divine love, is that you are still living, but you are living on His behalf, wholesale converted into His service. It is a wonderful thing: you can keep your personality for the interest of Krsna. But you must have no selfish motive, no conception of separate interest. Merging there is not physical, mortal merging, not merging of the losing variety, but the kind of merging spoken of in Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.29.34):

martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma

*niveditatma vicikirsito me
tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano
mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai*

"One who is subjected to birth and death attains immortality when he gives up all material activities, dedicates his life to the execution of My order, and acts according to My directions. In this way, he becomes fit to enjoy the spiritual bliss derived from exchanging loving mellows with Me."

And in Bhagavad-gita (18.55) Krsna says:

*bhaktya mam abhijanati
yavan yas casmi tattvatah
tato mam tatvato jnatva
visate tad-anantaram*

"Only through love and devotion can I be understood as I am. Thereafter, fully understanding Me, you can merge into My entourage."

This "merging" is explained by Krsna: "They enter into Me to become a person in My family. Among the circles of My friends, he enters: visate tad anantaram. He becomes as if My own. That means that without losing your personality you can be fully My own." To enter into the Lord's family is a living merging, not a physical or dead merging into Brahman, spirit. That is the result of prema, divine love. That ideal is above the general conception of merging into the oneness of Brahman, where one loses oneself in the ocean of consciousness as if in a sound sleep. We are not interested in that. Rather, through Krsna consciousness, we become lost swimming in the ocean of sweetness. This has been accepted by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Victory of Devotion

Once, Radharani left the rasa-lila when She saw that all the gopis were being dealt with almost equally by Krsna. Equal treatment towards one and all did not satisfy Her. So She decided to display a

composition of singing and dancing to please Krsna in a most wonderful transcendental way. Radharani showed Her skill in various ways, and then at the last moment, She suddenly disappeared. And as Krsna was engaged in that combined singing and dancing, He suddenly found that Radharani was absent. So He left everyone to search for Radharani. He met Her on the way, and after walking for some time, Radharani told Him, "I can't move, I can't walk anymore. If You would like to go on, You will have to carry Me. I cannot go further." And suddenly, Krsna disappeared.

A disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura once asked him why Krsna had disappeared in such a way. But our guru maharaja was very disturbed to hear such a question. In this lila, Krsna is apparently showing some disregard for Radharani. So our guru maharaja, by his very nature, could not even tolerate such a question. He had so much partiality towards Radharani that he was not disposed to hear anything against Her. And so, in a rather excited mood he answered, "Do you find any devotion here? What bhakti do you find here that you have asked me this question?" The question was rejected. He could not tolerate even an inquiry regarding that pastime.

When this news came to me, I tried to find what Bhaktivinoda Thakura had written in his own words about this verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam in his own translation, Bhagavatarka-Marici-Mala. Bhaktivinoda Thakura has harmonized the difficulties in the verse. He explains that Krsna was thinking, "I would like to see what will be the mentality of separation in Her." Only to appreciate the depth of the separation She felt from Him did Krsna disappear. Then of course Krsna returned after some time.

But our guru maharaja could not even tolerate the idea. "Where is devotion to be found here?" But Bhaktivinoda Thakura interpreted this pastime to mean that Krsna was driven to see what kind of happiness in separation Srimati Radharani would experience. He took this as an example of how the absolute becomes subservient to His devotee. And so we find that the negative, Srimati Radharani, is so powerful that the positive, Krsna, becomes powerless near Her. It is as if the positive loses its separate existence. This is the victory of devotion.

Devotion is represented in the negative side, drawing from the positive. There is the juice in a fruit and the one who extracts the juice from the fruit. The highest devotion is found where the extraction is in

its most intensified condition - there is the victory of the devotees: where the absolute accepts defeat before His servitors. This reveals the real presence of devotion, dedication, surrender.

Lord of Love

Surrender is so powerful that it can even capture the absolute. We are aspiring for that kind of potency. And whoever possesses that - they are all in all; they are our masters. For our highest interest, we must look towards the direction in which that power is intensified. We shall try to look wherever we find surrender in a thick, condensed stage. Our aim should be directed towards that. We are beggars of that. We are not beggars for anything which can be found in this mundane world: na dhanam na janam na sundarim... not wealth, followers or the enjoyment of women, but eliminating everything else, our aim should be directed towards one thing - that most intensified condition of divine service to the Lord of Love.

We should try to convert everything in such a way that it can go to that unknown quarter beyond the jurisdiction of our sense experience or mental acquisition, like a rocket sent towards deep space. Srimad-Bhagavatam, which draws the essence from all of the revealed scriptures, says that divine love is the most desirable and original thing. We must not allow ourselves to run here and there searching for base fulfillment. We must forcibly concentrate our attention on divine love. Divine love is the highest thing for us; it is the highest in creation, the highest in eternity.

And to take our stand in the negative position is the strategy of remaining in the relativity of the highest quarter of service to Krsna. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura once composed a verse expressing the proper attitude. Pujula ragapatha gaurava bange mattala sadhujana visaya range. "The path of divine love is worshipable to us and should be held overhead as our highest aspiration."

He ordered that a cottage be built for him in Govardhana and said, "I shall live there. I am not fit to live in Radha-kunda. So I shall live in a lower position, but my gurus - Gaurakisora dasa Babaji, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and others - are fit to serve there. So I shall go and serve

them there in Radha-kunda, and then return to a little lower position, in Govardhana. There I shall stay." That is the proper tactic to maintain a subjective position in the subjective world.

Otherwise, if we think that we are in the highest quarter, that higher reality will vanish from us. Only from a little lower position shall we view that higher plane with respect. But whenever we think that we have attained that higher position, that we are there - we are nowhere. That is the nature of the higher world. So we must maintain a respectable distance. If we try to look directly, we lose, but if we try to look at that plane through a screen or from a hidden place, then we may see. It is most peculiar. If we want to come in direct contact with things of a higher order, then they vanish from our experience. If you can't come in direct connection with some thing, you may find out about it by espionage - it is something like espionage. If you try to know it directly, it is impossible. Only from behind a screen can we have a glimpse.

In that way we can experience the highest ontological truth. As if by chance ontological truth comes to us, He accepts us suddenly, and we can find Him. He is absolute, He is an autocrat, He is independent; whenever He comes by His own whim to give His connection to us, we can have it. It is never within my clutches. He is not an object to come directly within my control. He is always above.

By this system we can come to the highest realization. In the highest order of lila of Radha-Govinda, Krsna asks Radharani to do something, and She refuses, saying "No, I won't do that." And yet this has been accepted as the highest mood of the negative side. To deny Krsna whatever He may want is called bhama-bhava. And Radharani is full of that nature. But that enhances the eagerness, the earnestness of Krsna. The whole system is a crooked one. And yet this is the way recommended for the poorest to come in contact with the highest. It is a wonderful device. The direct transaction, the clear face-to-face transaction, is absent there. Everything is like stealing. Everything there is a stealthy performance. In the highest area, in the area of autocracy, it is wholly blackmarketeering. And for that reason it is known as aprakṛta - just similar to the lowest conception of things. In our present living condition, we can't tolerate autocracy. It is considered the lowest thing. But autocracy is there in the highest

world. So it is known as aprakṛta: the highest quarter of the transcendental world which can harmonize everything.

The beauty of that plane is that even what is considered to be of the lowest type here is all harmonized there. The harmonious strength is so great there that what is undesirable, nasty, and bad here is harmonized in such a way that it gets the highest position there. Kṛṣṇa's peculiar position is such that the lowest has been proven to be the highest by His magical touch. Because He is there, no blot is a blot; it is pure. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the touch of Kṛṣṇa, the beauty of the highest order. Just as the touchstone will not only convert silver into gold, but it will also transform even iron, lead, or any lower thing into gold, the touchstone of Kṛṣṇa is so powerful that the lowest type of everything within our conception receives the highest position by His magical touch.

Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī says that if you are unable to accept this as truth, then you will be thrown down into Vaikuntha: "Go live there, where general law rules, where there are fair dealings. Go down to the land of fair dealings, simple dealings, where you can calculate and go on living very nicely."

A Cowherd Boy

But the higher world of Vṛndāvana is a most diplomatic position. Even Mahadeva and Brahma are both bewildered in understanding it. Baffled by Kṛṣṇa, Brahma surrendered to Him and confessed, "How could I know that the highest truth was a cowherd boy with a rod under His armpit and a morsel of food in His hand, searching for His friends?" Brahma said: "I have some intimacy with my father Nārāyaṇa; whenever any difficulty appears, I approach Him to get some instruction and then act accordingly. But I have never come in connection with any supreme power like this. A cowherd boy taking His food in one hand and a rod in the other, going off in search of His friends - He is the highest? It is inconceivable. But now I see that You are far above my father Nārāyaṇa. Vaikuntha is a fair and lawful field we know. But we have never experienced such pastimes of tactful and obscure diplomacy. That this sort of thing is going on in the highest

quarter, we should not be blamed for being unaware of that. It is wonderful and hidden, obscure. And yet there is a plane where so much wealth and sweetness are unknown to us." Thomas Gray once wrote:

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."
- Elegy in a Country Churchyard

How peculiar it is to find that the master of everything is a thief. Everything is in His possession, and yet He comes as a thief. Everyone belongs to Him, but He plays the part of a debauchee. Krsna's pastimes are all wonderful. Everything belongs to Him, yet He behaves like a thief, like one of us. That is a peculiar plane and a peculiar type of pastime.

There, all are equal, and some may even be superior. The father and mother of the absolute may be chastising Him, and the Lord may be weeping. Here is bhakti. Where is bhakti? What is the symptom of pure devotion? Where the highest authority is submissive to the servant - that is devotion. Bhakta-paradhinah: The highest has been forcibly taken down to serve the devotee. Devotion has such a peculiar position and power. Ksetra-hari prema bhajana: The last acquisition of devotion is that which can control the Supreme Lord and forcibly take Him to the devotee as a friendly servant. The master surrenders to the servant.

The infinite is at the disposal of the finite. Can we conceive of this? Not only that, but it is done stealthily in various diplomatic ways. So in Krsna consciousness, the finite achieves the suprememost unthinkable position, when the infinite comes to serve him. Such a glorious and unthinkable position appears impossible. Yet this impossibility can be effected by devotion, raga, love. Love's power is unthinkable. Although it is impossible, the infinite is defeated by the finite. What is that unthinkable position? It can only be attained through love.

And how adorable and precious and valuable love is! To acquire a drop of that divine love, no sacrifice is sufficient. So we are

encouraged to "die to live." And in that sense, wholesale death is adorable. To achieve such divine love is the impossible of the impossible, but Mahaprabhu came to give us that. How magnanimous He is! He Himself took the position of a canvasser begging from door to door, "Enlist your name. I have come to recruit everyone for that highest quarter where the infinite will be a slave to the finite. Take a drop of that valuable thing." It is the impossible of the impossible, the inconceivable of the inconceivable.

So give up your wild-goose-chasing habit and collect and concentrate all your might to progress in this line, to try to go to the temple of love divine.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.47.61), Uddhava says:

*asam aho carana-renu jusam aham syam
vrndavane kim api gulma-latausadhinam
ya dustyajam svajanam arya-patham ca hitva
bhejur mukunda-padavim srutibhir vimrgyam*

"The gopis of Vrndavana gave up their husbands, children, and families who are very difficult to renounce, and sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krsna, which are sought after even by the Vedas themselves. O! Grant me the fortune to take birth as a blade of grass in Vrndavana, so that I may take the dust of the lotus feet of those great souls upon my head."

Risk enhances the mood of love. It is a necessary part of the highest form of love: to risk so-called worldly achievement. The quest of divine love must be undertaken even at the risk of so much so-called purity of this world. That commands the highest position. Still, it should be very carefully taken. It should follow the line of humility shown by Newton, who was considered by scientists of his day to know everything. He said, "I know nothing." That is the way of proper realization: As much as one is in the midst of genuine purity, so much he thinks that "I am impure." That is the nature of infinite measurement. Because the charm is so infinite, it cannot but be estimated in that way.

The more they achieve, the more they thirst, the more earnestness is found within them. This is the characteristic of realization of the infinite. As much as one progresses, so much he thinks himself

helpless in going further for measurement. No part of the infinite comes into the plane of measurement.

*mukam karoti vacalam
panghum langhayate girim
yat krpa tam aham vande
sri gurun dina-taranam*

We cannot understand the infinite; we don't find ourselves qualified to give any expression about that, so we become dumb, thinking, "What shall I say?" But He makes us speak, He makes us open our mouths. Otherwise the reader, the knower, becomes dumb. A bona fide searching person is struck dumb with Krsna's ways. He cannot give any expression to that. But the power from on high comes down to make him give some statement. In that way, the truth from that part comes here. He begins to speak, to give vent to his feelings, being pressed by the higher plane, that higher entity. He has no power of his own to walk, but the Lord's wonderful power can help him cross mountains. This is the nature of the grace of the almighty, of the absolute: by His power, everything can move and live. Yato va imani bhutani jayante, yena jatani jivanti, yat prayanty abhisamvisanti: "He is the cause of production, sustenance, and again withdrawal. Evolution, dissolution, and sustenance in the middle. He is the prime, universal cause."

We are quarreling in a foreign land for fictitious gain. But Krsna is engaged in a loving search for His long lost servants. He wants to save them and take them all home. Only by the grace of that absolute is it possible. A wave is coming from there to take us home, to where everything finally enters. Everything which is created disappears into the subtle existence at the wholesale dissolution of this world. But again with a new evolution they come out. And some enter into the permanent lila and do not come back into this world of exploitation and renunciation.

Search for Krishna

We must inquire after Krsna. But first we should inquire, "Who am I? Where am I? In which way shall I move to approach the higher domain?" We are always inquiring, but for what type of thing? Now we should open our hearts wide and inquire about Him. This is our dire necessity. We can't avoid it. And what that inquiry contains, we can't predict the level of thought. Brahman, Paramatma, Bhagavan. Bhagavan inquiry is the highest: the search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful.

It is a natural necessity within us, for our own interest; we can't avoid it. A sane man who does not want to deceive himself can't avoid the search for Sri Krsna. The most general thing in our nature is to inquire after happiness. This is the general question of all animated beings. The search for Sri Krsna means searching for rasa, the highest form of ecstasy.

If we examine ourselves, we will read and cry: "What have I done? What is my necessity? And how am I passing my days? I must repent, cry. I have passed my days uselessly, I am a traitor to my own self, I am committing suicide. My real complaint is against myself and my so-called friends. We have nothing to do here." So, read and cry; do or die! Progress in the right way, or you are inviting your death. The general tenor of life, of all existence, in the most scientific way, will be this: Search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful. That is the highest goal not only of humanity, but for all creation. And all problems are harmonized and solved by that.

No complaints against this attempt can be normal. Deviation from this general instruction, the general call, is all false, unnecessary, and injurious. This is the truth, the necessity of everyone, wherever there is life. The most grand, extensive, and friendly call to all, to the whole of the world - the only friendly call - is this: "March towards Krsna!" It is the only call. All others should be silenced. All other topics should be silenced, should be stopped, and only if this call remains, the real welfare of the world remains. So the Upanisads say: Yasmin vijñate sarvam idam vijñatam bhavati yasmin prapte sarvam idam praptam bhavati. "Inquire into that upon knowing which, nothing further remains to be known. Try to achieve that upon gaining which, nothing further remains to be gained."

A comprehensive call is going out, and this is really nonsectarianism. Apparently it is thought to be sectarian by the abnormal thinkers. But

to every normal-thinking person, it is the most general universal thing that can be dealt with.

At present, we are quarreling in a foreign land for fictitious gain. But a sweet wave is coming from above to save us and take us all home. Only by the grace of the Lord's loving search for His lost servants is it at all possible. And all that is expected from us is to join the search for Sri Krsna and march towards the divine domain. Let us join the universal march towards the divine domain, save ourselves, and go back home, back to Godhead.

Seventh Chapter

Knowledge-Free Devotion

Beauty and Love

"The innermost hankering of every living soul is for beauty, love, affection, and harmony; not for power, knowledge, or anything else. This is the diagnosis of the whole creation in time and space: their common cause is one. But it is rare for a soul to reach such a clear stage of hankering for reality as to understand this point. Few souls are to be found in this world who are really conscious of their innermost necessity, who realize, "We want Krishna! We want Vrndavana!"

*bhidyate hrdaya-granthis
chidyante sarva-samsayah
ksiyante casya karmani
mayi drste 'khilatmani*

"Our inner aspiration for rasa, ecstasy, is buried within our hearts which are tied down and sealed. But hearing and chanting the glories of Krsna breaks the seal on the heart and allows it to awaken and open to receive Krsna, the reservoir of pleasure, ecstasy Himself."

Here, Srimad-Bhagavatam is saying: "There is a knot within our hearts, but that knot will be torn asunder by Krsna consciousness. At that time, the flow of our innate tendency for divine love (svarupa sakti) will inundate the whole heart. When the knot of the heart is torn apart, then, as the sleeping soul awakens, the Goloka conception within will emerge and inundate his entire being."

But this is apparently a difficult problem. How is it possible that all our doubts may be cleared? Is it possible for the finite to know everything? This statement seems rather inconsistent. It seems absurd. The Upanisads, however, say: "Who knows Him knows everything; who gets Him gets everything." How will the finite know that he has everything, that he has known everything? It appears absurd, but it is confirmed in the scriptures. And if this problem is solved, then all problems are solved automatically. The finite will realize wholesale satisfaction; all his inquisitive tendencies will be satisfied. This is confirmed not only in the Upanisads, but also in the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

When I first came to the Gaudiya Math, I mixed very carefully with the devotees. I thought, "They say that what they teach is the only truth and that all else is false - this is a bitter pill to swallow. They say, 'Everyone is suffering from ignorance. And what we say is the right thing.'" I thought, "What is this! A sane man cannot easily swallow such a pill. " I also could not digest it so easily at first. But what they were saying was confirmed by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita, and the Upanisads. All these authorities say, "Yes, it is so. If you know Him, everything is known. If you get Him, everything is gotten."

Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.31.14), in a verse similar to the above line from the Upanisads, also says that all doubts are cleared by Krsna consciousness, and as a result, we come into real knowledge. There it is written:

*yatha taror mula-nisecanena
trpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasakhah
pranopaharac ca yathendriyanam
tathaiva sarvarhanam acyutejya*

"By watering the root of a tree, all the leaves and branches are automatically nourished. Similarly, by supplying food to the stomach, all the limbs of the body are nourished. In the same way, if we satisfy the central conception of the Supreme Absolute, all our obligations are automatically fulfilled."

If we put food into the stomach, the whole body is fed. If we pour water on the root of the tree, the whole tree is fed. In the same way, if we do our duty towards the center, then everything is done. This is the greatness, the mysterious position of the absolute center: He has control over the complete whole. This is the peculiar position of the center in the system of the organic whole.

If a particular position of the brain is captured, then the whole body is controlled: one needle in that particular section of the brain, and all the functions of the body will be paralyzed. The peculiar position of the absolute center is something like that. So the impossible becomes possible.

Suppose I am a poor girl who has nothing. Ordinarily it would not be possible to acquire anything. But if I marry a rich man who is the owner of a big property, I can have command over many things by my relationship with him. Although we may be poor, our relationship with a powerful master makes us the master of many things. In the same way, the Absolute Center controls everything, and our affectionate relationship with Him may endow us with the command of many things. This is how it is possible for the finite soul to have possession of everything - through the subtle link of affection.

Through Kṛṣṇa everything is possible. And the nearer we come to Him, the more we shall catch. His influence inspires His devotees, and all His qualities fill their hearts (*sarva maha-guna-gana vaisnavasariṇa, kṛṣṇa-bhakte kṛṣṇera guṇa sakali sancare* - Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya-līla 22.75). In that way, although a devotee is not himself a master, through the link of love he can be master of anything. This is the line of thought explained by Srimad-Bhagavatam and the Upanisads.

Without having a real connection with the absolute center, your attempts to know everything will be useless. If you try to know even a particle of sand, lifetimes will come and go, millions of lives will pass, and you will continue to analyze the sand, finding no end to understanding even one particle.

The Absolute Center

We are told, "If you want to inquire - inquire about the center. That is the call of the Upanisads: "Don't waste your time trying to analyze the smallest part of this creation, trying to be its master; it is not possible. Your inquiry should be properly guided." Krsna says, "I am the center, and I say, 'Come to know Me, and through Me you will be able to know everything because I know everything and I control everything. Your connection with Me can give you that capacity. Approach everything through Me. Then you will be able to know the proper position of all things. Otherwise you will become acquainted with only a partial aspect of reality, and that will be external and incomplete. And you will pass millions of lives trying to know and understand reality to no end.'" Bhagavatam says:

*athapi te deva padambhuja-dvaya
prasada-lesanugrhita eva hi
janati tattvam bhagavan mahimno
na canya eko 'pi ciram vicinvan*

"Only one who is blessed with the mercy of the Lord can know His true nature. On the other hand, those who try empirically to understand His inconceivable glories can study and speculate forever without arriving at the proper conclusion."

Here, through Bhagavatam, Krsna tells us, "You may devote yourself for eternity in an erroneous direction, with no possibility of coming to the end of understanding. But if you try to approach the absolute center, then in no time you will be able to know what is what." That is the direction given by the Upanisads and Srimad-Bhagavatam, that is the direction we must take, and that is devotion.

It is so satisfying that once you have attained it, you won't care to know any other thing. We need only concentrate on Krsna's service. Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.3) declares:

jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva

*jivanti san-mukharitam bhavadiya vartam
sthane sthitah sruti-gatam tanu-van-manobhir
ye prayaso 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyam*

"Hatefully giving up all intellectual attempts to understand the Supreme Truth, those who want to realize You should completely surrender unto You. They should hear from self-realized devotees about Your holy name and transcendental pastimes. Whatever situation they may find themselves in, they should progress by fully dedicating their mind, body, and words to You. In this way the infinite, who is never conquered by anyone, becomes conquered through love."

We can approach the Supreme Lord only through submission, and when we achieve Him, we won't care for knowing anything else. We will have no regard for what is happening or not happening in the outside world. We will deeply engage in His service for His satisfaction. There, in His service, we will find the object of our lives fulfilled. And this external knowledge of "things outside" will seem to us as rubbish. We will realize, "What is the necessity of wasting time with all kinds of calculation - the nectar is here! It is far deeper than what is found in the external plane." And at that time, we shall give all our attention to His service.

The question is often asked why varnasrama-dharma, the Vedic system of social stratification, was ignored by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and why it is that anyone from any social position is accepted by our devotional school. We have to cross over the constraints of the caste system (varnasrama-dharma), offering the results of our work to Krsna (krsna karmarpanam), devotion mixed with the desire to enjoy the fruits of work (karma-misra-bhakti), and devotion mixed with the desire for liberation (jnana-misra-bhakti). They have all been rejected by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. His slogan was eho bahya age kaha ara: "These things are external; go deeper, go deeper." When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked what is further and higher than all these different conceptions of theism, Ramananda Raya suggested jnana-sunya bhakti, unalloyed devotion. When this was suggested by Ramananda Raya, Mahaprabhu said, "Yes, here real theism begins."

Karma and Jnana

That means karma, fruitive work, and jnana, the cultivation of knowledge, are unnecessary. One can begin a life of bhakti independently of karma and jnana - from any position. Bhakti need only be developed through sukrti, accumulated devotional piety, and through ruci, our eagerness and earnestness for Krsna. That is what is necessary, and not our aspiration to know anything and everything (jnana) or to have so much energy under our control (karma). These two paths lead us to exploitation and renunciation. But wherever one may be, if he wants to get in touch with the Lord, he need only have some inclination to hear about Him from a proper source, a real saint. This is the proper beginning of bhakti. And so, one may begin in the bhakti school independent of any position in the social system of varnasrama.

To become Krsna conscious, one need not be a wise man, nor a very energetic man, he may not be a master of opulence and power - the only requirement that is demanded from him is that he must have an earnest hunger for the Lord. He must find some sweetness, some taste in His words and His affairs when he hears from a proper source - a genuine saint. That taste will take him gradually further and further into the highest domain.

If they want to be successful in their search for the infinite, the seekers of knowledge and power, the jnanis and karmis, will ultimately have to cast out their attachments, break out of their circle, and come to this position. They will have to depend on taste. Taste is everything. A taste for His affairs is the all-important qualification for a devotee. It is all in all. Wherever one may be does not matter. Through his taste for Krsna, one will progress from ruci to the ultimate end of life.

So we are told, "Giving up everything, and even rejecting all conceptions of society and religion as external, exclusively surrender to Krsna." Without hesitation, one should take exclusive shelter of the Lord with full confidence, giving up bad association, and even neglecting the regulative principles governing society and religion. That is to say, one should abandon all material attachment. Saranagati: Take shelter under His protection absolutely.

Creeper of Devotion

A devotee thinks, "Krsna is very, very sweet. I can't avoid Him, I can't live without tasting His sweetness." That feeling is the real seed which can produce the bhakti creeper, the creeper of devotion. And that will gradually grow until it touches the feet of Krsna.

The creeper will grow and yet it won't try to find support anywhere in the planes of consciousness within this world, but it will grow higher and higher. Finally, when it reaches the personal conception of the Absolute, it will experience some sort of satisfaction. Still, it won't stop there. It will go up to Goloka. It will not stop with the calculative devotion of Vaikuntha. Crossing that plane, it will rise up to the stage of spontaneous, automatic devotion.

Back to Godhead

There we will find the Lord of Love. Love is the worshiping and adoring factor everywhere in that plane. The essential feature of that realm is the relationship of divine love to the central object. And we will find our fulfillment by getting service in a particular position in relation to Him. That is what is needed by everyone: to enter into the land of love and achieve some engagement in the loving service of the central representation of absolute sweetness, beauty, and love. And that highest absolute center came down as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to invite His long lost servants to return to His home, saying: "I have come to invite you and to take all of you to My home - come with Me!" What a fortunate opportunity we have! By accepting His proposal and gaining admittance in that line, how happily we can go back to home, back to God.

This is the very gist of all religions. Knowingly or unknowingly, every soul is searching for divine love. Still, different varieties of obstacles are coming to dissuade us from our campaign. But the heart won't be satisfied unless and until it reaches there. Once begun, our journey

towards Krsna can never be stopped anywhere. It is merely a question of delay: a long long time, ages and ages may pass by, but our ultimate success cannot be checked.

Krsna alone can really attract us. We cannot relish anything else from the depth of our heart and accept it as our final destination. We want only beauty and love, not power or knowledge.

Beggars of Love

It may seem that we want power. We sometimes think that we must have everything; we want that controlling capacity. We want that everything will come under our control, that whatever we want shall be done. But that is not what we truly want. It may seem that we want power, but ultimately power cannot satisfy us. And sometimes we may think that we want to know everything. We may not want to have the power of control over all, but we want to know everything; we don't like to be ignorant. But that is also not the ultimate end which can fulfill our inner necessity. That is not what we really want. We must become educated about our actual necessity - the inner search of our hearts. If we do that properly, we shall find that we are all beggars of love and affection. Adoration is the innermost necessity everywhere. And that can be completely satisfied only in Krsna's pastimes in Vrndavana.

This conclusion was broadcast by Vedavyasa, the compiler of the Vedic scriptures. Even contemporary scholars admit that Vedavyasa has disseminated all possible lines of philosophical thought in the Vedas, Puranas, Mahabharata and Vedanta-sutra. And in his last days, in his philosophical maturity, he gave Srimad-Bhagavatam, which culminates in the conception of divine love, krsna-prema.

"We Want Krishna"

The innermost hankering of every living soul is for beauty, love, affection, and harmony; not for power, knowledge, or anything else.

This is the diagnosis of the whole creation in time and space: their common cause is one. But it is rare for a soul to reach such a clear stage of hankering for reality as to understand this point. Few souls are to be found in this world who are really conscious of their innermost necessity, who realize, "We want Krsna! We want Vrndavana!" Such sincere souls are not easily found. This is mentioned in many places in scripture. (manusyanam sahasresu...narayana parayana... brahmananam sahasrebyo....)

There is only one end - many are not necessary - only one, the one, that very one we want, is a relationship of divine love.

An intellectual understanding of Krsna consciousness is impossible. Just as a bee cannot taste honey by licking the outside of a glass jar, one cannot enter the domain of higher spirit through the intellect. As subjects we are subordinate to the Supreme Subject. So there must be seva, service. Seva is the all- important factor. In the Bhagavad-gita it is mentioned that pranipata, respectfully approaching, pariprasna, sincerely inquiring, and seva, an attitude of service are necessary to enter into the domain of divine love. Only by service will Krsna be satisfied and come down, only then will we be able to understand the nature of higher plane. This is Vedic knowledge.

We are tatastha-sakti, marginal potency, and if we want to know any truth about higher reality, we must realize that it is more subtle than our existence, it is super-subjective: It can touch us, but we cannot climb up to that domain out of our own sweet will. Only if we are given the grace which can take us up can we go.

One who has this understanding will be able to combat all the existing intellectualists. The intellect has no capacity to enter into the higher subjective area. That supreme truth is atindriya-manasa-gocarah: beyond the plane of the senses, mind, and intellect. This expression manaso vapuso vaco vaibhavam tava gocarah by Brahma, admitting to Krsna that He was beyond the reach of his body, mind, and words, was not only a lip-deep statement of the mouth. If we want to know the absolute truth, the only condition for realizing Him is a submissive attitude. In that way, He may be satisfied with our attempt and reveal Himself to us. Divine revelation is not a matter of research within this world - we should have a sincere heart to serve.

The scientists are discovering so many wonderful things. But are these things there already? Or are the scientists the creators? Those

wonderful truths are already there. It is only that some of them are being discovered. It is not the creation of the scientists, so they are not superior to those truths. And in any case, they can know only a part of it, and even that with some endeavor. But the conscious nature of reality, the superior reason of divinity, is unknown to them, although they may go on researching, researching, researching. Whatever they find is only the outer cover, not the real spirit, the substance. Na te viduh svarthagatim hi visnum. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.5.30) it is written:

*matir na krsne paratah svato va
mitho 'bhipadyeta grha-vratanam
adanta-gobir visatam tamisram
punah punas carvita-carvananam*

Srimad-Bhagavatam tells us that we can try to enter the world of higher reality through intellectualism, but we will again come back, baffled in our attempts. If we try to press with our intelligence to enter into that domain, we will come back dissatisfied in despair and will wander here within this mortal world again and again. The world of sense experience will come and go through its different phases, but it cannot enter that spiritual plane. To enter that world, the only requirement is submission to a real agent of divinity. He may impart the process, and if we can accept that, we will be able to enter that world; otherwise we will have to wander in this world of sense experience.

Some scholars think that knowledge is of the first importance. According to them, if one wants to enter that realm, he should first acquire knowledge through scholarship and then try for love. They think that by knowledge alone we can understand what divine love is, and then we can have admission into that domain. They don't approve of the idea of jnana-sunya bhakti, or "knowledge-free devotion."

Once, the founder of the Bharat Seva Ashram Sangha wanted me to join his mission. I told him, "My head is already sold to the teachings of Sri Caitanyadeva." He said, "Yes, I also revere Him, but I say that first you must learn indifference to this worldly pleasure, as Buddha preached. Then you may come to study the Vedanta of Sankara, understand what is knowledge proper, and realize that all this world is

nothing, and Brahman, spirit, is everything. Then you may approach the prema-dharma, the love of Sri Caitanyadeva, which I also think to be the highest object of attainment." I answered, "You say so, but Sri Caitanyadeva did not say that we should go to the Buddhist school to learn abnegation and then to the Sankara school to acquire Vedantic knowledge before coming to Him. He said that wherever one is, one should get the association of a real Vaisnava saint and go on with sravana-kirtana, hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord." That man was struck dumb. He could not speak; he was silenced. Another time, the president of the Arya Samaj came to see me in Karachi and told me that, "If the finite can know the Infinite, He is not infinite." I replied, "If the Infinite cannot make Himself known to the finite, He is not infinite." He could not answer my argument.

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So it is not from any qualification on our side that the absolute can be caught. Whomever He chooses to make Himself known to will know Him. This is explained in the Upanisads: He cannot be known by lectures or discussions, by sharp memory or vast intelligence, or by genius or supernatural intellect. One may have extensively studied all the revealed scriptures, but that is no qualification. Krsna reserves all independence on His side. There is only one way by which He can be known: whomever He chooses to make Himself known to can know Him. Otherwise all rights are reserved there by His sweet will.

How can we draw His sweet will? That is the question. How we can tackle His sweet will. That can only be done through saranagati, surrender, by increasing our negative side. We must think, "I am so poor; without Your grace, I can't live." We must think like this to try to arouse pity within His heart. We must appeal to His understanding that we are in extreme need of Him and that without His grace we can't live. Only such a sincere feeling of necessity can draw His attention to us. Otherwise we have no possibility for capturing Him. So the negative approach has been recommended for capturing Him. Our exclusive prayer is that we are the most needy and sincere. That

alone can draw His attention towards us. And that is not an opinion or speculation, it is a fact. It is reality.

I once met a scholarly sannyasi in Badarikasrama who posed as an atheist in the course of our discussion. He argued, "What is the evidence that God or the soul exists?" Then I quoted a verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.22.34):

*atma pariijnana-mayo vivado
hy astiti nastiti bhidartha-nisthah
vyartha 'pi naivoparameta pumsam
mattah paravrtta-dhiyam sva-lokat*

I explained to him that although atma, spirit, is self-effulgent, there is a constant quarrel between two opposing parties. One party says, "God exists!" The other says, "God does not exist!" Srimad-Bhagavatam says that the atma is self-effulgent, but still we find that one class of men say, "He exists, we see Him, He can be seen," and another says, "He has never existed." This quarrel has no end because one of the parties hasn't got the eye to see what is self-evident. This quarrel is a useless waste of time, but still it will never stop; it will continue forever. Why? Because there are those who have the eyes to see God and those who have no eyes to see Him or their own self. One of these classes of men have deviated from God consciousness. There is a barrier between them and God consciousness, between them and self-consciousness. So the disagreement will only continue on account of their ignorance.

Those who have eyes to see will say, "The sun exists; There is the sun." And those who have no eyes will say, "No, no, there is no sun." This argument will continue forever, but that does not mean that the sun is not existing. It can show itself.

An analogy has been given in this connection. A boy is born in a dungeon, a dark prisonhouse. And he grows up there without any experience of sunlight. One of his friends from outside the prison would come and visit him. One day, the boy's friend said, "Let us go see the sun. Come with me, I shall show you." The boy replied, "Yes, I shall go," but he began to take a lantern with him. His friend remarked, "It is not necessary to take the lantern." The boy said, "What do you say! Do you think that I am a fool? Can anything be

seen without the help of a lantern? I am not a fool!" Then his friend forcibly took him by the hand and showed him the sun. The boy said, "Oh, this is the sun! By its light everything can be seen."

The soul is like that. God is like that. He is seen by His own light, and it is only by His light that we can see anything. He is self-effulgent. By His own light He can show Himself to others. He is the source of all knowledge. This is the proper conception of Godhead. He is automatically existing. He cannot be seen by our knowledge, just as the sun cannot be seen by the help of any other light. It is not necessary that we try to acquire God consciousness through intellect or knowledge. Knowledge of God is independent. It can come and go of its own accord. And if He comes to me, every thing comes to me. But nothing can force Him to come within our vision. The sun cannot be taken into your dungeon, but you have to go to the sun and see things by its grace; in the same way, the Lord is self-effulgent. He can be seen only by His own light.

Intellectualism is a disqualification. We are interested in jnana-sunya bhakti, knowledge-free devotion. Affection, attraction, sympathy - these things are all the outcome of having a heart. The scientists feel that animals have no real brain, no intelligence. Yet we see that even without much of a brain, an animal can live, but without a heart, none can live. As the brain is a representation of a computer, the animals have no real computer to calculate. Animals may follow intuitive knowledge, and so they can work unconsciously. And we can see that intuition can go above brain calculation. So many birds and beasts can understand that an earthquake is coming, but so far, no human calculation can understand precisely when an earthquake will come. There are many things that our brain cannot feel, cannot catch, whereas even the animals can get some clue about them beforehand. And after a long and deep research, men cannot find what is beyond their reason. The position of reason and intellect is explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.3):

*jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva
jivanti san-mukharitam bhavadiya-vartam
sthane sthitah sruti-gatam tanu-van-manobhir
ye prayaso 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyam*

"Hatefully rejecting any attempt in the intellectual line, we must nurture a submissive spirit within ourselves and try to live our lives in association with topics about the Lord. Of course, this does not mean any topics about the Lord; they must come from a genuine source. And it does not matter what position we hold at present. Whoever wholeheartedly attends to the teachings of His divine agents by thought, word, and deed, can conquer Him who is otherwise invincible."

This is the path of realization recommended by the Srimad-Bhagavatam, which condemns the path of intellectual attainment:

*sreyah srtim bhaktim udasya te vibho
klisyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye
tesam asau klesala eva sisyate
nanyad yatha sthula-tusavaghatinam*

"O Lord, those who want to have a clear conception of You through their intellect find their attempts useless. Their endeavors end only in frustration, like those who try to beat rice from an empty husk." (S.B. 10.14.4) So jnana, knowledge, is like an empty husk. Energy and knowledge are only outer aspects. The real substance, the rice, is devotion - love. That is the tasteful thing within. Other things are covers (jnana-karmady-anavrtam). But what is within the cover is tasteful, eternal, auspicious, and beautiful: satyam, sivam, sundaram. Beauty is reality, ecstasy is reality; everything else is only an outer cover. If we concern ourselves too much with the cover, we cannot get the substance within. Then our life becomes a disappointment:

*naiskarmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjitam
na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam
kutah punah sasvad abhadram isvare
na carpitam karma yad apy akaranam*

"Mere retirement is not considered to be fulfillment in anyone's life. Although in the stage of liberation no contamination of death, birth, disease, and infirmity are to be found, still that cannot be considered perfection. Then what to speak of karma, a laborious life of work which is not done for the satisfaction of Krsna?" (S.B. 1.5.12)

The only thing that can give fulfillment in both labor and rest is Krsna: He is the harmonizing principle of both. If work is done as a service for Krsna, then our labor is converted into gold: it is no longer iron. And only if renunciation is related to divine service does it have any value.

Adam and Eve

Those who are suffering from hard labor naturally want rest. They are dependent on labor to live, yet it is thought to be useless and undesirable: if we are to live, we must labor; still, it is considered a dishonorable life. Generally our aspiration is how to live without labor; we are in search of a peaceful life of rest where we are not the servants of labor. This is the general tendency in our life of struggle and labor. In the Bible, we find that when Adam and Eve were surrendered to God in heaven, their sustenance was automatic; when they fell down, they had to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. They were forced to labor in order to live. And it is a low and dishonorable form of life. But if we want to live, we must labor. We wonder, "Is there a life where one can live without labor?" We find such a tendency in our life from the beginning of existence. So we aspire for freedom from karma.

Buddha and Shankar

Both the Buddhist school and the Sankara school want to discover a place where one can live without labor. Buddha says that life itself is unnecessary; that there is in actuality no labor, no life, no existence. According to the Buddhist school, we can do away with our existence. It is a mania to keep up our existence in the struggling world, so we should do away with this mania. Why should we live at all? So the Buddhists advocate nirvana, the cessation of existence. And Sankaracarya says, "Of course there is life, but this life is not desirable. We are always suffering from injury, and there is a force

which is always diminishing us, and ultimately we die. We are challenged by slow death, slow poison." It is true that life in the world of mortality is undesirable. Then what is the solution? Sankara says that the endeavor to maintain one's individual self is undesirable. There is no possibility of maintaining individuality and at the same time enjoying real peace, eternal peace. So we shall have to give up the charm of individual life.

According to Sankara, there is one Universal Spirit, and that is a blissful conception. We are merely reflections of that. That Spirit has been reflected everywhere. Somehow it has created this mysterious individual ego or consciousness. We must not be very eager to maintain this false ego; we must dissolve it. And when that is done, we shall find that only Spirit remains.

In our present condition there can be no cure to the disease of mortality. At every moment we are losing ourselves in some way or other. This cannot be solved. But Buddha and Sankara have given only a partial understanding. But Srimad-Bhagavatam says, "The proper solution is to practice abnegation, detachment from the environment, by seeing it in relation to the service of Krsna. That knowledge by which you can attain perfection while maintaining your own individuality, interest, and prospect is possible only with bhakti, devotion, dedication. By exploitation you have to die. And by abnegation you merge into a sort of zero (Viraja, Brahmaloka) in some unknown quarter, never to rise from there again. But I recommend the kind of renunciation and knowledge which is embraced by devotion, dedication to Krsna. If you accept that, then your inner self, your true self, can live forever in a happy life."

Naiskarmyam means no pain of labor. A labor of love is the innate function of the soul. In our ordinary conception, labor carries a reaction. As we labor, things diminish and vanish, attacked by death. But these difficulties have all been eliminated by the recommendations given in Srimad-Bhagavatam. Srimad-Bhagavatam advocates vairagya and jnana embraced with bhakti, a life of dedication. Bhagavatam says, "Shake off exploitation and renunciation. You will not have to depend on them. They can be absorbed by dedication. Renunciation and knowledge are complete in devotion, and at the same time you can maintain your individuality. "

Srimad-Bhagavatam has harmonized knowledge and renunciation by supplying their very life in devotion. Through devotion, we can maintain our individuality, our activity, our prospect, and at the same time find immense peace and ecstasy in life. Srimad-Bhagavatam offers us a happy, eternal life simply by adding dedication to jnana and karma.

You will work, or energize; but it will not come under the jurisdiction of karma, which has a reaction. Your energy will be used for the center. Bhagavad-gita tells us, "Work only for the center, otherwise you will be tied down with a reaction." So it has been made clear that a very laudable life is possible for us if we dedicate ourselves to the highest center. That is neither dishonorable nor tiresome. Neither is it ignorance. So we should take this course which Srimad-Bhagavatam recommends for us.

If we are attentive to that and try to follow the advice coming from the real source, from real saintly persons, we will become properly adjusted; we will develop a proper understanding. And everything will be harmonized. One who has this realization will be victorious over all possible suggestions or conceptions of knowledge. Only by devotion, by dedication to Krsna, can we very easily become free from ignorance in the world of suffering.

To be a devotee means to serve; service is everything. Our proper life is to be found in dedicating ourselves and in self-distribution, not self-aggrandizement. We can live in service. All difficulties will be removed if we take to the line of dedication. There we will find everything: our individuality, the most favorable environment, our highest prospect. Only our angle of vision should be changed. And that angle of vision should be acquired through the center. We must try to understand how everything will be seen in relation to the center. Whatever we see, we must try to study its position in accordance with the center. We must locate or calculate what its position is in relation to the center. And with that angle of vision, we may establish our relationship to anything. If we can develop this vision, we will get relief from all undesirability. This is the teaching of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

This is the specialty of Bhagavata philosophy. It always tries to establish the conception of divine love, divine sentiment, and divine feeling above intellectualism and the mastery over energy. The

masters of power and the masters of knowledge have no value if devoid of the master of love. On the other hand, if it is possible for one devoid of knowledge and power to enter into the area of love, his life is successful. His movement is no longer considered as reactionary labor (karma), and his knowledge is real knowledge about Krsna (sambandha-jnana). Real knowledge about Krsna, His paraphernalia, and who is who in the spiritual world, is not within the jurisdiction of the knowledge that we can obtain by conducting scientific research. It is not like that; it is fulfilled in itself.

And Devarsi Narada came to Vedavyasa to recommend to him, "You must introduce this very clearly in your present book. In the Vedas and Upanisads and in the Mahabharata you have dealt previously with different aspects of knowledge and work. But it is not so clear. And now very clearly and definitely you should describe the success of life in its fullest form, independent of knowledge and energy." It is possible to reinstate ourselves with our lost wealth independent of energy and intellectual research.

The Seal of Ego

We have only to break the seal of the ego, and the natural flow of divine love will come and automatically help its own cause. Such an arrangement is there for us by which we may return home. We won't feel that it is a tedious, laborious journey. We will be carried by our natural attraction, independent of external guidance. The tendency within us for divine love can understand its own soil; it has that natural gift of attraction. An automatic attraction will be there for our home; no scientific search is necessary.

Rather, we will have to put a stop to our intellectualism, ambition, and aspiration. It is unnecessary. It is a wild goose chase. It will never help us to reach our goal. The heart will reject that. There will be no room for any suspicion at all. It is an infallible, natural, complete selection. So we should try to find that natural thing which cannot be acquired as the result of any long program of research. It is quite natural. It is only the artificialism within us that must be removed and bid adieu forever.

And the reactions that we have acquired after so long in our false journey will evaporate out of their own accord. They will present no problem. This is certain. There will be no reaction, and no necessity of finding any new discovery or invention. Once achieving that realization, we will see that our "progressive-knowledge-civilization" is all redundant.

No intellectualism is required. Just as a child knows his mother, we can recognize our real home. In the midst of so many cows, a calf will run to its own mother. They have some instinctive scent or a natural guidance that directs them. In the same way, no trouble, no investigation, no experiment or suspicion is necessary. Devotion to Krsna is automatic, natural, happy, and spontaneous. It is a spontaneous life, an automatic flow, a natural movement.

Our real interest is love. Love is independent of everything. It is the innermost substance in our existence. "Try to dive deep into reality," we are told. "Dive deep into reality, and you will find your home there in that divine realm. You are a child of that soil." That is the message of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. And that is not a very meager conception, an abstract or hazy dream, but that is the most intense and concrete reality.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu demonstrated this by His character, by how intensely He searched for Sri Krsna, and by how intensely and deeply He engaged Himself in the lila of Krsna, ignoring so many facts which seem concrete in the outside world. Forgetting everything, despising everything which is so important to us, He neglected all other functions and considerations of duty. He engaged Himself in krsna-lila so deeply and intensely - diving deep into it - that it captured His whole heart so much that He was externally found to be helpless.

Eighth Chapter

The Holy Name

Srila Rupa Goswami

"Rupa Goswami Prabhupada says that Krsna's name, form, qualities, and eternal associates everything about Him - is not mundane, but purely spiritual. It cannot be perceived by our gross senses. Simply by vibrating the sound krsna, our tongues cannot produce Krsna, our noses cannot catch the transcendental fragrance of His body, our eyes cannot have a vision of His beautiful figure which is supramental. This is true not only for our physical senses, but for the mind also. Our minds cannot conceive of Krsna. He is transcendental and supramental. His existence transcends all the knowledge in our possession."



Sri Nityananda and Sriman Mahaprabhu

If it is to be effective, the sound of the holy name of Krsna must have a divine quality. The holy name of Krsna which is infinite can do away with everything undesirable within us; but the name must be invested with a real spiritual conception. It must not be a mere physical imitation produced only by the help of the lip and tongue.

That sound is not the holy name. If it is to be genuine, the holy name of Krsna, Hari, Visnu, or Narayana must be vaikuntha-nama: it should have spiritual existence, divine backing. That principle is all in all in vibrating the holy name.

We are concerned with sound vibration that has spiritual depth. The physical imitation of the holy name is not the name proper; it is not sabda brahma, divine sound. Only imitation sound may come from the plane of mundane conception. The holy name of Krsna means divine sound; it must have some spiritual background. Something spiritual must be distributed through the physical sound.

In the case of a capsule of medicine, the capsule is not the medicine; the medicine is within. Externally, one capsule may look like another, but within one capsule there may be medicine and within another there may be cyanide. The capsule itself is not the medicine. So it is not the sound of Krsna's name that is Krsna: Krsna is within the sound. The holy name must be surcharged with the proper spirit, not any mundane sentiment.

Even the followers of the impersonal Sankara school have faith that the name is not confined within the jurisdiction of physical sound. They consider it to be within the mental plane, within the plane of sattva guna. Unfortunately they think that the holy name is the product of maya, or misconception, and so they conclude that the names of Hari, Krsna, Kali, and Siva are all one and the same. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Sankara school both preach in that way. But that conception also has its origin in the plane of misunderstanding.

Divine Sound

The divine sound of the pure name (suddha-nama) must have its origin beyond the area of misconception or maya. The extent of maya is up to the highest planet in the material world, Satyaloka. Beyond Satyaloka is the Viraja river and the world of consciousness, Brahmaloaka, and then the spiritual sky, Paravyoma. The pure name of Krsna must have its origin in Paravyoma, the spiritual sky. And if we are to examine it further, the holy name of Krsna really comes from the most original plane of all existence: Vraja, Goloka. According to

this understanding, the sound must have its origin in the highest plane of the spiritual world in Vrndavana if it is to be considered the genuine Krsna name.

The mere physical sound is not the holy name of Krsna. A true conception of the holy name is necessary, not only to free us from this world of misconception, but also for the attainment of service to Krsna in Vrndavana. Only that true name of Krsna which has its origin in the plane of Vrndavana can lift us up and take us there.

Otherwise, although the spirit is within the name, if the sound we vibrate is based on any other conception, it may only take us to that layer of conception. This is quite scientific; it is not unreasonable. The mere word krsna is not the holy name. What is important is the meaning of that sound and the depth of meaning, the deep conception of the meaning of the name. That is everything - it is all-important in serving our purpose.

There's a nice story that illustrates this point. When our spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, was a young boy, both he and his father, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, went to visit the holy place of Kulinagrama, which is located in the Hooghly district near Calcutta. Kulinagrama was a village where the great devotee Haridasa Thakura, as well as other famous Vaisnavas, used to live, and was the home of four generations of devotees.

A Haunted Temple

They went to visit that ancient holy place, and just on the outskirts of Kulinagrama, as they were entering the village, they passed by an old temple. Suddenly a man came out of the temple and humbly asked them, "Please stay the night here. In the morning you may enter the village and take darsana of all the places there." Bhaktivinoda Thakura and our guru maharaja, who at that time was a young boy, stayed the night in that temple house.

Just after nightfall, as they were resting, Bhaktivinoda Thakura experienced something unusual. He found that brickbats were being thrown about from different directions. He thought, "How is this happening and why? Who would throw big brickbats like this?" Then

he had some apprehension that there might be ghosts living there, creating disturbances. He began loudly chanting the Hare Krsna mahamantra. After some time, the disturbance disappeared, and Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta passed the rest of the night there peacefully.

In the morning, they entered the village and began visiting different holy places. After some time, one of the local gentlemen noticed them and said, "You entered our village early this morning. Where do you come from? And where did you spend the night?" Bhaktivinoda Thakura explained, "We stayed in that temple just outside the village there." One of them said, "Oh! How could you stay there? So many ghosts live there and throw stones and bricks at anyone who passes by that place at night. How could you stay there?" Then Bhaktivinoda Thakura said, "Yes, you are right. But when I found such a disturbance there, I began to loudly chant the Hare Krsna mahamantra, and subsequently the problem disappeared." The men of the village then asked Bhaktivinoda, "Who are you, and where are you coming from?"

Then they came to know that he was Bhaktivinoda Thakura. They had already heard of him, and some of them had read his books. They welcomed the two of them, and showed them all the holy places they had not yet seen. At one point, they said to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, "The gentleman who was formerly the priest of that temple was transformed into a ghost after his departure. Since that time, we have regularly seen the disturbances caused by that ghost. Why did he become a ghost? As the priest of that temple, he used to regularly chant the holy name of Krsna. We are witness to that fact; we have all heard him. Why was he turned into a ghost? We cannot understand this. Please explain."

Lip-Deep Sound

Bhaktivinoda Thakura told them that the priest must have only repeated the syllables of the name, the nama-aksara. What he was producing was only a mayik sound, a physical, lip-deep sound. It did not have the spiritual essence; the life of the name was absent when he

was chanting. It was nama-aparadha, offensive chanting. Bhaktivinoda asked them, "What was his character?" They said, "He was not a good man. He committed many sinful acts. That we know. But we can't deny the fact that he used to chant the name of the Lord almost always.

How could he become a ghost?"

Bhaktivinoda Thakura explained that the physical sound of the name is not the name proper. The priest had been committing offenses to the holy name (nama-aparadha), and as a result became a ghost. They asked, "Then how can he be released from that wretched condition?"

Bhaktivinoda said, "If he meets a bona fide sadhu who has a genuine connection with Krsna, and he hears the real name, or the proper explanation of Bhagavad-gita or Srimad-Bhagavatam from his lips, then he may be released from his ghostly condition. It is mentioned in the scriptures that this is the only way to become free from the entanglement of material nature." After this discussion, Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati left Kulinagrama.

From that day on, all the troubles caused by the ghost at the temple in Kulinagrama ceased. The villagers were astonished. One of them said: "That priest who had become a ghost must have been released from his ghostly condition after hearing the holy name chanted by Bhaktivinoda Thakura. When the trouble began, Bhaktivinoda loudly chanted the name, and gradually, by hearing the holy name of Krsna from his holy lips, that suppressed soul has been liberated from his condition as a ghost."

After that, many people journeyed to see Bhaktivinoda Thakura. They would tell him, "We are confident that you are a great Vaisnava - after hearing the holy name of Krsna from your lips, a ghost has been released." This story was published in the newspapers, and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Prabhupada used to recount this story of his own experience with Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

The point is that simply the external sound of the name is not the real name. The most important thing is the spiritual realization backing the name - that is the real name. Otherwise, a tape recorder can pronounce that holy name of Krsna. Even a parrot can pronounce the name - but the physical sound is not the thing itself. In the background there must be spiritual truth, which is conscious. That super-knowledge is beyond the knowledge of this mundane plane.

Supramental Nama

This understanding is confirmed by Rupa Goswami Prabhu in his verse:

*atah sri-krsna-namadi
na bhaved grahyam indriyaih
sevonmukhe hi jihvadau
svayam eva sphuraty adah*

He says that Krsna's name, form, qualities, and eternal associates everything about Him - is not mundane, but purely spiritual. It cannot be perceived by our gross senses. Simply by vibrating the sound krsna, our tongues cannot produce Krsna, our noses cannot catch the transcendental fragrance of His body, our eyes cannot have a vision of His beautiful figure which is supramental. This is true not only for our physical senses, but for the mind also. Our minds cannot conceive of Krsna. He is transcendental and supramental. His existence transcends all the knowledge in our possession.

We cannot be the subject and make Krsna our object. He is the subject. He exists beyond both the atma and paramatma. We should never forget that. We should always be mindful of the plane in which He exists. As finite souls we are tatastha jivas - the marginal potency of the Lord. The tiny soul can think and know only those things which are more gross than himself. But in trying to know that which is more subtle than himself, he is helpless. A connection with that higher spiritual realm is only possible when the higher area wants to bring the lower up into that plane. Therefore, to understand Him is possible only through surrender (sevonmukhe hi jihvadau).

Divine Slavery

If we can accept the current of surrender - if we can die as we are and surrender our innermost self at His disposal - His will can easily carry us up to the spiritual platform. Our soul will become as a blade of grass in that current, and so be carried up into the center of the infinite. It is not that we can enter there and walk proudly as we do here in this gross material world. Here we walk on our feet, but there we shall walk with our heads. Only by the Lord's grace upon our heads can we attract that plane to take us up.

Everything there is qualitatively higher than our own existence. The substance of that divine realm, the atmosphere, the air, the ether - everything there - is higher than any value we might have. Only those with a sincere spirit of service may be allowed to enter there. And there they will be taken to the highest position of divine love by the residents of that plane, who are venerable, generous, affectionate, and filled with good wishes.

We have as our prospect the chance to go there, but always as a matter of grace - and never as a matter of right. We must accept this creed from the beginning. Still, the atmosphere there is so happy and loving that no one there feels any distinction between slave and master. A slave there has no sense of being a slave. Everyone is family. Having attained the state of divine slavery, one should consider: "I am a slave - the generosity of Krsna and His eternal associates is my wealth. " But by the power of Yogamaya, those who are taken up into that plane forget that they are slaves. That is the greatness and magnanimity of that atmosphere where love is intensely flowing. It is really by their love and not by our own fortune that we may somehow gain entrance into that high and noble land.

But to realize this we must realize the spiritual position of Krsna's name, form, and eternal associates. Krsna's name is not material. We cannot capture the name of Krsna simply by vibrating the syllables of the name with our tongue. Ravana wanted to capture Sitadevi and thought that he had done so. But the fact was that he could not even touch the holy body of Sitadevi.

What Ravana captured was only a mundane representation of Sitadevi, a material double, an imitation which was like a statue of Sitadevi. Sitadevi herself is another thing; she is not made of flesh and blood. For a person here in this world, Sitadevi and her divine plane is not at all approachable. A mundane person cannot see, feel, or enter that

plane - what to speak of the possibility of snatching Sitadevi and taking her away. The scriptures have explained that Sita's capture was all show. Ravana was cheated. Of course, the apparent kidnapping of Sita by Ravana was done to serve some purpose, to teach something to the people of this mundane world. But in the real sense, no Ravana can come in connection with any of the eternal associates of the Lord who are living in Vaikuntha. In the same way, no mundane person can touch the Vaikuntha Name simply by imitating its sound.

Recently I was asked about a young boy who had been killed in an accident. I was told that he shouted the name of Krsna at the time of death. I was asked "What was his destination?" I explained that whether one is young or old in the plane of flesh and blood is no qualification for spiritual attainment. One's mentality must be examined. According to the particular time and place and the conception of the person involved, that sound may be the genuine name, or it may be namabhasa, the shadow of the real name.

National Nama

When Gandhi was shot, he cried, "Rama! Rama!" He was shot in the chest, and his spectacles were thrown into the street. Within half an hour he passed away, but he pronounced the words "Rama! Rama!" He was on his way to deliver a religious lecture, but his mentality was full of thoughts of national progress, so in his case, the vibration of the name may have worked in the plane of nation-building. To understand a person's destination at the time of death, we must ask, "What was his mentality?"

Sometimes chanting the name may result in namabhasa - the shadow of the name. Whether or not it is suddha nama, the genuine name, depends on the mental system of the person chanting the name. It depends on his relation towards Krsna, his intention.

"Gopi, Gopi, Gopi!"

A few days before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa, He was chanting "gopi, gopi, gopi!" Hearing this, a tantric brahmana came to give some advice to the Lord. "Pandit," he said, "You are a scholar; You know the scriptures. Still, You are chanting the name gopi, gopi? What benefit will You get from that? The scriptures say that if You chant the name of Krsna, You may get some benefit. You will find this in many places in the scriptures, especially in the Puranas. Why then do You chant gopi, gopi?"

Angered at the brahmana's ignorance, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in the mood of a follower of the gopis, picked up a stick and began to rebuke him. "You have come from the enemy camp to convert us into followers of Krsna?" He ran after the brahmana to beat him with His stick. In this example, we find that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was chanting "gopi, gopi" and neglecting the name of Krsna. Apparently He was advised to take the name of Krsna and became enraged - but what is the underlying thought there?

If we are to understand the effect of someone's chanting of the holy name, we must examine his underlying purpose. Sometimes his chanting may have some effect, but not always. Still, Jiva Goswami mentions the following example as evidence that the holy name may have some effect even if one is unaware of its full meaning. Once, a wild boar attacked a Mohammedan, and the Mohammedan cried, "Harama! Harama!" Harama means "that abominable hog!" On the other hand, Ha Rama means "the Lord," who has allowed a hog to attack me. Somehow, Lord Rama was invoked, and the holy name had a divine influence on the Mohammedan, who attained liberation.

Another example given in the scriptures is that of Valmiki. Before becoming a saint, the sage Valmiki was a dacoit. But the great saint Narada had a plan to benefit him. Narada thought, "This person is the most notorious and heinous dacoit I have ever seen. Let me experiment with him to see the potency of the holy name. I shall ask him to chant the holy name of Rama." He tried, but Valmiki could not pronounce the holy name of Rama. Then Narada told him to chant mara - the word for "murder" - instead. The dacoit said, "Yes, I can do this. This is just the opposite of the name of Rama." He began to chant "mara-mara-mara-mara-rama-rama-rama-rama." In this way, after some time, mara became rama. Valmiki began to chant the name of Rama, and gradually his mental attitude changed. So it is possible for

the name to have an effect on someone even if he has no proper conception of its meaning. This is called namabhasa: the shadow of the name. It can effect liberation. But a real devotee is not interested in liberation. He wants to enter the domain of divine service.

The sound and its effect depends upon the attitude we accept, and the quality we can conceive, because the actual vaikuntha nama is infinite. In that plane, the divine name is equal to the substance named. When the sound aspect is one and the same with the original aspect of the thing, that is vaikuntha nama. Here in this world, a blind man's name may be Padmalocan - lotus-eyed - but really he may be blind. The name and the figure may be entirely different. But in Vaikuntha, in the infinite world, the name and the named are one and the same.

Yet to experience the vaikuntha nama, one must avoid both nama aparadha, offenses to the holy name, and namabhasa, the shadow of the holy name. By namabhasa, we get some relief from this worldly bondage, and by nama aparadha, we become entangled in this mayik world. But the ordinary physical sound cannot represent the real name, which is supernatural.

It is said that one name of Krsna can remove more ignorance and sin than a man has the power to commit. But what is the quality of that one name? We may chant the physical name of Krsna so many times without getting the result of even one real name. There is a great difference between the ordinary sound of the name, the superficial mayik name, and the pure name. The pure name is one and the same with Krsna, but that descends down to our level only by His grace. We cannot vibrate it simply by dint of our moving our tongue and our lips. The pure name of Krsna is not lip deep, but heart deep. And it ultimately goes beyond the heart and reaches the land of Krsna. When Krsna comes down, the name Krsna comes through the heart and moves the lips and tongue. That vibration is the holy name of Krsna, krsna nama.

Negative Power

When Krsna in the form of sound descends from the transcendental world into the heart, and from the heart, controlling every aspect of

the nervous system, comes to the lips and begins dancing there, that is krsna nama. The initiative is in the transcendental world. That sound is not produced from the physical plane. The spiritual sound has to come down into this plane; He can come down, but we cannot so easily go up there. He is the Supersubject; we are an object to Him. We cannot interfere with His independence. Only by the negative power of surrender can we attract the Supreme Positive to come down to our level.

And so the holy name is not a production of our senses. It can be realized only when we approach Him with a very intense serving attitude. At that time, Krsna Himself may come down by His grace, being attracted by our serving nature. Then He can influence this element and produce transcendental sound and dance within the mundane plane. That is the holy name, the vaikuntha nama, the real name of Krsna. We cannot produce it with our lips. The sound we create with our physical or mental production is not Krsna. He is independent from whatever sound we may produce, and yet, because He controls everything, He can appear anywhere, in any form, in any plane, in any sound.

And this is confirmed in Bhagavad-gita (4.6). Krsna says, "When I come here by the power of My internal potency, I remove the external potency's influence and appear anywhere and everywhere." The mundane wave is forced back, just as a plane rides in the sky and pushes back the influence of air and wind as it forcibly passes. By removing the influence of the material waves, He appears within this world by the strength of His own force.

The Lord says, "I have My own potency, and by the power of that potency, I remove this gross material energy. And so I live and move here in this world." The laws of material nature cannot apply to Him. He has special power. And with the help of that special power, He subdues the laws of material nature and comes here. He does whatever He wants with His own potency. Wherever He goes, the laws of material nature withdraw from that place and give Him His way. In this way, He can appear within the realm of sound as the holy name.

The real importance of the name is not to be found merely in the arrangement of its syllables, but in the deep meaning within that divine sound. Some scholars argue that in the Kali-santarana Upanisad, Lord Brahma says that the Hare Krsna maha-mantra is

properly pronounced only when the name of Rama precedes the name of Krsna: **"Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare/ Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare."**

Krishna Nama

In the Kali-santarana Upanisad, the Hare Krsna maha-mantra is given in that way. But to say that the name of Rama must precede the name of Krsna in the mantra is a superficial understanding. It is said that because it comes from the Upanisads, the Hare Krsna mantra is a Vedic mantra, and therefore, because the ordinary people may not have any entrance into Vedic mantras, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu readjusted this mantra by reversing the order of the words. In that way, it is said, the concern that it is a Vedic mantra is thereby canceled, and so Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave it to all without breaching the injunctions of the Vedas. Some devotees in Uttar Pradesh who have great affection for Sri Caitanyadeva like to give this opinion.

But our faith is that the mentioning of "Hare Rama" first is only superficial. It concerns the idea that since the Rama avatara appeared first and the Krsna avatara afterwards, the name of Rama, "Hare Rama," should come first in the maha-mantra. A deeper reading will consider that when two similar things are connected together, the priority will be ordered not on the basis of historical precedent, but in consideration of the most highly developed conception. The holy name of Krsna is higher than the holy name of Rama. This is mentioned in the Puranas: three names of Rama equal one name of Krsna. The name of Krsna is superior to the name of Rama. Where the two are connected together, the first position should be given to the one that is superior. Therefore, the name of Krsna must come first in the maha-mantra.

This is one point. Another point is that within the eternal plane, everything is moving in a cyclic order. In an eternal cycle, which is first and which is next cannot be ascertained, and so, in the eternal plane of lila, it cannot be determined whether Krsna is before Rama or Rama is before Krsna. So from that consideration also, since the

names of Krsna and Rama are eternal and unrelated to any historical event, we may begin the mantra from any place.

Rama Means Krishna

But above these considerations, our sampradaya has given another, higher consideration. A deeper understanding will reveal that the Hare Krsna mantra is not at all concerned with rama lila. In the name of Rama within the Hare Krsna mantra, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas will find Radha-ramana Rama. That means "Krsna, who gives pleasure (raman) to Srimati Radharani." In our conception, the Hare Krsna mantra is wholesale Krsna consciousness, not Rama consciousness. Sri Caitanya's highest conception of things is always svayam bhagavan, krsna lila, radha-govinda lila. That is the real purpose of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's advent and teachings. In that consideration, the Hare Krsna mantra does not mention the rama lila of Ayodhya at all. There is no connection with that in the highest conception of the Hare Krsna mantra.

And the inner conception of the mantra is responsible for our spiritual attainment. When one pronounces the name Rama, if he means Dasarathi Rama, his attraction will take him there, to Ayodhya; if he means Parasurama, he will be attracted to another place. And if Rama means Radha-ramana Rama, he will go to Goloka. The inner conception of the devotee will guide him to his destination.

My original name was Ramendra Candra. When I was given initiation, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura gave me the name Ramendra Sundara. I asked him, "What is the meaning of Ramendra?" He told me, "In our consideration, Rama does not mean Dasarathi Rama or Lord Ramacandra, the son of King Dasaratha. It means Radha-ramana Rama - Krsna, the lover of Radharani."

The name "Hare" may also mean different things according to one's conception. That the meaning of the word Hare in the mantra is taken to mean Radharani is also determined according to the spiritual development or qualification (adhikara) of the chanter. When one is firmly established in conceiving of Radha-Krsna in the background of everything - when one finds svayam-rupa, the original form of

Godhead, underlying all sorts of conceptions of all things good - then only will he find that sort of meaning and nothing else.

For beginners, the word "Hare" in the Hare Krsna mantra can be conceived to mean Hari. That is one meaning. It may also mean Nrsimhadeva. And just as "Rama" can mean Dasarathi Rama, "Krsna" may refer to different types of Krsna. There is also a Krsna in Vaikuntha, where the vaibhavas, or extensions of the Lord, number twenty-four. In Vaikuntha, first there is Narayana, and then four extensions: Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Each of these four has five agents, making twenty-four in all. One of these is the Krsna of Vaikuntha. Then there is the Krsna of Dvaraka and the Krsna of Mathura.

In this way there are various conceptions of Krsna. But the highest conception of Krsna is Krsna in Vrndavana: Radha-Govinda. When one cannot remove himself from that plane, he will conceive of divinity only as Hari-Hara. He will see nothing else but Radha-Krsna. Those who are completely and perfectly installed in madhura-rasa - who have the highest kind of divine vision - cannot come down from that plane. If they do, it is only for the interest of Radha-Govinda. In that case, the devotee may go anywhere, but his real interest is under lock and key in Vrndavana. Only on behalf of the service of Radha-Govinda will a devotee leave Vrndavana.

For those who are followers of the Vrndavana line, "Hare" in the Hare Krsna mantra can only mean Hara: Srimati Radharani. Hara means "Radha, who can even snatch the attention of Krsna, Hari." The word harana means "to steal. " One who can steal the mind of He who is most expert in stealing - who can steal even the mind of Krsna - She is Hara. Stealing in its highest capacity is shown by Radharani. And "Krsna" means "He who is most attractive in the absolute sense." They are both represented in the mantra.

Rupanuga Nama

The followers of the rupanuga sampradaya can never deviate from that consciousness in their chanting of the maha-mantra. And with this conception, they go on with the service of Hari-Hara, Radha-Krsna.

They absorb themselves in radha dasyam. They cannot think of anything else but that. And once having fully attained that plane, they can never come down from that level, from the interest of Radha-Krsna. They cannot allow themselves to be out of that circle.

That is the position of our highest aspiration, and according to a devotee's adhikara, or spiritual qualification, that sort of meaning will awaken in one's mind. It will be awakened, discovered by sadhana. At that time the covering of the heart will be removed and divine love will spontaneously spring up from the fountain of the heart as the inner function of the soul.

Ninth Chapter

The Service Of Sri Radha



Sri Sri Gauranga Gandharva Govinda-sundara
Deities of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

"The Gaudiya Vaisnavas know only Radharani They are concerned only with Her and Her duties, Her necessities. They are ready to serve Her in all respects, and cannot contemplate any service without Her. That is the highest achievement of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas, that is the special feature of Mahaprabhu's party, and that was announced by Raghunatha Dasa Goswami."

"There is a hope which is sustaining me and nurturing my existence. With that hope I am somehow passing my days. But my patience has reached its end. I can't endure it any longer. At this moment if You do not show Your grace to me, Sri Radha, I shall lose my prospect forever. I shall have no desire to continue my life. And Vrndavana, which is even dearer to me than my life itself - I am disgusted with it. And what to speak of anything else, I am even disgusted with Krsna. It is shameful to utter such words, but I can have no love even for Krsna unless and until You take me within Your confidential camp of service."

Raghunatha Dasa

Once, the Diwan of Bharatpur had come on a pilgrimage with his family to the holiest of places, Sri Radha-kunda, the holy lake of Srimati Radharani. He and his family were circumambulating Radha-kunda. They would fall flat on the ground, offering obeisances lying down with their arms outstretched. Every time they bowed down in this way, they would mark the spot where their fingertips touched the earth. Then they would slowly rise, step forward to where that spot had been marked, and again fall flat, offering their obeisances with great respect and adoration. In this way they were circumambulating the entire Radha-kunda. Upon seeing such intense worship, Paramananda Prabhu, an intimate disciple of our guru maharaja Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, intimated to Prabhupada that the Diwan and his family must have great respect for Radharani to circumambulate the Radha-kunda in such a fashion.

At that time Prabhupada said, "Their angle of vision towards Radha-kunda and Radharani is different from ours. They recognize and revere Krsna. And because Radharani is Krsna's favorite, they also have some reverence for Radha-kunda. But our vision is just the opposite. Our concern is with Radharani. And only because She wants Krsna do we have any connection with Him."

And so, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas know only Radharani. They are concerned only with Her, and Her duties, Her necessities. They are ready to serve Her in all respects, and cannot contemplate any service without Her. That is the highest achievement of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas, that is the special feature of Mahaprabhu's party, and that was announced by Raghunatha Dasa Goswami in his Vilapa-kusumanjali (102):

*asabharair-amrta-sindhu-mayaih kathancit
kalo mayatigamitah kila sampratam hi
tvam cet krpam mayi vidhasyasi naiva kim me
pranair vraje na ca varoru bakarinapi*

This verse is a direct prayer to Radharani. It expresses a particular type of hope which is so sweet and reassuring that it is compared with an unlimited ocean of nectar. He says, "There is a hope which is sustaining me and nurturing my existence. With that hope I am somehow passing my days, dragging my life through these tedious times. That nectarine ocean of hope is attracting me and keeping me alive. But my patience has reached its end. I can't endure it any longer. I can't wait any more. "At this moment if You do not show Your grace to me, I am finished. I shall lose my prospect forever. I shall have no desire to continue my life. It will all be useless. Without Your grace, I can't stand to live another moment. And Vrndavana, which is even dearer to me than my life itself - I am disgusted with it. It is painful; it is always pinching me. And what to speak of anything else, I am even disgusted with Krsna. It is shameful to utter such words, but I can have no love even for Krsna unless and until You take me within Your confidential camp of service." This is the prayer of Raghunatha Dasa. When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada would begin to explain this verse, his figure would become transformed. He would

become full of emotion; his face would become like that of a phantom.

In this verse, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, taking an extreme risk, says, "O Radha, if I do not get Your favor, I don't want anything. I want You and You alone. To have an independent relationship with anyone else, eliminating You, is impossible in my life. You must be first, and then others. Without You, we can never even think of a separate relationship with Krsna." Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja has written that without Radharani's company, Krsna is not beautiful. Everything is relative - dependent. A teacher depends on the student, and the student depends on his teacher. Although Krsna is the enjoyer, He is completely dependent on the enjoyed, Srimati Radharani. The two are correlative; one cannot be separated from the other. As the enjoyed, Radharani is also absolutely dependent on Krsna, the enjoyer.

Radharani says, "My fate is lost forever because I have given Myself, I have sold Myself to many places. When I heard the flute, I dedicated Myself to the song of the flute. When I heard the name of Krsna, I dedicated Myself to that sound. And when I saw a beautiful picture of Krsna, I wholly dedicated Myself to that picture. So in three places I have sold Myself completely, with no possibility of any happiness or peace in My life. If I had dedicated Myself to only one thing, there might have been a possibility of peace, but because I have dedicated Myself in three different places, I am hopeless.

"Seeing the picture of Krsna, I couldn't contain Myself. I couldn't but give Myself to that beautiful figure, and so I dedicated Myself fully. The name of Krsna also purchased Me fully. And the sweet sound from the flute - that has also drawn Me to the extreme of dedication. So how can I hope for peace in My life? It is impossible, My friends." Radharani did not know it at that time, but the source of Krsna's flute, His name, and His beauty are one. If She could have seen how all three of these meet together, then it would have been possible for Her to have peace of mind. But it is difficult to understand this principle.

How is it that the sound of Krsna's flute, the sound of His name, and a picture of His form are nondifferent from Krsna Himself? Idealism. In Hegel's words, ideal realism. The absolute idea is not to be dismissed as an abstract thing; rather, it is the basis of all existence. Reality is there, but it is ideal realism. And the foundation of the reality of

Vrndavana is given by Nityananda, Baladeva: nitaiyer koruna habe, braje radha-krsna pabe, dharo nitai-carana du'khani.

After Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes the position of Radharani in his Saranagati, he says, "I want to serve those who have the service of Radharani in their heart. I want to serve the feet-dust of those whose only wealth is the service of Sri Radha. I want to fall before them and take the dust of their holy feet. If you cannot fix your mind in the service of Radharani, then all your attempts to serve Krsna are useless. If you cannot achieve earnestness in the service of Srimati Radharani, then all your labor for Krsna has gone to hell." We cannot conceive of a sun without heat, nor can we conceive of Godhead without His potency. So also, no conception of Krsna is possible without Srimati Radharani. We can't know any Madhava without Radha.

She is Krsna's other half - in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's language, the predominated moiety. Devotional service as a whole is represented by Her, because both the intensity and the comprehensiveness of Her service to Krsna are unparalleled. There are so many examples of chaste and pious ladies in the ancient history of the Puranas: Saci, the faithful wife of Indra; Sati, the wife of Lord Siva; Laksmidevi, the goddess of fortune; Satyabhama, Krsna's wife in Dvaraka; Rukmini, the principle queen of Krsna in Dvaraka; and even the antagonists of Radharani, headed by Candravali. All of them represent different aspects of Radharani. They all spring from the main potency which is known as Radha.

The name Radha comes from the word aradhana: One who can serve, who can worship, who can give respect, who really loves Krsna, who can render loving service. All of these other ladies who are famous for their chastity and piety are but partial representations of Radharani. If we note the scriptures and scrutinize the position of those virtuous ladies, we'll find that the source of all their chastity and devotion is Srimati Radharani. She is the fountainhead of devotion. And so Bhaktivinoda says, "I bow down and take the dust of the holy feet of those who have as their only wealth the service of Radharani. I hanker after nothing else. " Whoever knows this and always travels on that path with a sincere heart is most fortunate.

It is the ideal that makes one great, not any material possession. One who has the highest ideal is really wealthy. The highest ideal is the most valuable thing we may possess. And less valuable things must be

eliminated if we are to concentrate our efforts and save ourselves from useless endeavor. Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to show us that highest ideal - the path of divine love. And we find divine love of Godhead in its highest intensity in His life and teachings of Srimad-Bhagavatam. The whole Srimad-Bhagavatam is meant to illustrate the ideal of divine love which reaches its highest expression in Srimati Radharani. The Srimad-Bhagavatam sings very gloriously about the paramour relationship of Radha and Krsna. The Vedas and other Puranas are not so expressive about such confidential pastimes, yet we find a hint of the glories of Radha and Krsna in Srimad-Bhagavatam. And the Goswamis have more fully expressed Radharani's devotion in their writings. In Rupa Goswami's Padyavali, we find Her saying, "My Lord, people say that I have a bad reputation because of My connection with You. I do not feel any trouble in My heart because of this. My concern is that I could not give Myself to You completely. The people in general say that I am illicitly connected with You, but what disturbs Me is that I could not really give Myself to You. I feel that I am not fit for Your service. This is only the trouble within My heart."

And the ecstasy of divine love increases in separation. One day, when Krsna was playing with His cowherd boyfriends in the pasturing grounds of Vrndavana, Krsna suddenly felt extreme separation from Radharani. He sent His best friend Subala to Radharani, saying, "Go to My Radha and fetch Her. Without Her, I can't live. Suddenly I have so much desire for Her company that I can't stand it anymore. Somehow manage to bring Her." Subala said, "How is it possible to bring Her here in the jungle in broad daylight?" Krsna told him, "Somehow manage it!"

Subala thought, "What should I do?" Subala was very intimately connected with the family of Radharani's husband. He went to the house of Radharani and told Her girlfriends, "Krsna can't tolerate separation from Radharani any longer. He is so eager to meet Her that He is going mad. Somehow you have to arrange for Them to meet."

"How is it possible?" the gopis asked. Subala explained to them that Krsna was nearby in the jungle. They discussed between themselves what to do. Subala was a beautiful boy who resembled Radharani. So Subala took the dress of Radharani, and Radharani wore Subala's cowherd dress.

When Radharani was discovered wearing the dress of Subala, She was challenged by Her family members: "Subala! What are you doing here?" In the dress of Subala, Radharani said, "A calf is missing and its mother is mooing. So I have come here looking for that calf." So a calf was given to Radharani, and She carried that small calf on her breast into the forest. In this way, Radharani was disguised as Subala, while Subala, who had taken the dress of Radharani, remained behind in Her room.

Radharani had been given a hint of where Krsna was hiding near the forest's edge. She went to seek Him out. At last, when Radharani saw Krsna, She approached Him in the garb of Subala. Krsna was mad. He could not detect that Radharani had come, but mistook Her for Subala. He said, "Oh, Subala, you have come back without Radharani! Couldn't you bring Her?"

Radharani began cutting jokes: "No," She said, "It was impossible for me to bring Her in the daytime." Krsna said, "Then what am I to do? I can't tolerate My life any longer." Radharani said, "If You say so, I can go to Candravali and bring her." "No, no," Krsna said, "Curd cannot satisfy the thirst for milk. It is not possible!" Krsna was faint with disappointment. Then Radharani embraced Him, saying, "My Lord, can't You recognize Your maidservant? You failed to recognize Me!" Then Krsna was again full of joy.

Although the pastimes of Radha and Govinda are mentioned in the scriptures, these are all very high things. They are not ordinarily to be expressed in words, but still sometimes we are forced to speak about them because the high ideal of divine love given by Srimad-Bhagavatam is the supreme goal of life. Of course, the scholarship of Sukadeva Goswami and Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu have helped, to a certain extent, to establish the dignity of the proposal that love is above knowledge. It was admitted by everyone that Sukadeva held the highest attainment of the learned men of knowledge; he was unanimously admitted by the scholars to hold the highest position. Because of this, when Sukadeva Goswami came to inaugurate the principle that divine love is above everything else, the scholars had to take notice. Caitanya Mahaprabhu demonstrated to the scholars that His intelligence and scholarship excelled everyone else's. So when He came with the tidings of divine love, then it was easier for the ordinary men to accept it as the highest ideal and try for it.

So Vasudeva Ghosh says, yadi gaura na ha'te tabe ki haita kemane dharitam de. If Mahaprabhu had not appeared in this Kali-yuga, then how could we tolerate living? How could we sustain our lives? What He has given - the very gist of life, the very taste, the charm of life - without that, we think it is impossible for anyone to live in this world. Such a thing has been invented, discovered by Gauranga. If He had not come, then how could we live? It is impossible to live devoid of such a holy and gracious thing as divine love. Without Caitanya Mahaprabhu, how could we know that Radharani stands supreme in the world of divine love? We have received all these things from Him, and now we think that life is worth living. Otherwise to live would be suicidal.

And serving those who can serve Radharani is the way to approach Her vicinity. By serving the servants of the servants, we are assured of success in getting the grace of Krsna. If somehow one can be counted in the group of Srimati Radharani's servitors, one's future is assured.

Within the group of Radharani's servitors, we aspire to be rupanugas, followers of Sri Rupa. And the followers of Sri Rupa will have great earnestness to look after the order of Sri Rupa, as he does towards Lalita. In this way, through Rupa Goswami, our devotional service is going to the highest plane. And our highest gain is only there. Not even our connection with Radharani or Lalitadevi is the highest goal of life, but our highest aspiration is to serve in the Rupanuga-sampradaya; that means that our highest attainment is in Sri Rupa's connection.

Radha-dasyam has been said to be the highest attainment. Why? The quality and quantity of rasa that Radharani can draw from Krsna can never be found anywhere else. So if you are situated just behind Radharani, you'll be allowed to taste not only the quantity, but the highest quality of rasa.

No other person can draw such high rasa from Krsna. The fullest, highest type of quality is drawn from Krsna: He gives Himself fully and wholly and deeply. So if you are in Sri Rupa's group, then you can have a taste of that sort of rasa.

In Radharani's camp, when Krsna and Radha are enjoying very solitary pastimes in a secluded place, the grown-up sakhis can't venture to enter the room and assist Them. The young girls, the manjaris, are sent there. The leader of that young group can enter

where both Radha and Govinda are very closely connected, when even the sakhis do not venture to go for fear of causing some interruption. But Rupa and the manjaris can enter there at that time due to their young age. That sort of rasa that cannot be had even through the sakhis can be had only through the manjaris.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura prays to gain admission there. He has such a high quality of aspiration. He says rupanuga hoite sei doy. He runs to be enlisted in the group of Rupa, who can grant us that sort of prospect. And Prabhodananda Saraswati has described the prerequisite for understanding all these things:

*yatha yatha gaura padaravinde
vindeta bhaktim krta punya-rasih
tatha tathotsarpati hrady akasmat
radha padambhoja sudhambhurasih*

"As much as you surrender to the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga, you'll find yourself safely situated in the service of Radha-Govinda. Don't try to approach Radha-Govinda directly; if you do, there may be some difficulty. But the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga will take you there safely." In my Sanskrit poem dedicated to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, I have explained all these points:

*sri-gauranumatam svarupa-viditam rupagrajenadrtam
rupadyaih parivesitam raghu-ganair-asvaditam sevitam
jivadyair abhiraksitam suka-siva-brahmadi sammanitam
sri-radha-pada-sevanamrtam aho tad datum iso bhavan*

"What was sanctioned by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by His descent was intimately known only to Sri Svarupa Damodara Goswami. It was adored by Sanatana Goswami and served by Rupa Goswami and his followers. Raghunatha Dasa Goswami tasted that wonderful thing fully and enhanced it with his own realization. And Jiva Goswami supported and protected it by quoting the scriptures from different places. The taste of that divine truth is aspired for by Brahma, Siva, and Uddhava, who respect it as the supreme goal of life. What is this wonderful truth? Sri radha-pada-sevana: that the highest nectar of our life is the service of Srimati Radharani. This is most wonderful. O

Bhaktivinoda Thakura, you are our master. It is within your power to allow them to bestow their grace upon us. You are in a position to bestow the highest gift ever known to the world upon us all. It is at your disposal. O Bhaktivinoda Thakura, please be kind to us and grant us your mercy."

So Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, our most benevolent Lord, has come to search for His long lost servants and to give to them this highest ideal of divine love.

Contact:

Sri Chaitanya Saraswath Math
Kolerganj, P.O.Nabadwip,DT. Nadia,
W.Bengal, PIN 741302, India

SUBJECTIVE
EVOLUTION
OF CONSCIOUSNESS

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

SUBJECTIVE EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

*The Play
of the
Sweet Absolute*

His Divine Grace

SRILA BHAKTI RAKSHAK
SRIDHAR DEV-GOSWAMI
MAHARAJ

SRI CHAITANYA SARASWAT MATH

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*Edited by Bhakti Sudhir Goswami
and Swami Bhakti Vidhan Mahayogi
Assisted by Alwarnatha Prabhu, Vidagdha Madhava Prabhu,
Bhakta Priya Devi, Ananga Manjari Devi,
Ranamanda Prabhu, Jayananda Prabhu and Mukunda Prabhu
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Prabhu, Tilak Devi*

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Preface

Evolution is generally thought of as something objective. But objective evolution is a misperception of reality. Evolution is actually based on consciousness, which is subjective. Subjective evolution, however, seems to be objective evolution to the ignorant.

In ignorance we think of ourselves as subjects, although in reality the Lord is the subject and we are His objects. We think of ourselves as proprietors although we are His property.

It is said that all things happen by the will of the Vaiṣṇavas, the devotees of the Lord. A Vaiṣṇava is like a faithful employee who speaks the will of the employer; he has no will of his own: the will of the pure Vaiṣṇava is nothing but the will of God. In ignorance, however, we try to make the Lord our servant, but this is like using a *śāla-grāma śilā* to crack nuts. The Lord is not an object. He is the seer, the doer, and the knower – the Supreme Subject – but we foolishly think of ourselves as such.

The concept of subjective evolution is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.22):

**tasmād idaṁ jagad aśeṣaṁ asat-svarūpaṁ
svapnābhaṁ asta-dhiṣaṇaṁ puru-duḥkha-duḥkhaṁ**

“By an illusion created by the Lord the universe appears to be real, although it is not, just as miseries we suffer in a dream are only imaginary.”

Unintelligent people take the subject as an object. It is ignorance to confuse the eye with the seer, or the brain with the knower. This is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.31):

yathā nabhasi meghaugho
reṇur vā pārthivo 'nile
evam draṣṭari dṛśyatvam
āropitam abuddhibhiḥ

“The unintelligent equate the sky with the clouds, the air with the dust particles floating in it, and think that the sky is cloudy or that the air is dirty.”

Consciousness is not a product of the world; the world is a product of consciousness. This world is a perverted reflection of the spiritual world. In the material world, the world of exploitation, as Darwin says, it is a question of survival of the fittest. We must exploit to survive: *jīvo jīvasya jīvanam*. But in the spiritual world, the land of dedication, everyone is a serving unit. There we will find a happy life through dedication.

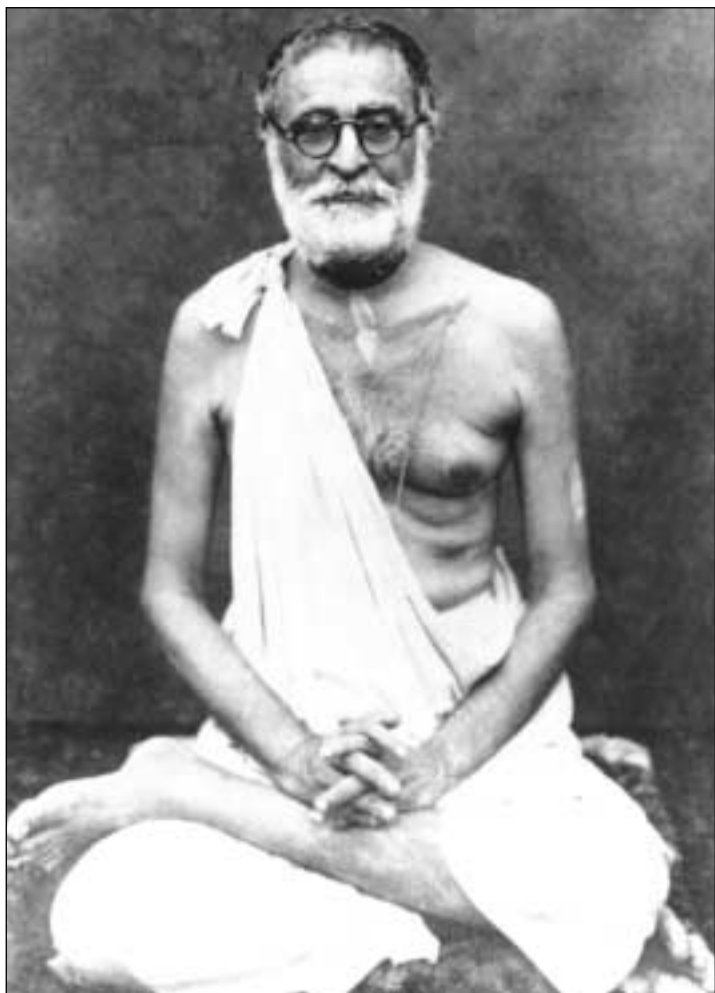
In that supersubjective realm, Śrī Krishna is eternally engaged in his divine play with his most intimate servitors. And as our consciousness evolves through dedication, we will find our highest prospect there, where we have a part to play in the pastimes of the Sweet Absolute.



*President-Āchārya Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*



*Founder-Āchārya Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura



Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābajī Mahārāj



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura

Fossilism, Hypnotism, & The Cosmos

This chapter is an excerpt from a conversation between Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, neurophysiologist Dr. Daniel Murphey and physical organic chemist Dr. Thoudam Singh

Dr. Singh: When scientists speak of evolution they mean that life has evolved from matter. I have heard you speak of evolution with quite a different concept. You say that everything is evolving from consciousness.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, consciousness comes first and then matter. The basis of all things material is consciousness, which is spiritual. Consciousness can contact consciousness directly. When consciousness comes into the stage of matter, material conception, we experience a kind of vague consciousness; first there is hazy consciousness and then material consciousness. But everything has its spiritual side. And as eternal souls, our direct connection is really only with the conscious aspect of existence. For example, the Earth is conceived of as a woman. According to the *Vedas*, the presiding deity of the Earth is a woman. And the sun is conceived of as a *devata*, a male god.

The soul, coming into material consciousness, must come through some hazy reflection of consciousness, *cidābhāsa*. Only then can the soul experience material consciousness. Before pure consciousness evolves to material consciousness, it will pass through a hazy stage of consciousness or *cidābhāsa*. So in the background of every material thing, there is a spiritual conception. This cannot but be true.

Dr. Singh: What is *cidābhāsa*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Something like mind. Suppose consciousness comes to feel matter. When consciousness is coming to the material world to know the material world, it has to first pass through material consciousness, and then it can feel what is matter. According to Darwin's theory, matter gradually produces consciousness, but before producing consciousness it must produce some hazy consciousness, then mind, and then the soul. But in reality, it is just the opposite. So subjective evolution parallels objective or material evolution. But in the evolution of consciousness, the supersubject is first, then the individual soul or *jīva*-subject is next. Then, from the subjective consciousness of the *jīvas*, matter is produced. But consciousness must penetrate hazy consciousness to perceive matter.

I say that the process of evolution moves from the top downward. The Absolute Reality – if we at all assert that there is anything which is the absolute reality – must possess two qualifications. What is that? First, in the words of Hegel, He must be by Himself: He is his own cause.

Second – and more important to us, He is for Himself: He exists to fulfill His own purpose. He is not subservient to any other entity, for then His position would be secondary. Reality the Absolute is full in Himself. All other things are coming from Him. The perfect substance already exists. What appears to us as imperfect comes down according to our own defective senses.

The imperfect must be dependent upon the perfect, the ultimate reality. And the imperfect may be so arranged by Him in order to prove His perfection. To prove the perfection of the Absolute, there is conditioned and unconditioned, finite and infinite reality. The defective world therefore has an indirect relation to the truth.

However, consciousness cannot jump at once into the conception of matter; it must pass through a process to come to material consciousness. From the marginal position, from the verge of the higher eternal potency, evolution and dissolution of this material world begins. This takes place only on the outskirts of *svarūpa-śakti*, which is the system responsible for the evolution of the spiritual plane, and is an eternally evolving dynamic whole. It is not that nondifferentiation is the origin of differentiation. An eternally differentiated substance exists. That plane is filled with *līlā*, dynamic pastimes. If a static thing can be conceived of as eternal, then why can't a dynamic thing be conceived of as eternal? That plane of *svarūpa-śakti* is fully evolved within. It is eternal. Evolution and dissolution concern only the degradation of the subtle spirit to the gross material platform and his evolution towards perfection. Here there is evolution

and dissolution, but these things do not exist in the eternal abode of *svarūpa-śakti*.

Dr. Singh: Objective evolution is what modern science calls Darwinian evolution, but how does subjective evolution unfold in Krishna conscious science?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: You have to take the example of hypnotism. Through a form of mystic “hypnotism,” the supersubject controls the subject to see a particular thing, and he is bound to see that. One may think that as we see a stone, the stone compels us to see it as stone, but it is just the opposite: we are compelled to see it as stone being under the influence of the supersubject who displays everything as He likes. When He commands, “See stone,” then we shall see stone. Full control over whatever we see rests in His hands. No power to control what we see rests in the objective world. The objective world is fully controlled by the subjective. This is confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā, where Krishna says *paśya me yogam aiśvaryam*: “If I say, ‘Behold my mystic power,’ you are bound to see it. You have no other choice.”

Krishna says *mattah smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*: He is the prime cause of remembrance, forgetfulness, and intelligence. He is the controller. For His own pleasure, His *līlā*, He can do anything. This is true not only in the material world, but also in His own domain. What is meant by this statement of the *Gītā* concerns this *brahmāṇḍa*, this material world. The gist of this statement is that from the lower planetary systems up to the

highest – this entire area of evolution and dissolution – everything is manipulated by Him. No credit can be attached to any external thing. All credit should go to the Center who controls everything.

And reality is subjective. It is based on consciousness. Color is perceived through the eye. It is not that the color is there and the eye can catch it. But the seer sees through the eye and perceives color. So color is a perception. Its position as actual substance should be traced to the subtle plane of existence. This is the nature of reality: the gross is coming from the subtle. In Sāṅkhya philosophy, of course, that is described as a bifurcated thing. According to Sāṅkhya philosophy, there are three branches of reality: the sense, the senses, and the sense objects. Sound is created by the ear, color is produced by the eye, and so on.

The objects of the senses are in the mode of ignorance, *tama-guṇa*, the sensual instruments are in the mode of passion, *rāja-guṇa*, and the power of sensation is in the mode of goodness, *sattva-guṇa*. From these proceed light, the eye, and color; sky, the ear, and sound. In this way, mundane reality branches in three ways: *tama*, *rāja*, and *sattva*. So the gross world is coming from the subtle through the channel of consciousness. The feeler, the instrument of perception, is creating the object of his perception.

Try to understand this principle of hypnotism. The whole thing is hypnotism – this whole creation – and it is completely in the hand of the Supreme Subject. All material laws have no meaning; the laws and the sublaws are all pertaining to the subjective world.

Dr. Murphey: But how can one perceive this sort of hypnosis?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: How can we know beforehand that in a laboratory, combining hydrogen and oxygen – two gases – will produce water? Only when one comes to a particular stage of scientific knowledge can he know that a more subtle thing like gas can produce a tangible material thing like water. In that way, when you have an idea of the higher substance, then you can understand how from the subtle, the gross has originated.

The relative world is a perverted reflection of the absolute reality. Highly qualified things must be given the position of causal importance. It is not that a lower thing can produce a higher thing, but it is easy for a higher thing to produce something lower. This is not difficult to understand.

The modern scientific position is saying basically that stone can produce soul; but why not consider that soul can produce stone? We have to inquire about that process – how the soul can produce stone. But we have done away with that and instead we say that stone is gradually producing soul – we are very fond of investigating in that line. Why? The subtle should be given more importance than the gross. Why should we think that man has created God, and not that God has created man?

Dr. Singh: Then God is the magician and we are His subjects?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Not only is He a magician, but

the Super-magician. He is not merely the kind of magician that is within our experience.

Dr. Murphey: What is the role of *Yogamāyā*, the Lord's internal potency?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: She is found in the eternal company of Krishna. In our conception of divinity, *puruṣa/prakṛti*, the masculine/feminine, are existing together. Potent and potency, substance and potency, are inconceivably interconnected. Otherwise, if we conceive of the Supreme Soul as existing independent of any potency, that will be the *brahman* conception of Śaṅkarācārya: ultimate consciousness as non-differentiated oneness. So the Absolute Truth includes both potent and potency – *puruṣa/prakṛti* – consciousness with energy.

Actually there are three main elements to be traced within divinity: *jñāna*, *bala*, and *krīyā*. The eternal aspect of the absolute whole is divided in three ways: energy, consciousness, and ecstasy. Thinking, willing and feeling. *Sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*. *Sat*, the potency for maintaining existence, is the potency of Baladeva (*bala*). *Cit*, the aspect of



The modern scientific position is saying basically that stone can produce soul; but why not consider that soul can produce stone?

consciousness, is Vāsudeva (*jñāna*). And *ānanda*, ecstatic feeling, is Rādhikā (*kriya*). *Jñāna*, *bala*, *kriya* (knowledge, strength, feeling); *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* (eternity, cognition, bliss); *sandhīnī*, *samvīt*, *hlādinī* (existence, realization, ecstasy): Baladeva, Krishna, Rādhārānī. These are the three phases of *advaya-jñāna*, or the one whole. The one whole can be thought of in its primary, evolved stage in three ways: main consciousness, main energy, and main satisfaction. In three phases we are to conceive of that ultimate reality. It is there: *jñāna*, *bala*, *kriya ca*. Thinking, feeling, willing. *Sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*. *Satyam*, *śivam*, *sundaram* (eternity, auspiciousness, beauty). And these three principles are expressed through evolution and dissolution in the eternal and non-eternal.

These aspects of theism have been dealt with in a very scientific way in the *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Samhitā* of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Once, I considered from this point of view the question of the planets in Vedic cosmology. We see that by the movement of the different planets, a solar eclipse is caused by the moon's shadow falling upon the Earth. And yet in the scriptures it has been described that during an eclipse, the planet Rāhu is devouring the sun or the moon. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura was in Purī during his last days and an eclipse came, one devotee who was supposed to know *siddhānta*, the conclusions of scripture, was sitting next to Prabhupāda. He suddenly ridiculed the idea given in the *Bhāgavatam* that during a solar or lunar eclipse Rāhu devours the sun or moon.

I could not tolerate that such a remark should be passed

in regard to the *Bhāgavatam* and argued that what *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has stated is not to be taken lightly. I offered what seemed like some far-fetched support. I said that in his *Jaiva Dharma*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has created so many characters, but I think that they are not imaginary. What he has written might have occurred during some other millennium (*kalpa*), or day of Brahmā, and that has now come to the surface. In this way I went on to support the cosmological position of the *Bhāgavatam* by arguing that what is necessary to prove reality must also have some real position. It cannot but be. In this way my argument went and Prabhupāda supported me.

In understanding the position of the planet Rāhu, what Śukadeva and Vyāsadeva have said is geographically impossible, but their statements are there in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the literal meaning of the scriptures is not to be taken lightly. Considering the importance of the literal meaning of scripture, Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja presented *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. I thought, “How am I to prove what the *Bhāgavatam* says? I don’t know. But what is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* must be true. I have faith in that.”

There are so many statements on the cosmology of the universe in the scriptures. The Aryans, the spiritually developed men of former times, used to see everything as consciousness. They saw that the shadow is also conscious. The shadow, *ābhāsa*, is also considered to be a stage of consciousness. Only through that shadowy stage of consciousness can we come to the material conception of a thing. Before we reach the conception of a shadow, we

must pass through some mental stage, and personification may be attached to that mental stage. The personification of the shadow may be referred to as “Rāhu.”

The soul approaches matter, the material world, but before that, he must pass through a shadowy stage of consciousness called *cidābhāsa*. Consciousness passes through the shadow level of consciousness into matter, non-consciousness. And that shadow stage of consciousness has its personality. It is also conscious, and may be known as “Rāhu.”

Every material conception presupposes a spiritual conception of that particular thing. The shadow through which consciousness must pass in order to perceive things as material has personality, and in the *Bhāgavatam*, the *ṛṣis*, the seers of the truth, are addressing it as Rāhu. Because they are highly developed, they find the personal aspect of existence everywhere. What we perceive to be dead matter, they perceive to be conscious. Therefore, they always take the personal perspective.

The soul, when going to experience any material conception, will have to pass through a medium which influences his consciousness to see things as material. What is concrete matter is unknown. It is a mere effect of consciousness. As everything material must have some conscious origin, or origin in personal consciousness, there must be a personal conception of the sun, the moon, the Earth, and all the planets. Before we reach the conception of a shadow or any other object, the soul has to pass through a conscious stage. That stage has some spiritual existence as a person. There-

fore the *Bhāgavatam* refers to the sun, the moon, and the planet Rāhu, as persons. Everything – the Earth, the moon, the stars, the planets – has a personal conception. In the background of what we can perceive with our dull senses, everything that is said to be matter, there must be a personal conception. Without the influence of a personal conception, consciousness cannot reach the stage of gross matter.

Therefore, in the ancient scriptures we find that the great sages and *ṛṣis* are always addressing everything within this world as a person. Although to us it is dead matter, they have considered them as persons. Why? The matter is rather the shadow of the personal entity. The personal, conscious entity is more real, and the matter we perceive through dimmed consciousness is less real.

Dr. Murphey: So that shadow is Rāhu?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: When we conceive of the personal representation of that shadow, it will be known as Rāhu. Everything is conscious. The shadow, its effect – everything. When the moon is between the sun and the Earth, the shadow of the moon is coming here, and what is coming is also conscious. Everything is conscious first – then there is matter. From the personal conception things evolve to gross consciousness. It is all personal. So the *ṛṣis* with such a vision of reality used to address everything as a person: the trees, the mountains, the sun, the moon, the ocean. When pure consciousness is coming to experience pure matter, then there must first be some mixed stage, and that is a person suffering in *karma*. Person means they are not a

fully developed spiritual person at present, but in a mixed condition. So what the *ṛṣis* are saying – that everything is a person – is real; it is not a concoction.

Everything is conscious. As the present scientists say everything is matter, we have real cause to think that everything is conscious. Whatever you see does not matter; we can directly feel what is in our nature. That is conscious. Our consciousness may be in a developed or degraded position, but consciousness is nearer to us. We feel our mental energy only.

Dr. Murphey: This is a bit difficult for us to fully grasp. When we see color, what are we actually seeing?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: That is a mental stage.

Dr. Singh: What is the reality of that object?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Reality – that is in the soul. Only the soul is real; the seer is reality. The subject is real. And whatever the subject feels also emanates from the subject.

Dr. Singh: But are the objects the subject perceives also persons? When we are seeing the color red, now is red also a personality?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Everything has its representation in the original, personal, conscious, spiritual reality. Otherwise, there is no possibility of its being reflected into this plane as matter. First there is consciousness and then when it is in a more gross condition, it appears to be matter. In the study of ontology it is taught that when studying a partic-

ular thing, although we can know that it has certain attributes to the eye, and that it appears to the ear in a particular way, these are all appearances. Independent of appearances, the ontological aspect of a thing – what it is, the reality of a thing – is unknown and unknowable. My contention is that when consciousness is going to feel non-conscious matter it will have to pass through a conscious area to meet the material object. So the full perception of that material thing cannot but be conscious; and consciousness always indicates person. First there is conception and then the material idea.

The conscious world is very near and the material world is very far off. Therefore the great *ṛṣi*s, whose thinking is highly developed, address whatever they find within the environment as if they are all persons. In the *Vedas*, the ancient scriptural literature of India, we find that the saints and sages are always in the midst of so many persons; in the background everything is a person.

Dr. Murphey: And person means thinking, feeling, willing.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Thinking, feeling, willing – a living entity has three phases. And it is also the same with God and his potency. There is a subject existing first, and then his experiences. And experiences of the subtlest character come first and are given the most importance. And when the subject is coming to the more distant area to conceive of matter, that will be the farthest point from him. He will address everything by which he is surrounded with personal conceptions.

A personal conception cannot but assert that matter is far off. The direct connection of consciousness is with the shadow, the reflection of the material into the conscious world. The soul can understand that only. If matter can exist independently, then also matter has a shadow in the conscious world and the soul is concerned with that shadow.

In other words, there is the person and then the body. Just as the body is the after-effect of the conscious living agent, matter is the after-effect of spirit. Irrespective of all material consciousness, that which is in direct contact with soul is all personal. *Cidābhāsa* is something like the mental substance we have within.

There are two kinds of persons, *kṣara* and *akṣara*: the pure liberated soul and the soul who is struggling in matter. When liberated and non-liberated persons are mixed within the world of material transactions, whether as moving or non-moving entities, or whatever their position might be, still they should be considered persons. Since everything is a unit of consciousness, everything has personal existence.

Dr. Murphey: So externally we see the Ganges as water, but in reality she is a person.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Everything is a person. Before we go to the material conception, we must pass through the personal conception or aspect of that thing. In Vṛndāvana everything is conscious, but some things are posing in a passive way. But they are all conscious: the Yamunā river, the cows, the trees, the fruit – everything is conscious, spiritual, but they pose in different ways. Being able to

detect the conscious characteristic in everything, the Aryans saw all of nature as conscious and personal, and addressed everything as conscious.

Consciousness and personality are the universal basis of reality. Whatever we may experience is conscious. The reflection of a material object is within me, and the plane within me is conscious. The subject is consciousness, and whatever kind of thing the object may be, it casts its reflection into the plane of consciousness. The observer of any objective reality is involved only with consciousness from beginning to end, and can have no conception of matter apart from consciousness.

Dr. Murphey: How can we differentiate consciousness from mind?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: In *Bhagavad-gītā* the path of differentiation between consciousness and mind is suggested: *indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur*. What is *ātmā*, the soul, the spiritual conception? We have come to the world conception by a particular process. By the process of elimination we can trace out what the mind is. It is said that the basis of the mind is acceptance and rejection: *saṅkalpa-vikalpa* – “I want this, I don’t want that.” What is the mind? A thing that contains apathy and sympathy for the external world. That is the mind. We have to trace within us what that thing is. It is within us, and one has to enter into his own self and try to have some personal experience of what the mind is. Then by internal analysis one can try to come directly in touch with the faculty of judgment, reason, intelligence, by

asking, "What is intelligence? Where is it within me?" We should try to find that out and come in touch with that directly. We should inquire, "What is the mind? It is already within me. But what is it? And what is reason within me? What is the source of the mind and intelligence? And crossing the stage of the decisive faculty, what is the soul?" We must try, as a yogi does, to come in direct touch with the elements within us. Mind and intelligence are within each of us. Why should we not be able to trace out exactly what they are, to see internally what they are?

Dr. Murphey: When our faith is growing in a particular direction, how can we know that our realizations are coming from our own internal self, from our inner consciousness, and not from the influence of the environment, the circumstances that surround us?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The self is in a dormant state, but by some external help it may be reawakened, just as when one is sleeping, by external interference a man can be roused. It is something like that. Someone is dormant, but when, by external help, he awakes from his slumber, he again becomes aware of himself. Once he is awakened and his self-awareness has returned, he immediately knows, "I was such and such; I am such and such." By the help of our friends we may recover our health. In the same way, if we continue to apply the process of *bhakti*, we shall become more and more conscious of our self and of reality. We are our own guarantee.

Dr. Murphey: I wanted to clarify one point. In Kapila's system of analysis, Śāṅkhya, he says that *pradhāna* is "that unmanifested matter which is eternal." You say that everything is consciousness. Is *pradhāna* also composed of consciousness?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. What is material is only the misconception which is the cause of all this material existence. But it also has personality – Devī, the goddess.

The world begins within misconception. When you have the proper conception, then you can read Krishna *līlā* everywhere. Everything will excite you about Vṛndāvana. You won't see the outward thing if you are relieved from misconception. A madman has a maladjusted brain. He may be in the midst of friends, but he is lost in his madness, his paranoia. When he goes back to his normal position, he finds the same thing – all friends. In the same way, everything is all right – only the disease, our misconception needs to be removed.

Dr. Murphey: The disease is our lack of Krishna consciousness.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Lack of consciousness means misconception, disease. This is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: *bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syād* – the disease is separate interest. The deviation from our normal spiritual condition, the development of misconception, is based on the charm – the prospect – of separate interest. That is the root cause of all misunderstanding. The conception

of local, provincial interest has caused the difference between a proper conception of reality and misconception. We have gone away from the central conception. From universal consciousness we have come to this provincial plane. And according to the gradation of consciousness in its development from provincial to universal, we may find ourselves in so many different planets or planes of existence: *bhūr*, *bhuvah*, *svāh*, *jana*, *mahār*, *tapa*, *satya*, all these different stages of development are involved in this process of provincialism and universalism. But loss of consciousness of the center is the root of this entire material existence.

One who is conscious of the organic whole, on the other hand, is in the most healthy position. That is proper adjustment, and maladjustment is the cause of our present diseased condition. Adjustment is life; it is liberated life, and to be the prey of maladjustment is to approach pain and misery. Everything within the environment is all right; the only difficulty is found in the conception of selfish special interest. Our aversion to the universal interest is the cause of our detachment from the conception of the whole and from happiness and health. We have been deprived of the happiness of our healthy position, and the cause is selfish interest.

The Absolute Autocrat is absolute good. So there is no room for complaint against Him. Krishna says: *subhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām*. He is the owner of everything; in comparison, we are nothing. But still, He is our friend. We should not forget that. We are represented in Him. Our detachment from Him is the cause of all the miseries that we are suffering. We and others like us have lost faith in Him, but

He is our friend. We are jealous of Him and are thinking, “I am not the master? Someone else is the master – this is intolerable. No taxation without representation!” But our interests are well-represented in Krishna. He cares about us even more than we can conceive. Why do we forget that?

If we only reinstate ourselves in that faith, we will be all right. It is our fault that we are suffering; otherwise there is no difference in vision from the universal standpoint. *Īśād apetasya*, we have turned away from our master. But we should remember that He is our master, He is our well-wisher, He is our guardian. Deviation from that consciousness is misery of an infinite magnitude. Its cause is very subtle and very minute; it is our mentality of separate interest. And as a result, we have been captured by the enemy camp.

Patañjali has said we are moving towards evil in an intelligent, organized way. That is not only mad but wicked; it is worse than mad, according to Patañjali. What will be the relief of a soul in such a deplorable condition? A madman is in possession of everything – he is only out of his mind. His consciousness has to be adjusted properly. Then he will find, “Oh, everything is all right – let me go back home.” At present his consciousness is cast aside. He is not at home; his consciousness must be pushed homeward.

That is the problem. Our Guru Mahārāj used to say, “I don’t admit any famine in this world – only that of a lack of Krishna consciousness: *jagate eka mātra hari-kathā-durvikṣā chāḍ’a āra kona durvikṣā nāi*.” Whenever he became excited, he used to use this expression. He would say:

“From door to door tell everyone, ‘Krishna is the Supreme, you are all servants of Krishna.’ Remind everyone of this, from door to door. Then they will find, ‘Oh, I have everything I need. I am Krishna-*dāsa*, a servant of Krishna. I must connect with Krishna.’ That link must be supplied, and then everything will be all right. There is no dearth of anything else. There is no real misery, except that we have forgotten Krishna, our Lord. That is the only point we must push. This is the universal necessity. I don’t admit any necessity besides this.”

Within this world there is always a fire burning; but there is no necessity of extinguishing the fire, because we have nothing to do with the world that will be burned into ashes by the fire. All our inner demands can be met only in connection with Krishna. All other things are unnecessary. They may be burned into ashes or devoured by flood. We have no real concern with any of those things. Rather, those material attachments are dragging us back towards the wrong thing. And as a result, we can’t allow our mind to be attracted to Krishna. The things of this world, or attachments, are all negative; these things are all our enemy. The whole universe may be burned to ashes, but we will not be affected in any way. The world may be devastated – the Earth, the sun, the moon, the stars – everything may vanish, but still we remain. The soul is eternal. And if we can have a connection with Krishna, the things of this world are all unnecessary for us and for everyone else. Why should we come to live in the mortal world, erroneously identifying ourselves with flesh and blood? We only think

that we are being born and dying. But it is a false notion.

Everything is conscious. And when we realize it fully, we shall be fixed in the *svarūpa-śakti* domain in the spiritual world. There, the different living beings may pose as matter, as the Yamunā, as water, as creepers, as trees, but they are all conscious units, simply posing in different ways.



*Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura*

Dr. Murphey: It is said that when Krishna goes to take bath in the Yamunā, all the waves rush in to embrace Krishna.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Sometimes the stones melt feeling the imprint of Krishna's lotus feet. Everything is conscious. So it is also in the case of Rāhu and Ketu and other planets. Everywhere in the scriptures, the spiritually developed sages are found talking with nature as if they are talking with a person. And it is real. But our consciousness is deviated in ignorance.

So as scientists, you must crush the philosophy of fossilism. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja has ordered you to take a strong position in the scientific community in the West and crush fossilism. Why should we accept fossilism?

First there is consciousness. This is Berkeley's theory. Not that mind is in the world, but world is in the mind. Everything is based on consciousness; no conception – nothing remains – without consciousness. So ultimately all undesirable things are only a mental concoction.

The Creation

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: The *Mānu Saṁhitā* (1.1.5-6) begins describing the creation from this point:

āsīd idam tamo bhūtam
aprajñātam alakṣaṇam
apratarkyam avijñeyam
prasuptam iva sarvataḥ
tataḥ svayambhur bhāgavān
avyaktavyam jayan idam
mahābhutādi vṛtaujaḥ
prādur āsin tamonudaḥ

Just before the creative movement began, the marginal potency of the Lord was in a state of equilibrium. *Taṭasthā* means equilibrium: *āsīd idam tamo bhūtam*. Everything was in darkness, fully enveloped by ignorance. *Alakṣaṇam* means there was no possibility of any estimation; no symptoms of reality existed by which any conjecture or inference about the nature of reality would have been possible. And it was *aprajñātam*: science has no capacity for investigating the nature of that stage of existence. We can only say from here that it was completely immersed in deep sleep. The

analogy of deep sleep may give us some conception of that period: *prasuptam iva sarvataḥ*. Material existence was as if in a sound sleep.

At that time, movement began from within the spiritual plane, and light came. Light was seen by the seers. That light was pre-existent, but at that time the seers received the vision to see light. They began to see. The first conception of this material world after light was water. The light revealed a substance like water.

That primal light is compared with personality. Light means consciousness and consciousness means personality. That light, or personality, first gave birth to the onlookers – to the feelers of material existence – and then to an objective substance like water. That water is known as *virajā*, or causal substance. What is known in Vaiṣṇava vocabulary as *brahmaloka* – the world of consciousness – is represented by light, and *virajā*, or causal substance, is represented by water. The conscious world is represented by light and the first objective reality is represented as water. Then the seeds of consciousness are sown in the causal water which is the shadow of that light. Although the actual element of water was created long after this, the first conception of matter is compared to water because water is an accommodating, moving solution. The Sanskrit word for water, *apa*, means “of lower conception.” In this way, the lower creation began.

Then, in connection with the seeds of consciousness and the primal water, the next production was known as *mahat-tattva*: the energy of consciousness represented by

light, mixed with matter as a mass. When the mass of matter is infused with the energy of light-consciousness, that is known as *mahat-tattva*.

After further development, that entity was divided into many units of *ahanikara*, the element of ego. *Mahato ahanikara*. First there is *ahanikara*, mass ego as a whole. The element of conglomerate ego is called *mahat-tattva*. As objective substance evolves by the influence of consciousness, it expresses itself in five main ingredients: that which can be seen, smelled, heard, tasted, and touched. These five elements are the primitive principles of material existence.

And that fivefold principle evolved in three phases: *sattva*, *raja*, *tamah*: goodness, passion, and ignorance. Expressing itself as ether, sound, hearing, and the ear; air, mass, touch, and the skin; fire, color, vision, and the eye; water, tastes, the sense of taste, and the tongue; and earth, aroma, the sense of smell, and the nose. There are twenty-four elements. The self, three subtle elements – *prakṛti*, *mahat-tattva*, and *ahanikara*, five gross elements, five senses, five sense objects, five sense-gathering instruments – in this way, the development of the material world has been described to have come down through a process of subtle to gross, from consciousness to matter. Again when this material existence is withdrawn by superior will, the gross dissolves into the subtle. Beginning with the most gross, gradually the whole of material existence becomes more and more subtle until it finally enters into the subtle expression of material existence known as *prakṛti* – the subtle causal watery substance.

With the dissolution of material energy, the *ātmā* or individual soul is absorbed in *brahman*, the nondifferentiated mass of consciousness. The position of the different kinds of spiritual energy has been described by Krishna in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.16) as follows:

dvāv imau puruṣau loke
kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni
kūṭa-stho 'kṣara ucyate

uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyāḥ
paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ
yo loka-trayam āviśya
bibharty avyaya īśvaraḥ

“There are two kinds of beings – the perfect and unchanging, or infallible, and the fallible souls. The fallible souls reside in the material world and the infallible souls reside in the spiritual world.” Krishna says, “I exist, transcending both fallible and infallible aspects of spiritual substance (*kṣara* and *akṣara*), so I am Puruṣottama, Vāsudeva, Param Brahma, the Supreme Absolute Truth. Within Me the whole of my jurisdiction is also to be considered.”

Vaikuṇṭha, Goloka – the whole creation – is represented by the name of Puruṣottama or Vāsudeva. Then, when one enters into that domain of Vāsudeva, he can see so many demarcations, stages of reality, pastimes, and transcendental dealings and activities. There he will find the perfected living beings busy in their dedicated life in the eternal world.

The general conception of the spiritual world is Vaikuṇṭha wherein we find calculative dedication. Above that is the plane of spontaneous dedication. That realm is called Goloka, and there are many different kinds of pastimes there. In Goloka, all the various relationships with Godhead are represented in full: *śānta*, passive, *dāśya*, servitude, *sakhya*, friendship, *vātsalya*, parenthood, *mādhura*, conjugal. And the conjugal mellow can be subdivided into *svakīya*, wedded love, and *parakīya*, a paramour relationship. This is, of course, a very elevated subject matter. Still, we have to have some view of these things since our fate is ultimately connected with such high things, given to us by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and great *āchāryas* like Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and discussed in scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*.

What is found in their teachings about Goloka is our prospect, our aspiration. According to our devotional taste we will develop, and our taste can also be improved by hearing from a higher source. The spirit of our selection may be improved when we are shown different ideas, different models of transcendental reality. And according to what attracts us most based upon our inner choice, we shall have to act.

Question: What part do the individual souls play in the process of creation?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I have described that. At first a general, conglomerate false ego (*ahaṅkāra*) is created. This is called *śambhu* in *Brahma-Saṁhitā*, wherein it explains

how the soul as a ray of consciousness mingles with material energy. Consciousness and *prakṛti*, the most primitive conceptions of energy, are categorically different. The conglomerate consciousness comes in contact with mass energy, and as they mingle together, a general ego evolves. That general ego gradually dissolves into innumerable egos, and the conglomerate consciousness distributes itself as individual units of consciousness absorbed in material energy. In this way, gradually, the individual conditioned souls come down and are entangled within the material world.

In a primitive state when the individual souls are massed together as a common whole, the conglomerate false-ego, or *ahaṅkara*, is known as *mahat-tattva*. As it evolves, it differentiates into innumerable individual units. Just as an atom can be broken down into subatomic particles, electrons, protons, neutrons and so on, the conglomerate ego gradually breaks into its component individual egos, *jīva* souls. Their position is *tatastha*, marginal, and undetectable. From that subtle, undetectable plane of marginal energy, consciousness first develops into the detectable plane as a whole, and then innumerable individual spiritual units are manifest from that mass lump of ego, or *mahat-tattva*. Gradually, the other elements of creation develop within this negative plane of exploitation.

This world is sometimes pushing forth, and sometimes withdrawing. In the same way that the heart expands and contracts again and again, the whole universe expands and contracts. Regrouping within the one, and again manifest as the many – the one and the many – the evolution and

dissolution of the material universe takes place. As a heart expands and contracts, the whole universe is manifest and withdrawn.

The same characteristics that we find in the smallest unit can be traced in the bigger units. This is the suggestion by which we may know the whole, more or less. There are also some categorically new elements to be added to our knowledge. In this way, those who are within this universe can have some partial knowledge.

But those who are independent, outside the contracting and expanding world, who are impartial onlookers, can give the real history. That is the revealed truth, which is distributed in installments according to the capacity of the people, of the time, place and circumstance. The revealed truth is found in varying degrees in the Bible, the Koran, the *Vedas*, and the other scriptures of the world. Through this process, the truth is partially revealed in different places of the world in proportion to the thinking and capacity of each particular group of people. The revealed truth is reliable, but still it is modified to fit the persons to whom it is extended.

For that reason we find differences in the different versions of the revealed truth. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that medicine may be hidden within candy to treat the ignorant; in the same way, the revealed truth may be hidden within the mundane concessions of ordinary religion to help the ignorant class of men, *parokṣavāda vedo 'yam*.

Still, Vedic revelation is conceived of by authorities as the most ancient as well as the most perfect of all versions of

revealed truth. The revealed truth as presented by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu must be considered full-fledged theism. There it is mentioned what lies beyond this created world is the eternally dancing world. Here we are trapped in the world of contraction and expansion, but in the spiritual realm, everything is an eternal, blissful dance. Still, even the reality there is of a lower and higher type according to the nature of *rasa* – transcendental mellow, *ānandam*, ecstasy – which is the desired substance of every conscious unit.

Question: Krishna’s pastimes are eternal. When Krishna finishes one pastime in this universe, his pastimes begin in another. At the time of the final annihilation, when all the universes are withdrawn, how do Krishna’s pastimes continue?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: When the universe is destroyed in the total annihilation of all the stars and planets, the *mahāpralaya*, this side almost equates to zero. It reaches equilibrium. But the spiritual world is always in full swing. No harm can be done to Krishna’s pastimes because they have an eternal aspect.

Question: But what happens to Krishna’s *līlā* here on Earth?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Suppose fruit falls from a tree. The fruit is gradually finished, but the tree remains. It is something like that. This material world may equate to zero, but Krishna’s pastimes continue eternally.

Question: What is the difference between Goloka, Krishna's place of pastimes in the transcendent world, and Gokula, Krishna's pleasure abode in this earthly plane?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Gokula Vṛndāvana eternally exists, but sometimes the seers are all absent. Gokula exists in the ideal world and is extended here. What we see, we see from our different positions of existence, but Gokula is there always. If you have no eye to see something, it cannot be seen. If you have no hand to touch it, it cannot be touched. It is the same with Gokula. It is in such a plane where the different external processes which exert control over material energy cannot touch the fine ideal of existence in Gokula.

If the earth vanishes, that does not mean that the whole solar system will vanish. The solar system may remain, but the men on the earth cannot see it any longer. Its influence on earth can no longer be felt. In a similar way, Gokula exists in another plane. It exists in the finest plane of reality. It is beyond the creation, beyond evolution and dissolution. Such subtle energy can be understood by analogy with ether. If earth is destroyed, ether may not be destroyed. Ether is within and outside earth, but with the dissolution of earth, ether may not dissolve, but continue to exist. The position of Gokula is something like that. This is confirmed by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.35):

yathā mahānti bhūtāni
bhūteṣūccāveṣy anu

**praviṣṭāny apraviṣṭāni
tathā teṣu na teṣv aham**

“O Brahmā, please know that the universal elements enter into the cosmos and at the same time do not enter into the cosmos; similarly, I also exist within everything and at the same time I am outside everything.”

Krishna's position is similar: He is there and not there. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.4-5), He tells Arjuna:

**mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ
jagad avyakta-mūrtinā
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni
na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ

na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni
paśya me yogam aiśvaram
bhūta-bhṛn na ca bhūta-stho
mamātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ**

“I am everywhere and nowhere. Everything is in Me, and yet nothing is in Me. In My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. Behold My mystic opulence, My simultaneous oneness and difference! Although I am the maintainer of all living entities and although I am everywhere, I am not implicated by any of this, for I am the very source of creation.”

We have to understand the relationship between cause and effect. The cause and its effect are of different types. Even the inner cause and the outer cause may have different positions. The body may be disturbed, but the mind may

not be. The mind may be disturbed, the soul may not be. By this we are to understand the difference between cause and effect, subtle and gross, matter and spirit.

Consciousness & Evolution

Prakṛti, the material nature, does not evolve consciousness like fossilism. But on the other hand, both are within consciousness. There is no necessity of movement for the soul here. The soul is inactive, indifferent, passive in this enjoying plane. That is another original conception. The soul does not take its place in the negative side; it is meant for the positive side. But accepting that the soul is in the background, *prakṛti* or material energy – the body – works on its behalf. The relationship between body and soul is like the relationship between a minor and his false guardians. It is something like what happens when the proprietor of an estate is a minor and the managers take advantage of his youth to loot and enjoy the estate. The *baddha-jīva* soul is in the minor's position. The soul cannot control these revolting managers, the five senses. He need only have the contact of a major soul. With the help and guidance of the major soul, he can subdue his managers and gain mastery over his own property. A fallen soul's position is like a minor proprietor. He is helpless. He is doing nothing; the managers are doing everything using his own resources;

they are doing everything in the name of the proprietor. The soul is inactive, non-cooperating. But the body, mind, intelligence, and false-ego are working on behalf of the soul – the real ego – as if he were on their side. But if his real interest inside is roused by a major soul who is connected with Paramātmā and with Bhagavān, then the soul will find his own field there. He'll control the senses and mind and utilize them in the service of the Lord. He'll say, "Everything is for Krishna, not for me."

So Krishna says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: "Give up all your duties and come to Me. And your present duties good or bad, whatever you can conceive from your present position – give up everything and come straight to Me. I'm everything to you." This is Krishna consciousness. Krishna is telling us: "You belong to me, you are My property. Just as you can say that you are master of any property, so you are My property, My slave." That is the truth, and by accepting that truth we will live in a higher plane. We will be the gainer, we will come into our normal position. At present, in an abnormal position, we are suffering from thinking, "I'm the master, the monarch of all I survey." But that ego is our worst enemy if we are to progress in devotional service.

And service to Krishna is of different varieties. There is service in general and then there are services of a particular type: *śānta*, *dāśya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, *mādhura*. And then there are also divisions according to whether devotion is calculative or spontaneous. In this way there is a hierarchy in the development of the devotional condition.

The highest development is *ujjvala-rasa*. *Ujjvala-rasa* means super-fine, the brightest, surpassing all, where we find Krishna in consorhood without any consideration of any law. Autocratic consorhood. And this particular nature and behavior is described in a book written by Rūpa Goswāmī titled *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. The first part of devotion is given in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. In that book, from the very beginning of an ordinary civilized religious life, Rūpa Goswāmī takes us up to different devotional relationships *śānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhura-rasa*. But the details of *mādhura-rasa*, the highest relationship with Krishna, has been described by Rūpa Goswāmī in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. Nīlamanī, Krishna, in his highest luster: *ujjvala*. Nīlamanī in consorhood. And what are Krishna's characteristics? How does he play with his paraphernalia in the *mādhura-rasa*? That has been described in detail in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

Even the greatest literary scholars are dumbfounded to find how divine love has been analyzed so finely and elaborately in this book of Rūpa Goswāmī. Subtle points have been analyzed, organized, and distributed in that book. And the great scholars become dumbfounded when they come to such statements. As *Bhāgavatam* says: *muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ*. In the introduction, *Bhāgavatam* gives this warning, this caution to the scholars: "You will all be dumbfounded when you attempt to come to this plane. Scholarship will not allow you to flourish here." The nature of that plane is so mysterious that even great scholars won't be considered fit to enter there.

Only the surrendered souls can understand and feel these subtle points of devotion. Outsiders, who remain objective inquirers and researchers, can't have any entrance here. It is the superior subjective realm, the supersubjective realm. That plane is above even the plane of soul.

And to understand this, we must first inquire about the soul. First there is mind, *manah*, then intelligence, *buddhi*, then soul, *ātmā*. The soul is evergreen: it does not die. Soul is eternal, constant. It is said in the *Upaniṣads* and in the *Gītā*: if once we can meet our soul, then a diametrical change comes in our life. At that time we will be astonished to realize, "Oh, such a highly qualified thing is here within me! In ignorance, I was considering that this perishable body and this flickering mind, was my true self. But the material senses and mind are all trespassers, they have some inimical tendency towards my true self. I am soul: I have no necessity of all these things. Without these unnecessary material things I can live! No food is necessary for the soul from the jurisdiction of this material plane. The soul is independent. What a wonderful existence I have! In reality I am soul, and the nature of soul is so noble, so high, so good." A diametrical change of consciousness comes at this point and one tries to enter into that higher realm. Spiritual reality is what is necessary for us. We are soul, we are independent of matter. We are made of such transcendental existence. Nothing can threaten the soul's existence – not the atomic bomb, nuclear war, lightning, thunder, or earthquakes. All the troubles of this material world are limited to this body which is a foreign carcass, a

concocted representation of my true self. My true self exists on the spiritual plane, on a higher level. If we can really have a touch of that realization, a glimpse of our own identity – if we can feel within that the soul is independent of matter, then a revolutionary change will take place within our minds. Then our attempt to progress in spiritual life becomes quite genuine. Otherwise, our progress is suspicious, doubtful. We grasp it intellectually, and think, “Yes, let me try. I’m hearing, of course, that I have a good prospect in spiritual life; by my intelligence I can follow something. Let me try.” But progress on the intellectual plane is only hesitating progress. When one comes to the plane of one’s own soul, however, one will find one’s self and realize, “Here I am!” At that time all false conceptions which have been held for so long will vanish like a dream. They will all be finished, and one will think, “I’m to start a new life.” And the new prospect will open to make progress in the higher plane.

Soul is nearby. We can try to find out what the soul is if we can eliminate the material elements. This is the process of the *Upaniṣads* and is mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā: indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur* (3.42). First we are to understand that our senses are primary. If my senses are removed, the entire world of our experience is nothing to me. Only through my senses can I be aware of the existence of the outside world. Minus senses, eyes, ears, no world is apparent to me. Then, above the senses is the mind. What is the mind? The mind deals with acceptance and rejection: *saṅkalpa vikalpa*. In other words, the mind thinks, “I want this, I don’t want

that." It deals with attachment and hatred. The mind determines who is enemy and who is friend, this is mine, that's yours. If we want to understand the mind we have to look within, to inquire within: what is that element in me that seeks friends and avoids enemies? Where is he? Sometimes the mind is apparent; then other times it is hiding. I must find out where the mind exists, of what substance is it composed? By analysis I can understand what aspect of my inner self is the mind. Then, having some idea of what the mind is, I may analyze that part of me which deals with reason, the intelligence. Where is the intelligence?

When the mind demands something; the intelligence says, "Don't take that, don't eat that." By introspection, I may look within and find out: what is that principle in me which reasons? Where is that fine thing? What is its nature, its substance, its existence? We shall try in our introspection to find it out, substantially. If that is possible, then the next step will take us to the soul. What is that soul which makes possible the intelligence, the reason by which we act, which prompts the mind to want, and also gives our senses the power to connect with things? What is that spark of knowledge? Where is that soul within me? What position does it hold? I want to see it face to face. Then in this way we can evaporate like lightning all the misconceptions of body and mind. By finding the soul through introspection, we may experience the lightning touch of realization.

At that time, the whole world will be turned in a diametrically different line, and we shall see things differently:

“Oh, this material life is undesirable! These senses are enemies in the garb of friends. If I confront them now, they say that I may have an honorable friendship with them, and that without them I can’t live. But it is all a hoax.”

From a realization of the soul, from the point of that wonderful knowledge, one may come to see the ocean of knowledge. One may begin to see what is in the subjective area, and hanker for how to come in connection with that divine realm. At that time, the very trend of one’s life will

be changed, and a total change will come in our search, in our standard of prospect in life. And our search will take a concrete shape in devotion. In this way, we must begin our search after the higher sphere. And how to enter there?

It is the opposite of this plane of exploitation. In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Satan said, “It is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.” But we shall experience just the opposite: “It is better to serve in heaven than to reign in hell.” To serve in heaven is highly superior than to reign in hell.



In Milton's Paradise Lost, Satan said, "It is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." But we shall experience just the opposite: "It is better to serve in heaven than to reign in hell."

The question of energy and power is important in the mortal world, but in the constant and eternal world, this sort of energy has no value. That plane is composed of eternal substance. It is not like this troubling plane which is always breaking, always disappearing, always disappointing, and full of treachery. That divine plane is constant. Life goes on there without any need of food, rest, or medicine. There is no need of the labor to earn bread in that higher realm. All these things are not necessary in a plane of reality where everything is permanent and of eternal value. All these problems which are making us madly busy are easily eliminated in one stroke. That is the nature of that plane. And if we realize that we are members of that plane, then the question becomes what to do? How to approach the higher realm? That will be our problem. We cannot force our entry there; we must be granted a visa. We cannot master that finer realm – we must allow ourselves to be utilized by it. In other words we must come to the position of slavery. We shall have to realize that mastership here in the mortal world is a curse, and the slavery in that higher world is a boon.

And the *Bhāgavatam* will help us in our progressive march towards that higher plane.

naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu
 nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā
 bhagavatya uttama-śloke
 bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī

The impure, undesirable things within us are going to

almost completely vanish, almost disappear by our serving association with the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the devotee. *Sādhū* and *śāstra*. In this way, the continuous connection with Krishna consciousness comes out from within. The interrupting elements that result from renunciation and enjoyment vanish, the covers vanish, and the continuous flow within, the connection with pure Krishna consciousness comes out.

There are two covers: the exploiting tendency and the renouncing tendency – *karma* and *jñāna* – the exploiting spirit and the tendency for knowledge that leads to liberation. They are not proper elements of our soul, of our real entity; they are only covers. And by our serving association with the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the devotee, they are uncovered, and the continuous flow of Krishna consciousness within comes out.

Niṣṭhā means *nairantaja*, continuous.

ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo'ṭha bhajana-kriyā
tato'ṇartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ

When the covers are removed, then we find that inner continuity of flow with Krishna connection within us, and *naiṣṭhikī-bhakti* appears. That is completely clear, cleansed. *Bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*: then on the basis of *niṣṭhā*, that is, the continuous flow, then further progress is made on the positive side – *āśakti*, attachment, then *bhāva*, spiritual emotion, then *prema*, divine love – in this way the inner



Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī

aspect of devotion will gradually come out. And we shall be able to dive deep into reality. As we give up the external covers, and we experience what may be considered as death in the external world – die to live – we shall enter into the inner side more and more.

Question: This verse says *naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu*, that the impurities are

almost destroyed. Why not completely destroyed?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: That means it happens gradually. The gradual development is described there. *Naṣṭa prāyeṣu* means when the stage of *niṣṭhā* comes, when all the undesirabilities are almost finished, then we can have a real peep into the thing. Just as before sunrise, when there is twilight in the early morning, the sun is not there, but the darkness has been dispelled. The darkness has been mainly removed, but the sun has not yet risen. In the same way, the *Bhāgavatam* is describing how *bhakti* develops gradually. *Naṣṭa prāyeṣu*: it is not finished immediately; there is a gradual process of *sādhana* – a means to an end. And gradually, slowly, according to the capacity of the devotee, and the endeavor, the *sādhana*, one's *bhakti* develops. When

darkness has almost been finished, the non-gentle, abnormal, exploitative symptoms like the mean attempt to exploit the environment, gradually disappear. And in this way, gradually, we make further progress. It is not that all of a sudden – in one stroke – everything is cleared. Rather, according to our *bhajana*, our *sādhana*, our attempt, the undesirable elements will gradually vanish, go away. And by different stages we shall reach the goal.

These stages have been described by Rūpa Goswāmī as follows in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15-16):

ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
 saṅgo' tha bhajana-kriyā
 tato' nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
 tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
 athāsaktis tato bhāvas
 tataḥ premābhyudañcati
 sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
 prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

“In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and then attachment. This is the way of *sādhana-bhakti*, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually spiritual emotions manifest and intensify, then finally there is an awakening of divine love. This is the

gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Krishna consciousness.”

Rūpa Goswāmī says that *niṣṭhā* means “continuous connection.” After *niṣṭhā*, the mundane negative side is eliminated, and then, in the positive side, we may make progress. Then, after this there are the higher stages: *āśakti*, *bhāva*, and *prema*. Within *prema*, there are also different stages: *sneha*, *mana*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, *mahābhāva*. In this way *bhakti* develops to the topmost plane, *mahābhāva*. *Mahābhāva* means Rādhārāṇī. That supermost intensity of *bhakti* which is not found anywhere else is found only in Her. That is called *mahābhāva*. In this way, *bhakti* – divine love – develops in different stages up to the highest level.

The Plane of Misconception

This chapter is an excerpt from a conversation between Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj and neurophysiologist Dr. Daniel Murphey, physical organic chemist Dr. Thoudam Singh, and Dr. Michael Marchetti.

We should understand that we are living in the plane of misconception. The whole thing is false. It is all a part of illusion. Within the world of illusion, some thing may have its place, but when we deal with the real truth, however, we will conclude that everything here is like a dream. This whole world is like a dream, a misconception. Any part of this world will therefore also be misconception. What is real, what is truth, will become apparent when a thing is judged in connection with the real world. The association of saints who have a genuine connection with spiritual reality promotes this transaction.

What is real and what is unreal? Whatever has a connection with the real self, with the soul, is real. Soul is consciousness in the world of pure consciousness. Whatever is connected with the mind in the mental world of false-ego

is all false. A part of the false is also false, extremely false. But it has got its negative utility.

Everything is true only by having connection with the Absolute Truth. Everything is there in the absolute. So the finite cannot produce anything which is not in the infinite. The finite world, therefore, is rather a shadow or a perverted reflection of the whole truth.

The foundation of my argument is as follows: Caitanya Mahāprabhu explained that while Śaṅkarācārya has denied the existence of this perverted reflection, we cannot dismiss it. If it does not exist, then why has Śaṅkara come to preach Vedānta? Illusion means “this is not that.” One thing may appear to be some thing else. An illusion is not what it appears to be, but it is not nonexistent. In that way it is real. It has its existence.

Within the real world which is created by the help of the Lord’s internal energy, *svarūpa-śakti*, this world of misconception has no place. But in a relative way, the conditioned world has an indirect relationship with the unconditioned world. So *māyā* is existing. In that sense it is true. But it is false in that it cannot give you the desired result you are searching after. In that sense it is all false.

Dr. Marchetti: Vaiṣṇavism says that this material nature is real as a reflection. But it is not real as the absolute reality of the spiritual world. Could you explain?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Reality is composed of unreal substance and real substance. We may see it like that. This is the world of misconception. Misconception means “I think

something is mine, but really it is not mine.” Everything belongs to the Absolute. Everything belongs to him. But we say “it is mine,” and we quarrel with each other. Actually, everything within this world is the property of another. But as a result of misconception, we fight with each other and so many reactions result from that fight. The difficulty is that the soul is entangled in this mock fight. Otherwise this world of fighting and misconception has no value. But the dust of spirit, a very infinitesimal part of the spiritual reality, is entangled in this world and concerned with this world of mock fighting. Without the spiritual energy within this world, nothing would remain. A magician’s sleight of hand is all based on misconception. It is false. Still we are perplexed by his tactics. That is also true. A magician or hypnotist can show what is not real to be real, and yet while we are under his spell we cannot deny its reality.

Everything, including our own self, belongs to Krishna. But the difficulty arises when we see something other than Krishna. Separate interest. The consciousness of separate interest is the root of all evils. We are one with Krishna, but whenever the seed of separate interest sprouts, and we think we have some separate interest, that we are not included in the interest of Krishna, that is the root of such misconception.

bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
 īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
 tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
 bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā

In this way, the scriptures have given a diagnosis of the disease or concoction of false conception. We are living in a fool's paradise. And the very beginning of material existence that we can trace is at the inception of a separate interest. The first deviation from *advaya-jñāna* is a conception of separate interest.

Question: How can we know what is actually real?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The scriptural name is *śraddhā*, or faith. That is the developed state of *sukṛti*, or spiritual merit. When our faith is developed, it leads us to *sādhū saṅga*, the association of saints. The agents of the divine world, who are in the plane of reality – the *nirguṇa* wave beyond this world of creation – come to establish some connection with reality in our soul. That is the deepest element. The connection with saints produces faith, and faith can see reality.

There is a world which is only approachable by faith *śraddhāmāyo'yaṁ loka*. Just as color is seen by the eyes and sound is perceived by the ear, that world can be perceived only by faith. Only faith can see and feel it. The Supreme Reality cannot be perceived with any other senses. Faith is the real function of the soul and that is awakened by the agents of Vaikuṇṭha, the saints. By faith one's association with saints increases, and by this transaction the culture of reality takes place. Gradually this process makes us become fully conscious. At that time we realize that this world in which we are living is all transient and that our home is elsewhere. Our real home is located in the world of pure consciousness.

Question: Is that the same process by which the materialist sees this world as real?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj:

No. Realization of spiritual reality is independent of all material contamination or misconception. That injection into our soul is given by *Vaikuṇṭha*, by the eternal associates of *Viṣṇu*. Perceiving spiritual reality is the function of



*Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī
Mahārāj*

the soul, not of the material ego or senses. It is independent of that. When a patient is unconscious, the doctor gives him an injection. Then consciousness comes and after that he can cooperate with the doctor by describing his symptoms. But before one can cooperate with the doctor, the doctor does different things to help the unconscious patient. In the same way, when we are fully engrossed in our material engagement, the saints from the higher plane of reality act like doctors to inject some understanding of divinity into our consciousness. In this way they try to awaken our spiritual self-interest, our consciousness of the soul.

Dr. Singh: Once Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj asked us to prove that matter comes from life, by using science. I didn't know how to start. How can we prove that matter comes from life?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The definition of evolution given by Darwin is that life comes from the fossil. But we say just the opposite. Evolution from inside of consciousness is the cause of our seeing the different things of this world. The evolution is from within. Evolution is not from the outside, as we might ordinarily think. This is the teaching of Vedānta. Reality does not develop from imperfection to perfection; it is only that a part of the perfection seems to be imperfect. To theorize that the imperfect is producing perfection is ludicrous.

It is far more reasonable and easy to conceive that a part of the perfection has somehow become imperfect. It is perceived by us to be imperfect. That is the natural and more reasonable conclusion. We have to accept something of what Darwin says but where does the fossil come from? And that the fossil can produce the infinite is a foolish idea.

The body is amazing the doctors with so many wonderful phenomena. They cannot fathom so many questions. How is it built? How are consciousness, intelligence, and genius centered in the brain? That wonderful thing which we find in the brain, the thought of the genius, is not produced by a material thing. The starting point must be the wonderful thing. We say that really exists – that wonderful thing, the source of all wonders.

Everything is full of wonder. If we analyze the atom, we will be in wonder. Only we impose limitations. But when we analyze the atomic parts of wood or stone, we will be in wonder. The infinite is everywhere. Perfection is everywhere. The trouble is that with our limited thinking

we have produced a world of limits. But we who are captured by the “scientific” way of thinking are not ready to admit that. That is the puzzle. From the biggest to the smallest, from the lowest to the highest, everything is wonderful. But we won’t admit that. We will go to the fossil and say that the fossil is producing everything. But what is that fossil?

Dr. Marchetti: But how can we prove to the scientists that matter comes from life? These are philosophical arguments. The scientists will say, “What is the utility of philosophical arguments?”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: In the beginning of the electric generation, the famous scientist Michael Faraday gave a public demonstration of the power of electricity. In one experiment, Faraday generated electricity. With the current generated by his dynamo, he was able to move some pieces of paper. After watching the wave of current move some pieces of paper, a lady challenged him, “What is the utility of your electricity, Dr. Faraday?” And he said, “Madam, would you please tell me, what is the utility of a newborn babe?”

Is death philosophical? Death is there to frustrate all other things if you don’t take shelter in philosophy. Only philosophy can face the greatest enemy, death. And death is not limited to a particular thing; it will include the whole world. The sun, the moon, the stars, this globe, and everything else will vanish in due course of time. The scientists themselves tell us so. If we want to live beyond the plane of death, philosophy will help us have an eternal life of eternal



Charles Darwin

peace. Only philosophy can give us that.

All these sciences of technology are simply an attempt to increase the glamour of this life. They are all enemies of the soul, deadly enemies. All of them lead us but to the grave. The grave is true and only dealing with the grave philosophically will

relieve us. Otherwise, we are all finished. These materialistic scientific conceptions are cunning enemies surrounding us. They are tempting us, "Live in the material world. We shall help you." This is illusion.

Dr. Marchetti: When you said that the world is in the mind, isn't that idealism?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Berkeley's idealism: not that we are in the world, but the world is in our mind. Of course in a higher sense, we are not concerned with the mind. The material mind is also a part of the world of misconception. The soul is living in the soul region, and the mind, ego, and everything else is dependent on the soul. If the soul is withdrawn, nothing remains. Here also, if life is gone, the body will perish.

If the souls are withdrawn from this world, nothing will remain. The soul is reality. This mundane reality is to

be described as a misconception which appears in the soul much the same as a dream appears in a person. The soul himself is unconcerned. And if the soul is returned to the world of soul, and consciousness is withdrawn from this plane, nothing remains. It is all darkness. And it cannot exist independently. So this material reality is created by the soul's revolting attitude, his unhealthy attitude.



Bishop Berkeley

Just as a man who is in a diseased condition experiences delirium. Disease is the cause of delirium. The delirium itself has no independent existence. The hallucination does not exist outside his mind. If you want to remove the delirium, you must treat the patient. His brain needs medicine. When he is treated, the world of delirium vanishes. In a similar way, the soul has developed a diseased condition, and he suffers from delirium. And as the collective souls are suffering collectively from this delirium, this world appears real. Collectively so many misguided delirious persons are being connected or disconnected with this material reality.

Dr. Murphey: Then what is the difference between the world of reality and the material world?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: This material world is only a reflection of complete reality; it is a conception we find exciting to us. Compelled by local interest of enjoyment, we have embraced this creation of the Lord. With our spiritual vision covered by the spectacles of prejudice, we are seeing things in a distorted way. The Lord is not to be blamed; our spectacles should be blamed. Everything is meant for Him; the only difference in our vision of reality is that our vision is tainted with the colors of our different kinds of selfish interests. And the different planetary systems in the material world are different sub-planes in the plane of enjoyment or exploitation. Our distorted consciousness is the source of the different colors of the things that surround us.

And when these illusory conceptions are fully removed, we will find that everywhere it is Krishna and Krishna only. And when the conception of Godhead as Lord and Master is removed, then receiving his impetus of activity from Krishna consciousness, the soul will find himself in Vṛndāvana. But in order to attain that stage, we must have no consciousness of this body, or the mind, or the country conception, the nation conception, or the globe conception. All planes of limited conception must be crossed. From soul to Supersoul, the soul must enter deeper and deeper into reality. You will find everything there. There you will find that Rādhārāṇī and Krishna in Vṛndāvana is not false. It is neither poetry nor imagination.

The only requirement is that we must develop our deeper nature, our self-identification, through self-determination. In Hegel's language, self-determination is the fulfillment of all of us. Self-determination in the Vaiṣṇava conception means *svarūpa-siddhi*, spiritual identity. Who am I? What is my deeper self beyond my mind or my intelligence? Where am I? What is my inner self-interest? I must enter the plane of reality, I must get back my proper self. And in Krishna's connection I will enter the environment and see what the world really is.

If I am given some wine or some poison, then I shall become beside myself. I shall see things in a distorted way. I will be unable to recognize my sister or mother, and actuated by animal nature, I will see everything as an object for my enjoyment. The crude tendency of lust will cover my vision of everything. Then again when I am sober, I shall see the same things, but my perception of them will be changed.

In this way we must be prepared to go deeper beneath the surface reality, and find out who we are, what is our real self-interest. We should try to see the paraphernalia of reality according to our genuine self-interest. Through self-determination we must learn to see things the opposite of the way we are seeing them at present. We must try to understand how to find ourselves. And by surrendering ourselves to Krishna's interest, then we shall try to go back home, back to Godhead.

A Floating World of Experience

There are many schools of atheist philosophers. The most famous atheist in Indian philosophy was Charvaka Muni. His philosophy is paralleled by the extreme atheists of Western philosophy. According to their opinion, consciousness is the by-product of the chemical combinations of different material substances. With the dissolution of this physical body, neither soul nor consciousness remains. Only the physical combination of the different elements of the body remain. Just as the combination of different chemicals produces something more than the individual chemicals themselves, the physical combination of different material elements produce consciousness. With the dissolution of this fleshy body, nothing remains. This philosophy was first propounded in the West by Epicurus.

Then there is Buddhism. The Buddhists say that when the physical body is dissolved, the subtle body, the mental system, goes on to take another birth. The Buddhists admit transmigration from one body to the next, or reincarnation. According to them, although this body may vanish, we must enter another body according to our *karma*. If we



Buddha

work in a particular way, then the subtle body, the mental system, dissolves, and nothing remains. According to the Buddhists, there is no soul.

Śaṅkarāchārya's philosophy is similar – with a slight difference. The Buddhist school says that the individual soul does not exist. According to them there is no permanent individual soul.

Śaṅkarāchārya has also said that no permanent individual soul exists. But Śaṅkarāchārya says that conscious substance, Brahman, exists as the ultimate reality. This is the difference between Śaṅkarāchārya and the Buddhists. According to Śaṅkara, consciousness itself is true; it is only the consciousness of separate existence that is false. In his view the individual soul is only a reflection of the conscious substance which is the ultimate reality. With the dissolution of the mental system, each soul's consciousness of individuality vanishes; it is nonexistent in that ultimate plane of reality.

He gives the example of the moon and its reflection in a mirror. Remove the mirror and there is no reflection. His view is that all individual souls are reflections from a common source: Brahman, consciousness. So Śaṅkarāchārya says, in reality individual souls are one and the same with Brahman.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's interpretation of Vedānta is different from Śaṅkarāchārya's. Śrī Chaitanya says that we

have to accept the Vedic truth in its entirety, without any modification. Śaṅkarāchārya has accepted only a few Vedic aphorisms which constitute a partial representation of the truth. His four principle expressions taken from the *Vedas* are *aham brahmāsmi*: “I am Brahman”; *tat tvam asi*: “Thou art that”; *so’ham*: “I am that”; and *sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma*: “Everything is



Śaṅkarāchārya

Brahman.” Śrī Chaitanya analyzed the meaning of the aphorism *sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma* follows. According to Śaṅkarāchārya, everything is one. He says *brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā*: Spirit is true, the world is false. Śaṅkarāchārya says that *brahma* (spirit) exists, and that *sarva* (everything) does not exist. If this is actually true, and everything is one, then why does the question of existence or nonexistence arise at all?

In the aphorism *sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma*, *sarva* – everything – exists, and *brahma* – spirit – also exists. In this expression, many exists and one also exists. There is many and there is one.

Again, if everything is one, then the question arises: to whom are we speaking? For whom have the *Vedas* come with this advice? Both the relative and the absolute exist together; they are coexistent. The absolute and the relative



*Lord Śiva with
Gaṅgamāyī (the Ganges)
on his head.*

are also represented in the Vedāntic aphorism *tat tvam asi*: Thou art that. *Tat* or “that” is there and *tvam* “you” is also there. Both variety and unity are found represented in the aphorism *tat tvam asi*, but Śaṅkarāchārya accepts one and rejects the other. His explanation is therefore a misinterpretation of the original meaning of the *Vedānta-sūtras*. It is not a proper interpretation of the *Vedas*, because he has thrust his own idea or conception forward in the name of the

Vedānta. Śaṅkarāchārya’s interpretation of *Vedānta* is artificial. It is selfish and provincial.

This is the refutation of Śaṅkarāchārya given by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and as far as we are concerned, it cannot be seen otherwise. If we try to follow the interpretation of Śaṅkarāchārya, then what meaning can be found in this statement of the *Upaniṣads*: *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti*? “The Absolute Truth is He from whom everything is coming, who is maintaining everything, within whom everything exists, and into whom everything enters at the time of annihilation.” What does this mean? Does this statement say that the Absolute Truth

is non-differentiated? It is sufficient for our understanding to accept its direct meaning. The self-explanatory meaning of these words is sufficient to understand this simple statement of the *Upaniṣads*.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu defeats Śaṅkarāchārya through common sense. This is the unique characteristic of His argument. He defeats His philosophical opponents not with difficult, abstract, intellectual arguments, but with common sense.

When Śrī Chaitanya wanted to demonstrate the supremacy of Nārāyaṇa over Śiva, he said that one may just consider the position of the Ganges. The Ganges is the water that washes the feet of Nārāyaṇa, and yet she rests on the head of Śiva. From this, we can easily use common sense to see which of the two holds the superior position. When Śrī Chaitanya wanted to show that Krishna is greater than Nārāyaṇa, he pointed to the example of Lakṣmīdevī. She aspires after the association of Krishna. Although she has everything with Nārāyaṇa, still she has some aspiration for the company of Krishna. On the other hand the *gopīs* have no attraction for Nārāyaṇa. When they meet Nārāyaṇa, they pray that by His grace, their devotion to Krishna may be enhanced.

In this way, by applying common sense, intuition, we may judge the nature of reality. Intuition will be far more helpful than abstruse argument. *Vedānta* confirms this in the aphorism *tarko-pratiṣṭānat*: “Argument can never help us reach any real conclusion.” Rather it is only intuition and common sense that can really help us. This is the recom-

mendation of Śrī Chaitanya, and this is how He refuted many scholars including even the great all-conquering *digvijaya paṇḍita* of Kashmir.

Question: The Buddhists say that after one transcends sensory experience he will find that underneath it all there is actually no foundation of life. One will find that there's nothing there but the void. According to their teaching, after our experience is removed, there is no soul, no basis of existence. How do the Vaiṣṇava *āchāryas* deal with Buddhism?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: In South India, and especially in Andhra Pradesh, there are many Buddhist scholars. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu met the Buddhists when he was passing through South India. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says *veda nā māṇiyā bauddha haya ta' nāstika*. Because the Buddhists do not accept the Vedic scriptures, they are considered atheists. Śaṅkarāchārya, in a hidden way, also preaches on behalf of the Buddhists. The difference between them is that Śaṅkarāchārya admits the existence of Brahman as the fundamental reality, whereas the Buddhists say that ultimately nothing exists.

The Vaiṣṇava *āchāryas* disagree with both Śaṅkarāchārya and with Buddha. They say that the *jīva* is an individual eternal soul. This particle of spiritual energy known as the *jīva* or spirit is tiny, like the dust particles of earth or the pencils-rays of the sun. There is the Supreme Infinite Soul or Consciousness, and the finite sparks of consciousness. Their relationship may be compared to the relationship between a

great fire and the sparks that emanate from the fire. The sparks that emanate from the fire may become covered by darkness, but when they re-enter the shelter of that great conflagration, they are again perfectly situated.

To refute the atheism of the Buddhists, we may look to the modern European philosopher Descartes.



Descartes

Descartes said, "I doubt everything. Whatever you say, I doubt." Then, Descartes says, the question that arises is, "Does the doubter exist: true or false?" You have to start your search for truth from there. Who am I? To whatever truth is related, whatever idea is stated, one may say, "I oppose that statement. I doubt it." Then the question arises does the doubter exist, or is he nonexistent? If he is nonexistent, then there can be no question of doubting. If one takes the position of an extreme skeptic, he must explain his own position. He may assert, "Whatever you have said, I doubt," but he must discern whether or not he really exists. That must be the starting point for any further inquiry.

And what is the doubter? Is he an atom? A particle of dust? Is he without knowledge? And if so, then how has he comes to assert doubt? This question should be examined. Whenever one may doubt, the question must be asked,

“Who is the doubter? Is he conscious? Does he have reason? Has he any existence at all? Or is he imaginary? Is it matter that is submitting the question? Or is a unit of consciousness asking the question? What is the origin of this question? Who is asking the question? Has it come from the conscious region? If it has, then what shall we consider as the basis of existence? Consciousness or matter? A fossil or God?”

Before the First World War, I was a student of law in the university. In my senior year I studied philosophy under a professor named Mr. Stevenson. He was a German scholar, but during the war he took Indian citizenship. His class dealt with ontology and psychology. Professor Stevenson’s language was very simple, and he used fine arguments to make his point. He gave four arguments against atheism, one of which I find very useful: “Consciousness is the starting point of everything.” Whatever you say presupposes consciousness. Any statement presupposes consciousness.

If we examine the fossil, what do we see? It is black, it is hard, it has some smell, some attributes, but what are these things? These are all different stages of consciousness. Without the help of consciousness, no assertion can be made. No assertion is possible at all. One may say that the fossil is the most elemental substance, but a fossil means what? Some color, sensation, hardness, taste; but the background is consciousness.

After everything is analyzed, we will find that it is an idea. This is Berkeley’s theory. Everything is an idea in the ocean of consciousness. Just as an iceberg floats in the salt ocean, so the fossil is floating in the conscious ocean.

Ultimately everything – whatever we can assert, whatever is within the world of our experience – is floating like an iceberg in the ocean of consciousness. This point can never be refuted.

I have had personal experience of this. When I was twenty-three, I had some deep and natural indifference to the world. At that time I had an experience of the reality of consciousness. I felt the material world floating on consciousness just as cream floats on milk. Conscious reality is much deeper than the apparent reality of our present experience. The world of experience is like cream floating on milk which is the mind. This physical world is only the visible portion of reality floating over the mental world. I felt this myself. When there is a huge quantity of milk, the cream that floats over the milk and covers it is very meager. In the same way, I could feel at that time that this physical world is only a meager portion of reality, and that the subtle world, which is at present in the background, is far more vast. The mental world is a huge and vast reality, and the physical world is a small cover over that mental world.

Whatever can be perceived by the eye, the ear, the tongue, the nose, the skin – any of the external senses – is only a covering of reality. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Prahlāda Mahārāj says, *na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum, durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ*. We are making too much of the covering of reality, we are devoting our minds to the external coating – *bahir-artha-māninaḥ* – but we do not dive deep into the eternal substance. If only we were to dive

deep into reality, there we would find Viṣṇu. The most peaceful substance is within, but it is covered, just as milk is covered by cream, and we are making much of that cover. The real substance is within, just as fruit is covered by its skin. What we experience at present is the cover, the skin, and we are making much of that, ignoring the very substance which the cover is protecting.

The primary step in the search for truth is to penetrate the covering and find the knower within. And then begin our analysis. What is he? Is he an atom like an atomic particle of dust? Or is he a fantastic atom in the conscious plane? At first we must approach reality in this way. There is the knower and the unknown, the inquirer and the inquired.

Try to find yourself. Then gradually, you will come to know that you are the soul, the particle of consciousness within. And just as you are spirit covered by matter, the whole world is also like that; the spiritual reality within is covered. Upon realizing your self as spirit soul, you will be able to see that everything is a part of consciousness. Within the world of consciousness, worlds of different sorts of experience are floating. In the conscious sea, the sun, the moon, trees, stones, human beings, our friends, and our enemies are all floating. As we approach the spiritual plane, we will find it to be nearer to our real self. And in this way, we will see that matter is far, far away, but the soul is near.

Try to conceive of reality along these lines. Soul, spirit, consciousness, is nearer to the soul and you are a child of that soil. Matter is far, far away. But the interrupting planes

are so close together that we don't see the nature of spiritual reality, just as if you put your hand over your eye, you can't see the hand. But if the hand is only one foot away, we can see it very clearly. Sometimes what is very close, we cannot see. I may be able to see so many things, but I cannot see myself.

Although the Buddhists and other atheists argue that consciousness is a material thing, I say that there is no material thing. If I am to answer the question of whether or not consciousness is produced from matter, then I shall say that nothing is material. Whatever we feel is only a part of consciousness. Everything is an idea. We are concerned only with consciousness from the beginning to the end of our experience. Beyond that we cannot go. Everything is an idea: the stone, the tree, the house, the body – all are ideas. The plane of consciousness is very much closer to us than we perceive. And what is shown as a particular thing is far away. We are involved only with ideas. We can't go outside that. Everything within our experience is a part of our mind.

Question: The *Purāṇas* say that there are 8,400,000 species of life. Are they only ideas?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: All ideas. Consciousness is always in the primary position. Yet these ideas are real, because they are also originally present in the spiritual reality Vṛndāvana. Nothing is eliminated in our conception of reality; everything is harmonious. Everything has its proper position; nothing is to be eliminated. The only thing necessary is

harmony. Only our outlook, our angle of vision, needs to be changed. But in order to have that kind of vision, we must give up being self-centered. Both exploitation and renunciation must be given up. These two things cause this hallucination. Everything has its contribution to the service of the supreme Center, and if we can understand that, we become free from this relative world. The material world is a reflection of the spiritual world. There is undesirability here. From Brahmā, who holds the highest position in this universe, to the lowest creature (*ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ*), everyone is prone to misconception. On the other hand, everything in Vṛndāvana contributes towards the pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda.

Everything in Vṛndāvana is Krishna conscious; every tree, creeper, and shrub. How can they be useless or ordinary shrubs and creepers? Uddhava is the greatest devotee of Krishna and he aspires to take birth as a creeper or a shrub in Vṛndāvana. What then, is the value of the shrubs and creepers of Vṛndāvana! Should we think that Uddhava's aspiration is imaginary or theoretical, with no practical value?

Everything in Vṛndāvana is necessary for the pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda. Everything in the spiritual environment has its indirect value. This is called *śānta-rasa*, or passive mellow. It may be understood in this way: if a man does not harm anybody, even a fly or a mosquito, that does not mean that he is paralyzed or diseased; he is simply in a passive mood. So in Vṛndāvana, service may be rendered in a passive mood. The Yamunā river, the trees the birds, and the insects, are absorbed in rendering service in a passive mood.

How this is so can be understood by the analogy of a drama. In a drama in the theater, an actor may play the part of a dead man. As his body is being carried, he can't say anything; he can't move. That does not mean that he is dead. Similarly, a devotee in *śānta-rasa* may assume a passive role as a creeper, a shrub, or a tree in Vṛndāvana, in order to enhance the drama of Rādhā-Govinda *līlā*.



Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu

A devotee may also accept the role of a servant. He may be a king, but for the satisfaction of the Lord, he may play the part of a sweeper. While one is playing the part of a sweeper, he may perform his role so nicely that the men standing by applaud in appreciation. So the mood of servitude is also a contribution to the service of Krishna.

Another example of *śānta-rasa* is Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the bathing place of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, where Krishna enacts his pastimes of conjugal love, is considered to be the highest place in Vṛndāvana. The gods and devotees all praise Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Should we think it to

be an ordinary body of water? Rather, how exalted is the position of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Then there is Govardhana Hill. That is also a kind of pose. Apparently it is a hill, but Govardhana is worshiped as Krishna Himself. He also appears as a stone, as *śalagram*; He appears in the form of the Deities.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu prays, “O Lord, please consider me as the dust of Your holy feet,” expressing Himself as a *vibhinnāśa jīva*. Foot-dust is generally inanimate. But when Chaitanya Mahāprabhu prays, “Consider me foot-dust,” the dust He speaks of is not matter; it is a unit of consciousness filled with knowledge and love. The dust of the Lord’s lotus feet is the emblem of knowledge and ecstasy. In the spiritual realm, existence and knowledge is presupposed. But more than that, the souls there are points of divine love in Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa. And with the wholesale conversion of the souls of this world, everywhere we will find the kingdom of God. Krishna’s kingdom, Mahāprabhu’s kingdom, exists; we have only lost the proper angle of vision by which to see it. We must once again acquire that vision. At present we are in the midst of enemies, but if our angle of vision is changed, we shall think, “No, I am in the midst of friends.”

And that angle of vision is so broad that one who sees in that way becomes fearless. When Jaḍa Bhārata was captured by dacoits and taken to the deity of Kālī to be sacrificed, his angle of vision was so spacious that he did not care for anything. He thought, “Whatever is happening is the Lord’s will. He is the proprietor and witness of all. He

sees everything. Everything is his will, and I have nothing to do with the outcome.” With this idea, wherever Jaḍa Bhārata was taken, he went without resistance. Although he was about to be sacrificed, he was unconcerned. He thought, “I am in a friendly circle. There is no danger.” He was in such a plane of consciousness that no apprehension, no danger, could affect him; he thought, “I am under Krishna’s care.” And so it is proved by Jaḍa Bhārata’s practical example that this angle of vision is not simply philosophy or imagination. It is reality.

Krishna’s divine will is in the background of everything that exists. And when one comes in connection with that paramount power, that original plane of reality, he will not have any care; he will become fearless, *māyā santuṣṭa-manasaḥ sarvāḥ sukha-mayā diśaḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.13).

Yet, in the plane of reality where Krishna is worshipped with knowledge-free devotion, *jñāna-śunya bhakti*, that sort of posing is there. There appears to be fear and concern, but that concern is quite different in nature from material cares. Influenced by *yogamāyā*, the *gopīs* and Krishna’s friends want to know, “Krishna is not here! Where is He?” And in this way, the *gopīs* and cowherd boys run here and there searching for Krishna. Even the cows are concerned and stop grazing, but all this is conducted by *yogamāyā* for the satisfaction of Krishna. Such is the nature of *līlā* in the plane of *jñāna-śunya bhakti*.

We are engaged in an inner search for truth. And in the *Vedas* the answer to our questions, the essence of the whole

revealed truth of the scriptures, can be summarized in one word, *om*: “Yes!” What is the meaning of that “yes?” “What you want: yes, it exists. What you are searching for: yes, it is there! Your inner search to live and to improve will be fulfilled: seek and ye shall find.” If you examine yourself and search out your innermost need, you will find that the revealed truth says, “Yes, your thirst will be quenched. You will be well-fed.”

Question: In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna says *jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedam dhāryate jagat*: the spiritual energy is sustaining this material world. How are we to understand this?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The misguided souls of this world are from *taṭastha-loka*, the marginal plane, and misguided by misconception they have come within this illusory angle of vision.

Krishna says this world is dead matter. The souls entered here and movement came. They entered into this material conception and began moving it. In that sense, they are sustaining the universe, *yayedam dhāryate jagat*. But ultimately everything is sustained by Him.

Krishna also says *aham sarvasya prabhavo*: “Everything emanates from Me.” And in the *Vedas* it is said, *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*. He is the origin of everything in its creation, its maintenance, and its annihilation. But here in this material world, the fallen souls as so many sparks have entered like glowworms into the dark region showing the darkness surrounding it. The *jīva* souls are like glow-

worms in the dark night of this material world. Somehow they are carrying on in the darkness. We can barely trace them out as a meager light in the dark. They are almost completely covered by darkness, but still they can be distinguished. Spirit can know itself.

Question: Who did you say was expounding the atheist philosophy in the West?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Epicurus is the greatest atheist of the West, as Charvaka Muni is in the East. According to Epicurus, with the dissolution of this physical body, nothing remains. And according to him there is no mental system; the mental system – what we come across in our dreams – does not have any separate existence. But Śaṅkara and Buddha both accept the existence of the mental system within the physical body. Transmigration of the soul is also admitted in their philosophy. But Buddha says that with the dissolution of the mental system – the *sukṣma śarīra* – nothing remains.

Śaṅkarāchārya, on the other hand, says that the consciousness within the mental body is a reflection of Brahman, and Brahman is the ultimate existence. According to him, with the dissolution of the body, nothing remains but Brahman. Śaṅkarāchārya says:

śloka dhenu pravakṣyāmi
yad aktam yānti kotibhiḥ
brahma satyaṁ, jagan mithyā
jīva brahmaiva na paraḥ



Rāmānujachārya

“In half a verse, I am summarizing the truth that has been expressed by volumes and volumes of scripture. Within only half a verse I shall give the essence of all truths: *brahma satyaṁ, jagan mithyā*. Brahman, spirit, is true – this world is false. And the *jīva* is nothing but Brahman. This is the substance of all the scriptures.”

Proper knowledge is not possible under the philosophical systems of Buddha and Śaṅkarāchārya. If what they say is true – the world is false – then we must ask, “Why do you speak? And to whom? If everything is false, is your philosophy also imagination?” We will have to ask Śaṅkarāchārya, “Does your coming to this world and your endeavor to refute Buddhism and establish oneness as the ultimate truth have no meaning? Who have you come to preach to? Why have you come to preach if this world has no reality? If this world is false, then why are you taking so much trouble to explain your philosophy? For what? Is your mission also imagination?”

The first great opponent of Śaṅkarāchārya was Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja’s refutation was very strong and based on a sound foundation. Rāmānuja argued: “What is the necessity for Śaṅkarāchārya to endeavor with so much energy to establish his philosophy if it is all fictitious? To

say, the world is false, is a suicidal position. Has he come here to do nothing? He has come to correct us and free us from error, but there must be errors. Error or misconception has reality, otherwise, what is the necessity of spending so much energy refuting so many propositions? *Māyā* exists. *Māyā* is eternal. The individual soul is eternal, and *māyā* is also eternal.”

The basis of material existence is the possibility of the *taṭastha jīva* committing a mistake and developing misconception. The soul is *anu cetana*, atomic consciousness. And as atomic units of consciousness, our freedom is not perfect. Our defective freedom is the cause of this illusion. The soul must have freedom. Before a crime is committed, the possibility of committing a crime is present in the ordinary peace-loving subject. The possibility of disease is there, so hospitals, medicine, and special diets are all necessary. In the same way, the possibility for misconception is there in the soul because we are weak and limited.

Māyā, the world of measurement, is unnecessary for the Absolute, but necessary for those in the relative position. When there is only one self-interest, *māyā* is not necessary. But where there is division, differentiation, and distribution, when there are many ideas of self-interest, *māyā* is necessary.

Within the world of misconception, *māyā* is the law of the land. The law helps the law-abiding, and the law punishes the law-breaking. The law is the same for everyone; and that same law means protection for the good and suppression for the bad. Law means to divide rights. One and the same

law provides for protection of the good and punishment of the bad. The *svarūpa-śakti*, the Lord's internal energy, helps the good, and the *māyā-śakti* punishes the bad.

Śakti, or energy, serves the purpose of the Lord, and therefore necessarily has two aspects, *paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*: to chastise the wicked and reward the good. When the Lord Himself appears, His purpose has two aspects: one for the good, another for the bad. He also comes here with that combined purpose. So although He is one, we see these two aspects of His character.

The conception that the unity of the absolute is not a stale, nondifferentiated thing is a theory that was propounded by Rāmānuja. This is called *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*, oneness with difference. The philosophy of Śaṅkarāchārya, on the other hand, is known as *kevalādvaita-vāda*, exclusive oneness. Rāmānuja accepts that the Absolute Truth is one, but according to him, it is a differentiated oneness. He does not accept non-differentiated oneness. That it is one, he has no doubt. But that one is characterized by specification and differentiation. This is similar to the panentheism of Hegel.

Question: According to what you are saying, matter is also conscious because it is coming from the Lord who is the Supreme Consciousness. In the beginning, when we first differentiate between matter and spirit, we learn that matter is dead and the living entities manipulate it, but when we develop a higher realization will we see that matter is also living?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, and that is known as *śānta-rasa*. In a higher stage of realization we can detect consciousness everywhere: within glass, stone, earth, wood – in all the innumerable shapes and colors in which matter may appear.

We are always in the midst of consciousness. Consciousness is all-pervading, but is situated in different gradations of conception. The gradation of conception may differ, but it is all consciousness, all eternal: *paśu-buddhi-tanturājanam hariṣyati*. We must try to reinstate ourselves in our own plane of reality. There, without the help of this mortal element, we can live happily. That transcendental plane is not a nondifferentiated world. It is not that there you have no individuality. If a nondifferentiated mass of consciousness can be admitted, then why should we not admit the existence of a system of consciousness? Rāmānuja says that it is a system. Śaṅkarācārya says there is only a nondifferentiated mass of light-consciousness. Rāmānuja disagrees. He says that a differentiated light-mass of consciousness is the basis of reality. It is not undifferentiated or non-distinguishable.

And Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says that the basis of reality is *acintya bhedābheda*, inconceivable bipolarity. Everywhere there is something common and something different. Whatever opposing points you may discuss will have something in common, and something different. Nothing is quite the same as anything else. And above all, the infinite is not within your fist. It is inconceivable. The unified and differentiated character of reality is inconceivable; its secret is in the hand of the Supreme. It does not

depend upon your whim. Still, that differentiated character of the Absolute will be seen differently according to the subjective relationship we have with Him.

An example of this is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.43.17)

mallānām āsanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ
 strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
 gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām
 śāstā sva-pitroḥ śīśuḥ
 mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣām
 tattvaṁ param yaginām
 vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito
 raṅgam gataḥ sāgrajaḥ

“When Lord Krishna, accompanied by Baladeva, entered Kamsa’s wrestling arena, He appeared to the spectators in different ways. Everyone viewed Him according to their own relationship (*rasa*) with Him. To the wrestlers He appeared as a lightning bolt. To the people in general He appeared as the most beautiful personality. To the ladies, He appeared to be the most attractive young man, Cupid personified, and thus increased their lust. The cowherd men looked upon Krishna as their own kinsman coming from the same village of Vṛndāvana. The kings who were present there saw Him as the most powerful ruler. His parents Nanda and Yaśodā saw Him as their most beloved child. Kamsa, the king of the Bhoja dynasty, saw Him as death personified. The worldly-minded saw Him as the Universal Form; the unintelligent saw Him as incapable,

and to the yogis, He appeared to be the Supersoul. To the members of the Vṛṣṇī dynasty, He appeared to be their most celebrated descendant.”

When Krishna entered the arena, everyone saw Him in their own way. In this way we can understand how He satisfies everyone. When Yaśodā sees Him, she says, “My boy!” But the *gopīs* see a grown-up – not a child. His friends see Him as one of their playmates. Krishna satisfies everyone. Even the animals in Vṛndāvana become ecstatic when they come in connection with Krishna.

barhāpīḍaṁ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ
bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśaṁ vaijayantīm ca mālāṁ
randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair
vṛndāranyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇaṁ prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.21 .5

“While the *gopīs* were describing the sweet vibration of Krishna’s flute, they also remembered their pastimes with Him; thus their minds became enchanted, and they were unable to describe completely the beautiful vibrations. While discussing the transcendental vibration, they remembered also how Krishna dressed, decorated with a peacock feather on His head, just like a dancing actor, and with blue flowers pushed over His ear. His garment glowed yellow-gold, and He was garlanded with a *vaijayantī* garland made of *tulasī*, *kuṇḍa*, *mandāra*, *parijāta*, and lotus flowers. Dressed in such an attractive way, Krishna filled up the holes of His flute with the nectar emanating from His lips. So they remembered Him,

entering the forest of Vṛndāvana, whose soil experiences the pleasure of consorhood upon being embraced by the touch of Krishna's lotus feet."

Krishna consciousness means full-fledged theism, up to consorhood. All conceptions of fulfillment are found there in their purest and most desirable position. This material world, however, is only a shadow, a black imitation of reality. Full-fledged theism means Krishna consciousness. In the full-fledged conception of theism, the Infinite embraces the whole of the finite. It comes down to completely embrace and welcome the finite. This kind of full-fledged theism is found in Vṛndāvana. There, one negligent part of the finite may find the bliss of the embrace of the whole of the Infinite. In Vṛndāvana, not a corner of the finite is left unfulfilled; every particle of sand and every creeper is well-represented there, with complete personality in the loving pastimes of Śrī Krishna.

Here in this material world, however, a particle of sand is nothing; it is ignored. But there, everything is well-attended. In Vṛndāvana there is no ignorance. No interest of anything is ignored there; everything is harmonized, and therefore the conception of Vṛndāvana in Krishna consciousness is the highest conception of full-fledged theism. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, "Whenever Krishna sets his lotus feet within Vṛndāvana, the Earth personified says, 'My fate is fulfilled, I have achieved my highest fortune.' In Vṛndāvana, the earth, the very dust, feels the pleasure of the highest type of conjugal love merely by the touch of His lotus feet. Wherever Krishna

puts his footsteps, the Earth's joy knows no bounds. By his touch, the Earth feels the most intense type of ecstasy.

In Vṛndāvana, Krishna is *mādhurya*, sweetness personified. He is *ānanda*, ecstasy personified. And Krishna responds to our own inner demands in every way. The Supreme Center has the peculiar capacity of responding to all our needs and satisfying the thirst of all existence. According to their capacity, rank, and dignity Krishna distributes to all souls the juice from the sweet sea of transcendental mellow, *yo yaṁ śraddhā sa eva saḥ*.

One can taste the sugar-candy sweetness of the Absolute, according to one's capacity, just as sugar candy is tasted in different ways. For a normal tongue sugar candy is very sweet, but if there is a boil on the tongue even sugar candy is bitter.

When a man is working, his manager will see him as a worker; his child will see him as a father, and his wife will see him as a husband. His servant will see him as master. Dogs and other animals will view him in another way. The same person will be seen differently according to the relationship between seer and seen. Similarly, Krishna appears differently to those who view him according to their respective *rasa*. In this way, the differentiated character of the Absolute is revealed according to the soul's subjective qualifications.

Thesis, Antithesis, & Synthesis

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What subjects are you studying?

Student: Philosophy and religion.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In which university?

Student: San Francisco State.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: You are a student of religion and philosophy. Have you studied Hegel? Hegel's philosophy is sometimes described as panentheism. Panentheism proposes that God is present in all things, but in contrast to pantheism it affirms that God is also an independent being above and beyond all things. Hegel is also known for Perfectionism. He says that the nature of the Absolute is both conditioned and unconditioned combined. The truth develops through thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, and by this method everything progresses. According to Hegel, the Absolute is by Itself and for Itself. And he also used the German equivalent of the expression "die to live." These were his chosen expressions.

Such expressions are very useful for those in the theistic line. If you want to live a progressive life you will have to



George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

die as you are. Your ego must be dissolved and then the real inner or finer self will come out. This is a good philosophy to have appeared amongst the Westerners. The concept of die to live comes in the line of Vaiṣṇavism. Hegel has also said that the Absolute is “by Himself” and “for Himself.”

“For Himself” means that the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Enjoyer. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Krishna says:

ahaṁ hi sarva-yajñānām
 bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca
 na tu mām abhijānanti
 tattvenātaś cyavanti te

This is the most vital point to establish God as a person. He is the enjoyer. If anything is enjoyed, the enjoyer will hold the supreme position. This cannot but be. Everything is meant for His enjoyment. And He is the supreme. “By Himself” means that the absolute is supreme – everything is meant for His satisfaction. This is a necessary truth; it is not questionable. And also, His existence is subjective.

No object can exist without a subject. No thing can exist without a thinker. There must be a thinker. For example, what is a fossil? As we examine it we observe

color and the hardness of stone, but these qualities are simply thoughts within us – a thinking stage. What is color? A concept within our consciousness. So any kind of existence presupposes a subject or consciousness. This is the crux of the argument. No object can exist without a subject. And no subject can exist without an object. There is the thinker and the thought. If there is a thinker, he must be thinking something – so an object is there. And if there is an object, then whatever attribute it has must be reflected in the consciousness of a subject. Otherwise no existence is possible. Do you follow?

Student: Yes. It is very clear.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: These are all Hegel's original conceptions, his contributions to philosophy. He was a very important philosopher. And for a Western thinker, his philosophy was very near to that of the Eastern thinkers. In many respects, Hegel's philosophy is very close to Rāmānuja's philosophy.

Of course, there are many important Western philosophers. Kant's philosophy is very influential. Are you familiar with Kant?

Student: Yes.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Have you studied Descartes?

Student: Yes, somewhat. He said, "I think, therefore I am."

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: He is said to be the father of modern philosophy. Then there is Berkeley: he is an

extreme subjective thinker. Locke, Hume, Mill, Berkeley, Johnson, Kant, Hegel – all these are important Western philosophers.

Student: I prefer to study Eastern philosophy.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: What kind of Eastern philosophy do you study? Sāṅkhya? Yoga? Nyāya? Vaiśeṣika?

Student: Zen Buddhism and Taoism – Chinese philosophy.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Confucius came from China. Before Buddhism, Confucius was present in China. Then gradually moving West we find Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Have you studied them?

Student: Yes, I have studied them a little.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The concept of Parallelism forwarded by Plato is also accepted in Vaiṣṇava philosophy to a certain extent. According to Plato, the forms we experience are a reflection of ideal form. This was his understanding of how the forms we perceive are a perverted reflection of the original spiritual world. That is the theory of Parallelism of Plato.

Student: Can you please explain more about the parallels between Hegel's philosophy and Krishna consciousness?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: In Hegel's philosophy, truth progresses through thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The truth moves in a crooked way. In the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, the word *vilāsa* means "playful movement."

You may take it to mean that the Absolute is absorbed in play. And that is expressed through crookedness. *Aher iva gatiḥ premnaḥ svabhāva-kuṭilā bhavet*: A serpent moves in a crooked way; similarly, the movements of the Absolute are not straight, but crooked. *Vilāsa*, or the conception of *līlā* – the divine pastimes of the Lord – is something like that.



Plato

This is similar to Hegel's opinion in which the truth develops in a crooked way through thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. There is thesis, then its opposite, and then again they unify and create a new thesis. Then again antithesis, and again a greater harmony in synthesis.

In this way truth is dynamic; it develops and makes progress. Hegel was the deepest thinker among the Western philosophers. Of course, other German scholars like Max Muller were also deep thinkers. In fact, Germany had such great appreciation and fondness for Indian culture that certain ancient books that can no longer be found in India may still be found in Germany. The Germans were never the colonial masters of India, but still they were extremely inquisitive to know about the cultural books of India. In spite of the war, many rare, ancient Indian books that can

no longer be found in India are still safely preserved in Germany.

Student: I had a question regarding the philosophy of Berkeley. According to Berkeley the world is in the mind. It seems that the Berkeley theory tends to negate the existence of this world. It tends to argue against any type of reality.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: But Hegel has come to relieve Berkeley somewhat. Someone may challenge Berkeley: “I may think that there is a hundred dollars in my pocket, but if I search my pocket, will I find it there?” Hegel says that it must be there somewhere in the Universal Mind. That is Hegel’s standpoint.

Student: Then it is present somewhere.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: And that wave comes gradually. This was my argument regarding Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *Jaiva Dharma*. Have you read that book?

Student: No, I’m not familiar with that book.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: In that novel, the characters who speak on spiritual life are apparently imaginary. The different persons in that book – Brajanātha, the Bābājī, and others – seem to be imaginary characters discussing spiritual life. But I once explained that what is in Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s mind, what he has written in *Jaiva Dharma*, is not imagination. At one time or other, the persons and events he mentions must have existed, and these things will again have to come into existence. Do you follow?

Student: I'm not sure.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja:

What Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura saw in his mind must exist somewhere in this world, sometime in the future, or sometime in the past. That very thing he describes in an apparently fictional way actually existed. Let me give you an example. When I speak, the sound moves at



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

a certain speed. That sound can be heard later in another place. The same is true in the case of light, isn't it?

Student: Yes.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So Śrī Chaitanyadeva, with his divine sound, chanted here and performed *saṅkīrtana*. He preached and the velocity of that divine wave is still going on. And now in some place in a universe, it may be found. Do you follow? Am I clear?

Student: I think so.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: The velocity of that light is going on; it is not lost. In the same way, the sounds I am now pronouncing are not lost; they are traveling for some distance through time and space. Whatever I see, that wave of light,

is also traveling. The radio broadcasts from World War II – that war period, the war vision – is also there in space somewhere, vibrating at a certain rate. That vibration was once here, but now it somewhere else. It is floating in some plane of reality in time and space. If I throw a flower into the waters of the Ganges, then it is carried away by the current. If I can move with more speed than the current, I can find that flower somewhere else far away in the river. So the velocity of light – eyesight velocity – moves 186,000 miles in a second. If it is possible to move faster than the speed of light, then we can overtake the wave of visual events that are carried by that light. It is possible.

In a similar way, what exists in the plane of imagination now must have existed in reality at some time in the past or future, but it is now found somewhere else. It is said that the pastimes of Krishna move from one universe to the next in the same way that the sun moves from one time zone to the next. Now morning is here; five minutes from now, sunrise and morning will take place somewhere else. In this way, it is always sunrise somewhere. Here or there, the rising sun is to be found somewhere on the Earth. If we can move at the speed of the sun, then for us it will always be sunrise.

What came within the mind of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, what he may have described in an apparently fictional way, must exist somewhere in the plane of reality, in the past or in the future. It is reality, not imagination.

Everything is real. It is not imagination. What I see in my dreams is now false. But in some former lifetime, in my past I experienced that reality. I had that sort of vision,

and that has come to me now as a dream. It was a fact, and only now is it a dream.

What is in the mind may be abstract to us, but in the Universal Mind, everything is concrete. Whatever exists within the plane of imagination must be, and can be traced somewhere.

Student: Although everything is, in one sense, in the mind, still, when I feel hot and I find that others also feel hot, I conclude that it is hot. It seems that according to Berkeley, this is just going on in my mind.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: You have to understand the fundamental truth that what is hot to you may be a cold environment for some other organism. It is a question of degree. Our experience of coolness and heat depends on our degree of tolerance. What is cool to us may be hot to another. In this way we have to adjust with the idea of reality; what is hot to me may be cool to another. Reality is one thing for human beings; it is something else entirely for insects, worms, and other organisms. What is bright to us is dark to another. What is bright to an owl is dark to us. Do you follow?

Student: Yes.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Creation is of a variegated nature. The experience of our eyes and ears is different from the experience of others whose senses are different from ours. What we can hear, others cannot hear. But our ears cannot detect subsonic or ultrasonic sounds. Our ears can detect only a

limited spectrum of sound. Our vision is also limited. We can see neither infrared nor ultraviolet light. Our feeling, our sense of touch, is sensitive to an extremely limited degree. So all realities are co-existent; reality is adjusted according to our own experience. Something feels cool to me; that very thing is hot to another. In this way it is “hot” or “cold” according to our subjective experience. And so “our reality” will exist. So what is perceived by the mind is not imagination; it is reality. What is imagination to me is reality to another. The rising sun and the setting sun can be perceived simultaneously from different angles of vision. Within the whole creation all experience is co-existent.

What you now feel to be cool you can easily feel to be very hot by the will of the Supreme Lord. By His will, everything is possible. Everything depends on Him. He is the ultimate cause. What you consider as intolerably hot, you will be forced to feel as intolerably cold in a minute, if God so wills it. Everything depends upon His will. And that is coming here in either a modified way, in a general way, or in a particular special way according to His whim. In this way there may exist a gradation in how He manifests His will, but His will is the prime cause of everything. And He is above law. We must be conscious of that. Then we will be able to explain anything.

Student: So He is something like a hypnotist.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, He is a hypnotist. Everything depends on the sweet will of the Absolute. Everything is designed and destined by Him. Everything is in His hands.

The absolute center is by Himself and for Himself. He alone knows the purpose of everything. No one else. He alone knows His ways; no one else can know His ways. We may know only as much as He wants us to know. And that also can change by His sweet will. So He is completely free, an autocrat.

And that supreme autocrat can be captured only by love, not by knowledge. His ways are uncertain. How will our knowledge help us to understand Him ? Knowledge may be useful in understanding a thing if it follows a fixed law and has a fixed nature. But the Absolute is an autocrat; at any moment He can change all the laws. Then how shall we know the Infinite? In trying to understand the Absolute Truth, all our previous experience becomes null and void. At every second He can show us a new color. No degree of knowledge can make any clear statement of truth about God. Knowledge is futile in regard to the Infinite. First He is moving in one way, then another. On what basis will we make our calculation? His position is always changing by His sweet will.

His heart can be captured only by surrender. Through surrender alone we may please Him. And if He likes, He may make Himself known to us, but even then we may only know that portion of His personality, only that much about Him, that He cares to reveal to us. The designer of reality is an autocrat; He is above law. We must consider this carefully. He who is designing this universe is above law. He is not under the jurisdiction of any law. He does not have any fixed nature. At any time,

He may change His position according to His sweet will. And whatever He wills, that must come about.

Student: Bertrand Russell says that if there is a God, He must not be good. God Himself is not bound by law, but if we violate the law of God, we suffer. If God were good, He could have created all the souls of this world above law.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: If he says that, then that means that he wants to become the God of Gods. To Mr. Russell we say, "The Absolute Truth is unknown and unknowable. How can His ways be known? He is an autocrat. And you want to impose your crooked, meager, finite experience upon the Universal Truth! Your experience is the limited of the limited. And you want to thrust that small experience onto the unlimited whole? It is a most deplorable argument based on an assertion of faulty knowledge. From your finite position you want to know the measure of the whole Infinite, and then criticize Him. What is the foundation of your criticism? From what basis are you approaching the Infinite to criticize Him? How much do you know about Him?"

"If you see a mother chastising her son, and you see only that portion of her behavior, you may conclude that she is very cruel. But you do not know the affection with which the mother cares for the child. You are not aware of how she feels for his future good. You are unaware of all this. You may say that she is punishing the son and that she is therefore cruel, but you do not know the context of her behavior. Every incident must have its future and its past,

and you must carefully trace that out before passing any judgment or making any remark.

“In your case, how much are you limited in relationship to the Infinite? To what extent can you understand Him? Your capacity for knowing the Infinite is very meager. No one should attempt to make any remark about the infinite will on the basis of his own limited capacity. That is injudicious, and suicidal to a man of understanding.”

Student: I have heard it said that according to Vedic ontology, the soul is marginal. Do the *jīva* souls in the marginal or *taṭastha* position have knowledge that there is an upper and a lower world, that there is suffering in the material world and divine service in the spiritual world?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: A *jīva* soul has adaptability of both sides; marginal means “endowed with adaptability towards both the spiritual and material worlds without participation or any experience of either.” The marginal soul (*taṭasthā-jīva*) has only seed adaptability towards both. He is situated in the margin between the spiritual and material worlds, and the margin strictly means that one is in a position to analyze adaptability. He can go towards the spiritual world and he can come towards the material world. The possibility of either is there in potentiality, but he is left to exercise his freedom. Because the soul is a conscious unit, he has free will. Freedom is inseparable from consciousness. A conscious unit and freedom are one and the same. Conscious atom means endowed with freedom. Without freedom, it is matter.

Student: The soul has freedom, but does it have knowledge of the different aspects of reality?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Because the soul is very small, his freedom is also imperfect; a soul in the marginal position is very vulnerable. Freedom does not mean absolute freedom. Because the soul's existence is small, his freedom is defective; there is the possibility of committing a mistake. Freedom of the minute soul does not mean perfect freedom. Complete freedom would be perfect reality, but the minute soul is endowed with the smallest atomic freedom. This is the position of the atoms of consciousness, and this is why they are vulnerable. They may judge properly or improperly; that is the position of those who are situated in the marginal position. If the soul were not endowed with the freedom to determine his position, we would have to blame God for our suffering. But we cannot blame God. The starting point of the soul's suffering is within himself.

The suffering of the soul in bondage is similar to the suffering of one who is addicted to a drug. Before one begins taking intoxication, the first step towards addiction is curiosity. Then after one has taken intoxication for a certain amount of time, he cannot do without intoxication. Our attachment to *māyā*, or misconception, is like addiction to a drug. At first we are curious, but when we become habituated to the intoxication of misconception, we are forced to continue using that intoxicating substance. Before beginning the habit it might never have begun. But once you have begun, as much as you cultivate an addiction, the intoxication will devour you.

The first cause of our entanglement with material nature was our mixing with *māyā* in a play of curiosity. But as much as we make friends with her, so much she comes to devour us. In this way we are in the clutches of *māyā*. But in the beginning our involvement was very slight, like one experimenting with drugs. The beginning of our play with *māyā* involved the voluntary misuse of our free will, and that has led us to this present stage where *māyā* has devoured us. *Māyā* means our attraction for intoxication: where there is love of exploitation, there is *māyā*. And truth is the opposite of exploitation. Truth is found in dedicating everything for the center, for Krishna.

Student: If in the marginal position (*taṭasthā*) the soul has exposure to both reality and illusion, why doesn't he have enough discrimination to come to the right path?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: He has no real depth of discrimination; only a little discrimination. But it is there. However small it may be, it is there.

Student: Can he also go to the spiritual domain of the Lord?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, and some souls do go to that side. Some go to that side, and some come to this side. The soul has independence. Not all come to one side or the other. Then there would be some compulsion. But there is no compulsion. It is a free choice; some are coming to this side, and some are going to that side.

Student: Is there any knowledge that can come from outside, or is it possible for the soul in the marginal position to get help from an outside agent?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: At every stage in our existence, outward help is present. But in the undifferentiated stage of spiritual existence in the marginal plane, only higher agents can help. An ordinary saintly person cannot detect the defects or transcendental qualities in the undifferentiated soul. Such help is the work of a higher personality. Only God Himself or an exalted or empowered saintly person can help a soul in that condition. Suppose you have a newborn baby. Only a doctor who is a specialist with advanced knowledge can treat the newborn. But when the child is a little grown up and can talk, he can explain the symptoms of what is paining him. At that time, an ordinary doctor may help him. Ordinary saints cannot help us in every stage of life. They can guide us and help us only up to a certain standard. But the Lord Himself and those highly empowered saints who are closely connected to Him can help us in any stage of our spiritual development.

The Super Subject

Question: How can we apply proper discrimination and judgment in our search for knowledge of the Infinite?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Discrimination may take place in different planes, but it must have a connection with the higher plane. Judgment and discrimination should be in the right plane. Judgment and discrimination come from our side, but our progress depends on the favor of the higher side. It must have that connection, so surrender is required. Then the Lord will approach us and take us up to that higher plane. Somehow, we have to persuade the highest authority to favor us. We must invite the higher authority to accept us. It does not depend so much on our own ability, but on our submission and surrender, our hankering for mercy – not our positive capacity but our negative character, our surrender. As a subject, I cannot make the Infinite the object of my discrimination; He is always the super-subject. I cannot make God the object of my discrimination. He is super-subjective. My position, my attitude, must invite the higher authority to come down to my level and help me, favor me. Real discrimination or knowledge

should take us to self-surrender. Surrender is necessary to attract the attention of the Lord. Everything depends on His sweet will. He is an autocrat: His sweet will is everything. To attract His sweet will, to increase our negative side, our tendency for surrender, to attract His favor, this will be our real problem if we wish to progress in spiritual life. And to attract the Lord's attention, all our qualifications must be of a negative character: we shall require surrender, submission, humility. And then we can press our position by praying, "O my Lord, I'm in the worst need; without Your grace I can't stand. I am helpless. I cannot endure without Your favor." That sort of hankering, earnestness, and necessity for His mercy will help us. In other words, we are to improve our negative character, and in that way we shall attract the positive, Krishna.

Then we shall develop proper discrimination, for at that time our subjective character will be to act only as His agent. He will inspire from within in whatever we do. Our discrimination will be utilized in carrying out His order. It will not be possible for us to have any separate interest, any original discrimination. I will carry out His order, or the order of the higher officer of the Supreme Lord. I may use my discrimination about how to make the lower arrangements in carrying out that order. But towards the Lord, who is higher than me, my attitude will always be one of submission, surrender, obedience, allegiance, unconditional slavery. The slave mentality will help us in entering that plane. If we truly feel ourselves to be low and in want, then the supply of mercy will come from the higher plane. This

should always be the tenor of our thought: high and low. Subjective and objective. And Krishna is not subject to any rule; He is an autocrat. These are the data we must keep in our mind always. Everything moves according to His sweet will; our problem, then, is how to draw His attention. This will be possible only by increasing our negative tendency, by proving to Him, in a bona fide way, that I'm the most needy. At that time, we shall develop proper discrimination and knowledge; that is, our discrimination will be utilized in carrying out His order.

Question: In the *Īsopaniṣad*, there is a mantra:

vidyām cāvidyām ca yas
tad vedobhayam saha
avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā
vidyayāmṛtam aśnute

The translation has been given by Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj as follows: “Only one who can learn the process of nescience and that of transcendental knowledge side by side can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death, and enjoy the full blessings of immortality.” What does he mean by learning the process of nescience and that of knowledge side by side?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: One is negative and another is positive. Knowledge means to know what is false and to leave that, and to recognize what is true and to accept that. Do you follow? To cultivate an understanding about falsehood and truth means to know, “This is false, we must

reject it; this is truth, I must accept it.” In that way this verse may be understood. To know the bad, to culture the bad, means to know when a thing is bad and to reject it, and to culture the truth means to accept it. Not that culture means that we should culture ignorance in order to have it. What is encouraged here in this mantra is rejection of falsehood and acceptance of truth. The defects of *māyā* should be analyzed. We must know: “Oh, this is *māyā*. This is bad, this is hopeless, this is undesirable.” We must know to avoid these things. We must reject nescience and we shall try to attain science, knowledge. We shall try to understand the bright side and aim for the light, to accept it more and more and progress towards truth.

Question: A fifteenth century German Catholic philosopher, Nicholas of Cusa^{*}, taught the doctrine *Of Learned Ignorance*. How would that compare to Vaiṣṇava philosophy?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: We may accept the bright side: noble ignorance in our view is *jñāna-sunya bhakti*, knowledge-free devotion. Noble ignorance means not to

^{*}The *Dictionary of Philosophy* contains the following entry: "Nicholas of Cusa (or Nicholas Cusanus) (c. 1400—64) German cardinal, whose "*theological negativa*" was influential in the Renaissance. Main philosophical work: *De Docta Ignorantia* (Of Learned Ignorance) (1440). Using the methods of medieval logic, Cusanus examined the nature of God (Book I) and the Universe (Book II). His view of their relationship was fundamentally Neoplatonic; the Universe (*maximum contractum*), seen as the totality of finite things, flows out from and returns to God (*maximum absolutum*), whose nature is unknowable. Hence all human knowledge is simply learned ignorance.

attempt to calculate in this world but to surrender: to lose our faith in calculation, in our subjective capacity of calculation, and to surrender to the Supreme. We may interpret *jñāna-sunya bhakti* like that. “Learned ignorance” is when learning understands its own limit, when one realizes, “I’m finite, my learning is also finite; learning cannot make me a bona fide inquirer about the Infinite.” It is better to surrender to the Infinite, and let Him work within us for our best interest. Submission, surrender to the Infinite, is the highest reach of learning. Learned ignorance means to realize that we can’t know the Infinite. If he makes Himself known to us, then we can know Him; otherwise not.

Question: Nicholas of Cusa said, “God is inconceivable by thought.” What do you say?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, only through devotion and by His grace may God be known. Our cultivation of knowledge won’t give us God. That is the failure of knowledge – investigation about God, the Infinite. Only His grace can give Him. We have to come to the side of devotion and do away with knowledge. Our attempts to make much of knowledge will be stopped when coming in connection with the Infinite. Knowledge has got its limit. And when knowledge fails, faith begins. Knowledge fails and faith develops. You must develop faith and give up hope in knowledge. A research laboratory cannot give you God. When the Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin returned from space, an old lady inquired from him: “You went so high; have you seen God there?” But he was an atheist.

He said, “God is like a horse drawing our cart. What do you think about God for? We use God in our service. With our knowledge and our research science we have forced God to serve us.” This is the proud boast of science: “We have engaged God in our service; we are above God, superior to God. God is our creation.” As if He is the creation of a particular half-mad section of society.

Question: Nicholas of Cusa also taught that “in God, opposites coincide. Opposites – smallest and greatest – come together in God.” What is your understanding?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Not only big and small, but even good and bad, even anti-parties, everything is harmonized in God. Good-bad, friend-enemy, everything is harmonized and accommodated there. And they lose their poison; all become good. He is the all-accommodating, all-harmonizing, all-adjusting principle, both directly and indirectly. Thesis and antithesis find their highest synthesis in the Krishna conception of divinity.

Science *vs.* *NeScience*

Student: I have finished my studies and now I am taking a break, a vacation.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Please don't take offense, but that you are involved in the present system of education means that you are diving deeply in the ocean of ignorance. You are making progress in the ocean of ignorance.

Student: What do you mean by that?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: As a student of nescience you are moving in the opposite direction from truth. You are being taught that you and other souls of your type are the subjects, the center of the universe, and everything, all else, is an object meant only for your exploitation. You are being taught that we are exploiters and that the entire environment is for our exploitation. That is the foundation upon which the present system of education is based – a conception which is completely false.

In reality, we are not the subject, the center of the universe. The cause is in the higher world. Krishna is the Supreme Absolute Truth. Simply by His will, everything is

brought into existence. He said, “Let there be light,” there was light; “Let there be water,” there was water; “Let there be earth,” there was earth. His will is all-powerful. To know this is real education – subjective learning. What we experience sprang up from the divine will. Just as if He were a magician, He can show one thing to you and something entirely different to me. The Supersubject, the universal subject, has such power. So our idea is completely the opposite of the fossilists. It is not that from time eternal the fossil is developing into this world of experience – it is just the opposite. Therefore, by conceiving of this world on the basis of fossilism, we are diving deep into an intense ocean of ignorance.

Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj asked a few of his disciples who were research scholars to crush the fossilism of Darwin, that is, the idea that everything is coming from fossils. This idea must be demolished. It is not so.

Everything is coming from above. What we experience at present is like the outcome of hypnosis. In the process of hypnosis, the hypnotist can make us withdraw our consciousness from anything at any moment and show us another way to view reality. In the same way, Godhead is free, and whatever He wills becomes reality. Whatever he imagines becomes reality (*satya-sankalpa*). He can force us to see something, and when He does so, we cannot see it in any other way.

If you can understand this principle, you can understand how everything is possible with divinity. Then you can have some faith in what is Godhead. Godhead means this:

the origin of creation. And yet this creation is only an insignificant part of His divine nature. He has infinite qualities and activities. And this world in which we live is only a negligible part of the cosmic manifestation. The whole basis of everything is there in Him. It comes from up to down, and not from down to up. To the idea that everything is developing from downward to up we must say, "no." A fossil is not a thing perfect or sufficient enough to create all this. To say that from a fossil intelligence is coming is a fool's conception.

Intelligence can be traced everywhere. As much as we analyze, we find higher reason, higher intelligence. Scientists are astonished to find the intelligence that is within nature. They continue to discover higher and higher laws. And yet all those laws already existed. It is just that these fools had no awareness of it, but an extremely fine degree of order existed long before their "discovery." The wonderful laws of nature existed long before their invention. And this is evident everywhere. The physical laws of nature do not exist by dint of their creation. Do the scientists create the laws of nature? They may invent so many things, but the intelligence within nature already exists. And there is something more: Power exists everywhere. Where has it come from? The scientists, intelligence to discover or invent a thing: where has it come from? Is it coming from the brain? Or is it merely a portion of dead flesh? Does intelligence come from somewhere else?

Consciousness, spirit, is all-pervading. It is present even in the trees, stones, earth, ether, air, everywhere. And to

know the truth, we must connect with the conscious principle of the infinite. What is the Infinite? He is almighty, omniscient, omnipotent, all sympathetic, all-loving. Our real aspiration must be to have a direct connection with Him, leaving aside the charm of His created substance. We should want to negotiate how we can have a connection with the Creator Himself.

And His position is not simply that of creator. This world is a creation of a lower order. But a higher creation also exists in a plane of reality which is infinitely higher than this world of experience. We should inquire whether it is possible for us to have a life in that soil. We should try to understand what are the layers of reality in that realm of consciousness, and how we can go higher and higher in that plane. We should inquire about that and find out how we can enter there. We must try to understand what is the key to the entrance into that transcendental abode. This should be the basis of our search for truth. We should inquire into how to become free from both the plane of renunciation and the plane of exploitation.

Once, Krishna went to the court of the Kauravas, the camp of Duryodhana and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, with talk of peace. At that time, Karṇa, Duryodhana, and the others in the party attempted to bind Him down and put Him into prison. They thought that if Krishna were to be imprisoned, then the whole Pāṇḍava camp would automatically be finished. They knew that Krishna was the life and soul as well as advisor of their enemies, the Pāṇḍavas. They thought, “Now we have Krishna in our fist; we must immediately

imprison Him.” They went to tie Him down, but Krishna manifested His Universal Form. At that time, He revealed His divine nature in such a way that the men who went to tie Him down were perplexed. They thought, “What is He!” When Krishna manifested His Universal Form of thousands of heads, hands, and legs, they thought, “This is a gigantic thing! Here in this form we find Bāladeva on one side, Arjuna on another, and Bṛghu on another. Where are we to apply the rope? We can’t!” They were perplexed.

At that time, when Krishna showed His Universal Form in the assembly of Kurus at Hastinapura, those who were present began to chant in praise of Krishna. Bhīṣma, Drona, Nārada, and Vyāsa were present at that time in the assembly and they began to praise the Lord. Hearing their voices, the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra was charmed, and prayed to Krishna: “I can’t see You; I am blind. But I hear these great persons chanting Your praises upon seeing Your wonderful form. You can do anything and everything. So for the time being, please remove my blindness; let me see Your figure and color. Let me behold the beauty which they are praising so much. After removing my blindness You may again make me blind.” Krishna replied, “It is not necessary for your blindness to be removed. I need only command that you see Me, and you will be able to see Me.”

That is the very nature of seeing Him. Our vision of Godhead depends on His will. It is not the eye that can see Him, nor the ear that can hear Him. He is above sense experience. Only by His will may He be seen. He said, “You will see Me,” and Dhṛtarāṣṭra saw Him. Although he

was blind, still he could see Krishna's divine form. Then what is Krishna? If a deaf man can hear Him and a blind man can see Him, then what is the nature of that divine substance which is Krishna?

Another time, when Arjuna wanted to see the Universal Form of Krishna – the Viśvarūpa – Krishna said: “Yes, Arjuna, see Me!” Arjuna beheld his Universal Form. Krishna asked him, “What do you see?” And Arjuna replied, “I am seeing so many wonderful divine manifestations. It is a wonder of wonders!” So Krishna's sweet will is the basis of everything. We are living in correlation with that absolute power. There is no stability to the environment where we live at present. All importance is on the divine will of Godhead. He is the cause of all causes. From Him this world emanates and by Him it is maintained.

The plane of dedication, however, is far higher than the mundane realm. And we are told that by dedication, by surrender, we can have a direct connection with the center of everything that be. So our advice to the scientists is “Physician, cure thyself! You have come to give so many dazzling models of civilization to the world, but first you should cure yourself fully. What you have come to distribute is all a hoax. The laws of nature, abided by everything that surrounds us, is only the sweet will of the supreme. The laws of nature are not a rigid thing. Their basis is the sweet will of an autocrat. So what you know – that is nothing; it is no knowledge.” At any moment, the laws of nature may be changed by the sweet will of the Supreme Autocrat, and another set of rules may completely replace them.

The key to enact the change in our ability to experience reality is in His hands. He may easily say, “O Arjuna, you see this, but I am that.” And Arjuna will say, “Yes, now I see that You are that.” Everything may be seen in one way by His will and at the next moment that vision of reality may be withdrawn by Him. So the knowledge we can acquire through materialistic education has no value at all. With this realization we should enthusiastically begin the search for Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful.

Krishna is charm Himself. He is the all-charming Absolute. Our innate need is to find sweetness, beauty, *rasa*, *ānandam*, ecstasy, happiness. Everyone wants this. No one can say “I do not want happiness.” No one, from the lowest atheist to the highest theist, can deny this. All will say, “Yes, I want ecstasy; I want sweetness, happiness, peace.” This is the common demand in every conceiving unit. From the worst atheist to the greatest theist – wherever there is conception everyone wants peaceful existence. So our direct necessity is with Him, Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful. He is *raso vai sah*: ecstasy, beauty Himself. We must begin our search for that.

Do not lose a moment. Don’t waste a minute of your time in wild goose-chasing. Give up everything. *Sarva dharmān parityajya*. Leave it behind. Give up all phases of duty that you are so busily engaged in. It is all worthless. Begin the search for that divine principle who is the creator, the master of everything, and the fulfillment of everything. Search for Him directly. Give up all your so-called obligations and duties in your relative position. They are

misconceived, misunderstood from your present defective position. Do not rely on them. Make a direct search for the prime cause from which everything is coming as a miracle. He is the fulfillment of our lives. He is the fulfillment of every atomic existence in all worlds.

We must try to march towards Krishna with His blessings upon our heads. And His agents will give us important help in that direction. Others can do nothing to help us in our inner search; we must take shelter of the saints. We must take shelter of His divine name; it is inseparable from His existence. The sound aspect of divinity can help us a great deal on the way back to Godhead. His holy name is our slogan, our war cry. “Hare Krishna!” With that slogan, we shall march on with His genuine agents. We must follow them and withdraw ourselves from all other possibilities and promises, all so-called prospects of life. They are nothing; they are of no value.

Student: There are many inequities in the world; there is a lot of unfairness, is there not? How can we account for that?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Fair and unfair are both false. They are just like a dream. One may have a good dream or a bad dream. In either case it is only dreaming. So one should not waste energy to remove the unfair and to increase the fairness. Fair, unfair – it is all false, completely false. In the *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā*, 4.176) it is written:

‘dvaite’ bhadra-bhadra-jñāna, saba – ‘manodharma’
 ‘ei bhāla, ei manda’, – ei saba ‘bhrama’

“In the material world, conceptions of good and bad are all mental concoctions. Therefore, saying, ‘This is good, this is bad,’ is a mistake.” The basis of this calculation is false. Our real interest is not there. It is a false scent we are pursuing. Our fulfillment is not to be found in that direction at all.

In this material world there is very little distinction between fairness and unfairness. Everything in this world is based on cheating. Everyone is cheating. There may be cheating of different kinds, but all are cheating. Any fairness or unfairness is an illusion. One may have a good, hopeful dream, or a disastrous dream. But both are dreams. Both are false. And fairness within this world is also false; it is a mental concoction. And what is apparently evil within the relative conception of evil is also false. Why allow ourselves to waste time in a wild goose chase? After all, these relative conceptions of fair and unfair, good and evil, are all false. Whether there is a good hope or a bad hope, all hope within the plane of misconception is based on mental concoction.

Student: But there are so many people that are starving in the world. It seems unfair.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: What to speak of starving, we are in a cave, imprisoned in a cage. That is not desirable for the soul at all. The whole world – suns, stars, moons, oceans, mountains – all are vanishing, and again coming and going. You may be the lord of all you survey, but you are a lord in the cremation ground – a master of the cremation ground,

only to deplore, “Oh, everything is passing away. Every second everything is passing away!” In Gray’s elegy he wrote,

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour;
The path of glory leads but to the grave.

Everything here leads only to the grave and will be finished.

Student: I guess what I want to ask is how we can account for these inequities. I know that you are saying that there is no distinction. But why is there suffering?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: The cause is the misuse of the free will of the *jīva* soul. The misuse of the wealth given to you.

Student: Given by the Supreme Power?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: By the Supreme Power. As a part of a particular potency, you have free will eternally existing within you. And by misuse of your freedom, you have selected to become a king in the mortal world, just as Satan is portrayed in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. He wanted to reign in hell rather than to serve in heaven. The free will – the weak, vulnerable, childlike free will – misused. We came here to be a monarch of all we survey: to reign in hell. Inherent adaptability is an innate feature of the soul. We could have selected service in heaven. Then our desires would have been fulfilled. But we have selected the wrong thing. We have moved in the wrong way. We wanted to be

monarch. We could not select slavery in the higher realm. We selected monarchy in hell.

This material world is hell, the soil of affliction. And here we face affliction in variegated ways. These are mainly classified as birth, death, infirmity, and disease. These undesirable things must be there in hell. There is the subtle difference. If you are to live in heaven, then you must live there as a surrendered soul. That is a much higher soil than this. And ultimately we see that to serve in heaven is infinitely better than to reign in hell.

Spiritual Evolution

Question: I want to know more about the position of women in your tradition. Are women allowed to participate in the process of practicing, praying and showing their devotion?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Who is a woman here may not be a woman there in that higher realm; who is a man here may not be a man there. The body is only a dress. The soul has its mental dress, and according to that, we wear this physical dress, the flesh dress. Sexual identity means the flesh and the mind. In the soul, who will represent which type of sexual identity there, is uncertain at present here in this plane. But women there in the higher realm have a higher prospect – a brighter prospect in the spiritual world.

In the spiritual realm, those souls that are female – who have attained that formation of the soul's realization – hold a better and higher position than men. Here in the plane of exploitation, men hold the better position. But there, in the plane of submission and surrender, the female form of mind is more rewarding than the male's form of mind. The negative aspect of submission is more valuable in connection with Krishna. The supreme positive is

Krishna Himself. And His potency is of a negative nature. We belong to the negative-potency group, not the Master group. The Lord Himself is the possessor of the potency.

Question: You refer to Krishna as Him. Does that mean that Krishna is manifested as a male figure?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, male. That is, He is the predominating moiety, predominating half of the Absolute. And others are to be predominated by Him. There are two halves of the Absolute Truth: the male half, or predominating moiety, and the female half, or predominated moiety. Positive and negative. It is similar to the concept of the proton and electron, the positive and the negative. The proton is in the center and the electron and innumerable other subatomic particles are like so many planets moving about the center.

Question: Do you believe in the general concept of equality?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: No two things are ever equal, in this world or in the spiritual world. No two things can ever be the same or equal. Everything has its specific characteristic. One atom is different from another atom, one electron is different from another electron. It cannot but be. Everything has its particular differentiated character.

Question: How can you determine whether one thing is superior to another?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We must judge a thing from the

universal standpoint. If we are to judge a thing, we must judge its quality on the basis of its connection with the Center. That measurement may be made according to the standard of ecstasy, *rasam*, just as gold is the standard for measuring the value of different monetary papers. There may be many currencies – the pound, the ruble, the dollar, the rupee, the yen – but the common standard for determining their value is gold. In the same way, there may be different types of calculation of one's relationship with the Absolute on the basis of *rasa*, ecstasy or divine mellow. *Rasa* is also scientifically divided. *Rasa* is classified in five groups: *śānta*, passive, *dāśya*, servitude, *sakhya*, friendship, *vātsalya*, parenthood, and *mādhura*, consortherhood. And then again these groups are classified according to the degree or intensity of *rasa* in each group. Ultimately *rasam*, *ānandam*, happiness – is the common standard by which to judge which religion is higher or lower.

If we want to establish the value of a thing, we must do so by seeing how much of the common requirement it provides. For example, food is a common requirement. We cannot eat dollars in a time of famine. But one who is in possession of food is in a good position. We cannot avoid food. We may not always require dollars, but we must have food. A nation cannot stand without food. That is an indispensable necessity for everyone. In the same way, joy is the innate requirement of every soul, every living thing. And so the position of a particular religious conception may be judged according to the development of *rasa* that may be traced there.

There are different proposals in the religious conceptions of different peoples. There are Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and Jews. Among those who follow the Vedic doctrines, there are Vaiṣṇavas, Śāṅkarites, and so many others. But if we are to judge the value of different religious conceptions in a comparative study, we must judge their value by three things: *sat*, *cit*, and *ānandam*. This means we must judge how far a religion is durable, eternal; what is the quality of what is conceived; how far can we conceive of it within the plane of knowledge; and what is its development of *rasa*, *ānandam*. These three things must be there: existence, consciousness, and the food of consciousness – ecstasy, happiness. We are to compare religion on the basis of these three things.

In this way we may ask, “What is the proposal of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or Buddhism regarding existence, knowledge, and ecstasy, which is the goal of all religion.” Christianity, Islam, Vaiṣṇavism – so many religious faiths exist. We are to compare them and then accept what is best. Different adjustments are made by each faith. The different religions of the world are not to be cast away, but there are those for whom each will be – for the present – useful and relevant.

But according to our understanding, Krishna is the personification of ecstasy and beauty. And so the highest religious process for achieving complete ecstasy will be the search for Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful. But how should we search? Through devotion. And what is that? Dedication. What is dedication? Surrender, self-sacrifice –

die to live. And what is living? To live in love, Krishna-*prema*, love divine. The whole picture can be described in two words, Krishna-*prema*. The search for Śrī Krishna is *sambandha jñāna* or understanding our relationship with the object of our fulfillment. Then what is that search, and what is the end of the search? In a few words, in a nutshell, we have described all these things on the title page of our book, *The Search for Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful*.

And this may be understood through the help of Śrī Guru and his grace: it may be explained that the necessity of guru is there, it is universal. To err is human, but not to err is also an inner tendency. Śrī Gurudeva comes to give us relief from our internal trouble. In this way the conception of guru may be developed. The necessity for guru can be inferred from the universal basis of nature which is present around us.

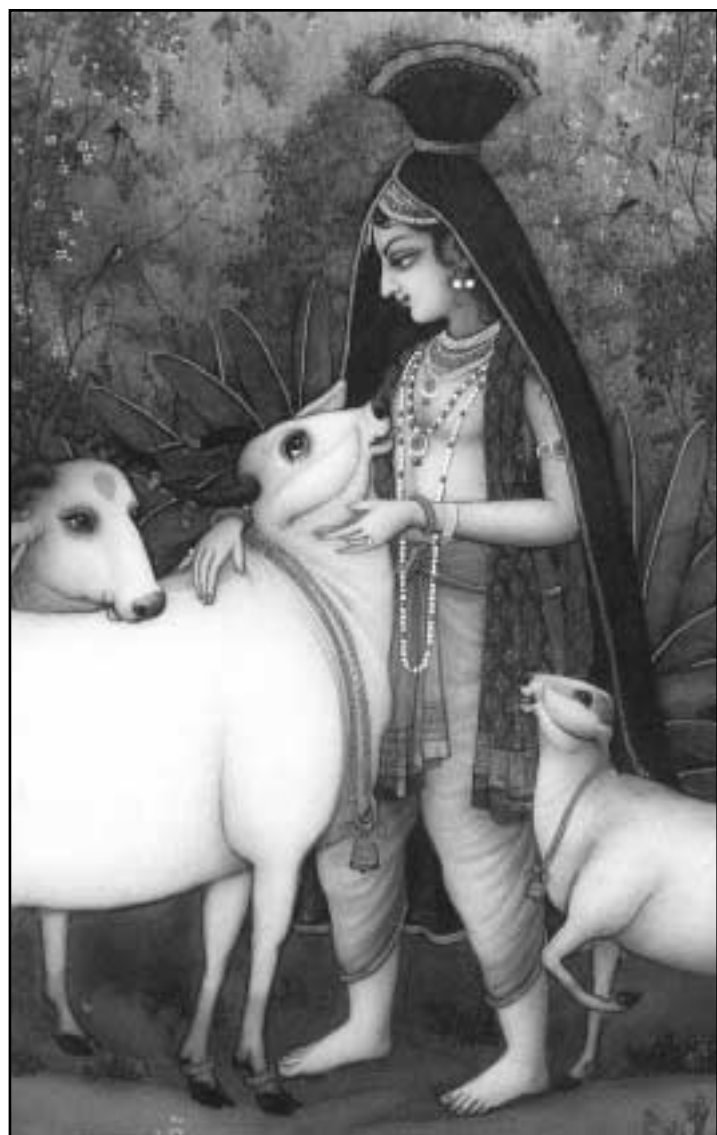
And from there it will gradually move to the absolute. Ultimately the conception of guru will come to Krishna. In this highest sense, Krishna is guru. Who can remove all our doubts, and satisfy all our inquiries? It is Krishna alone. Gradually our faith will develop and take us to the one who can clear all our doubts. We may have doubts upon doubts. One doubt may go and thousands of doubts may come, but guru is one who can clear all our doubts, *bhidyate hr̥daya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ* (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.21), who can do away with all the suspicions in our mind; it is he who is full. In this way we must progress. The birth of our faith may be in intellectualism,

but its goal is transcendental. The birth of our search and its destination will come to meet together. The birth of faith is from the potency of Krishna, and after moving through the whole of the Infinite it will come again to the potency where we will take our eternal position.

Krishna consciousness means the infinite in the finite: the affectionate connection of the finite with the Infinite helps him to live in infinity. The finite backed by the Infinite may become infinitely resourceful. Our Guru Mahārāj gave the example that if a poor girl marries a prince, although she may have nothing, by her affectionate relationship with the prince, she turns into a princess. So one who has nothing, only a friendly relationship, gets command over everything. This is the nature of Krishna consciousness.

One's resources may increase in that way. Intrinsically, a *jīva* soul is insignificant; it is an infinitesimal point of a point of a point, but by coming in affectionate connection with the Absolute, he gets the facility of all the advantages of a life with the Absolute. Then he or she is in possession of the Whole. We cannot really ascertain anyone's potency or power without considering his relationship with others. Israel is a small country; Russia could conquer it in five minutes, but – America is there. So relationships, connections, and friends must be taken into consideration when understanding the power of a thing.

There is a fable that shows how a small bird was able to disturb and even control the whole ocean. Once, a small bird laid her eggs by the ocean's shore, but the ocean





Garuḍa the carrier of Viṣṇu

carried the eggs away. When the ocean stole her eggs, the bird became angry and asked for them back, but the ocean would not return them. The bird went to her master, that bird went to his master, and in this way they finally went to Garuḍa, the master of all birds. Garuḍa is the servant bird-carrier of Viṣṇu. And

Garuḍa came to the aid of that small bird. He threatened the ocean, "If you don't return this little bird's eggs immediately, I shall drink you to the last drop." The ocean had to submit. In this way the unlimited ocean was conquered by a small bird. As the moral of this story, Pandit Viṣṇu Sharma gives this conclusion: "When examining a person, we must consider his friends and the friends of his friends. Without such considerations, we should not try to estimate the power of a particular thing." Because of friendly association, the ocean was conquered. In the same way, by making friendship with the Infinite, one can conquer the Infinite.

Pure Devotion

Once, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had a dream in which he was wandering in the sky chanting the holy name. He came upon the court of Yamarāja, where Yamarāja himself was sitting with Brahmā, Nārada, and others discussing a point from a verse in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30):

api cet sudurācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

The generally accepted meaning of this verse is: “Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is an *ananya-bhāḥ* devotee who worships Me alone in devotional service which is free from *karma* and *jñāna*, he is to be considered saintly because his endeavors are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed.”

Here, Krishna says, “Whatever he has done, if he is exclusively given to Myself, he should be considered as My devotee. *Samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*. And whatever he is doing is cent percent right.” But then the next passage

says *kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā*: “very soon he will be a man of righteousness; he will become *dharmātmā* – dutiful.”

As Yamarāja, Brahmā, and Nārada discussed this point, a question came up. Krishna says, *bhajate mām ananya-bhāk*, “one who is My exclusive devotee.” The question arises, “What is exclusive devotion or *ananya-bhajana*?” Krishna says, “Give up all other religious conceptions and surrender to Me alone”: *sarva dharmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaranam vraja*. That is exclusive devotion. But if one is practicing exclusive devotion, then he is already *dharmātmā*, he is already righteous. How is it then that in the very next verse, Krishna says “soon he becomes *dharmātmā*”? How are we to adjust this? Krishna says:

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

“He soon becomes righteous (*dharmātmā*) and attains lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.”

This is the general meaning of this verse. Krishna tells Arjuna, “He soon becomes *dharmātmā*. My devotee is never ruined. Go and declare this to the public.” Krishna says that after the devotee became *ananya-bhāk* – that is, he gave up all sorts of duties and surrendered to Krishna – then again he will be a dutiful man.

As Brahmā, Nārada, and Yamarāja discussed this point, they saw Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura walking in the sky and

taking the holy name. Then one of them suggested, “There is a pure devotee. He should be able to give the real meaning.” Then Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was invited in their midst and was asked, “How shall we adjust these points? Krishna has said that this person is an exclusive devotee, that he has renounced all sorts of duties and surrendered to Krishna. And yet, in no time it will be seen that he is very dutiful. How can we understand this?”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explained that “he quickly becomes righteous” refers not to the exclusive devotee, but to one who considers the exclusive devotee pure in all circumstances. “Even if he performs some abominable act, he is really a *sādhū*, a saint.” One who can think of an exclusive devotee in that way will soon become *dharmātmā*. This was Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s explanation.

In this way, in my commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*, I have followed Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s explanation. I also saw that it was redundant to say that an *ananya-bhāṅk* devotee becomes *dharmātmā*. Krishna says that an exclusive devotee should be thought of as a *sādhū*, an honest man. One who says that an exclusive devotee, a surrendered soul to Krishna, should be thought of as pure whatever be his external practices – the man who is making this remark – he becomes righteous. This is the proper conclusion. What he says is cent percent truth. And the next thing Krishna says is that he who can remark in such a way will be purified very soon.

Krishna says that by such appreciation of the exclusive devotee, a person will soon come to his eternal duty and

attain eternal peace. “So I ask you, O son of Kuntī, Arjuna, to go and promise in public that My exclusive devotee will never be lost” (*kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhakta pranāśyati*). Then you will get the benefit of the man whose remark improves his life.

Otherwise, why should Krishna tell Arjuna, “Make a public announcement that My devotee is never ruined.” What effect will there be for Arjuna? But one who declares: “an exclusive devotee of Krishna is saintly no matter what he does,” soon becomes righteous. If Arjuna declares this, he will become *dharmātmā*. He will get the benefit. So Krishna tells him, “You make this remark. Take a bold step; take a risk and make this remark. Then you will also get that benefit I have described.”

Of course, Arjuna is a *parṣada*, an eternal associate of Krishna, but using him as an example, Krishna tells him, “You do it.” Arjuna has taken the position of an inquirer independent of his *parṣada* character.

When I was publishing my commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*, a godbrother once told me, “If you give such an explanation, then in the name of *ananya-bhāṅk-bhakti*, exclusive devotion, less advanced devotees will take advantage of this. What you are revealing here is a very hidden meaning. It is not meant for the public. It is a confidential point: *api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāṅk, sādhu eva*: ‘He may be the worst debauchee in his outer life. But if he is *ananya-bhāṅk*, a surrendered soul, he should be considered a really honest man.’ If you explain things according to your interpretation, everyone will say, ‘Oh, I am an

ananya-bhāk devotee,’ and they will go on with their debauchery. So please don’t express this interpretation of yours so explicitly.”

But I published my commentary over this objection because the principle underlying this verse is an important one. One who has surrendered to Krishna is accepted as his own. And just as Krishna has rights over everything and is never a trespasser, so his own man should never be considered a trespasser at any time. This is confirmed elsewhere, in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: *ātmā bhūyāya ca kalpate*, “My devotee belongs to Me.” So one who works by inspiration from Krishna should never be considered a trespasser. He can enjoy anything on Krishna’s behalf if he is really a surrendered soul. He should be considered as Krishna’s. He has free access to everything that belongs to Krishna. But some objected, saying, “Don’t be so broad in your interpretation. If you do so, then the people at large will do abominable things in the name of pure devotion. They will say, ‘Oh, I am Vaiṣṇava. I am *acyuta-gotra*, I am one of Krishna’s own men. What is his property is mine. I can enjoy everything.’”

Then of course the question comes, “How do we recognize *ananya-bhāk-bhakti*, exclusive devotion? The real trouble is here. Merely professing that I am a pure devotee won’t do. Rather, a real devotee will think, “I am not a real devotee.” That will be his understanding, his inner feeling. Exclusive devotion is not a small thing. A genuine devotee thinks, “I can’t be an *ananya-bhāk-bhakta*. I have not attained that stage. It is very difficult. Rather I am going away from that.” That will be the general tenor of his attitude.

What to speak of lesser devotees, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself says, “People associate me with Krishna. They say that I have an illicit connection with Krishna. But what they say is all false. My grief is that I could not give my entire heart to Krishna. I cannot say that I am completely His. My internal trouble is that I could not become wholly His and they falsely think that I am. I have no objection to becoming fully His, even to having an illicit connection with Him; but that I can’t become so, this is my great fault.” That will be the general attitude of a real *ananya-bhāṅk-bhakta*.

Just the opposite tendency will come. The fact is that one who has accepted Krishna exclusively has no taste for any other thing, so really he is not *durācāra*; he is not capable of acting in an abominable way. Internally he is always connected with Krishna. In external life he is indifferent. So what he is doing is not done by him. One who acts in that plane of reality may destroy thousands of universes, but does not do anything (*hatvāpi sa imāl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate*). He is acting in the transcendental plane, the *nirguṇa* plane. He is not to be seen in terms of what is good or bad in the calculation of this world. He is absent here.

What is in connection with Krishna is all good; it is *nirguṇa*, transcendental, without material qualities. In this world, truth is a relative thing. “This is true, this is not true, this is mine, this is yours,” – what value do these things have? If a devotee steals a flower for Krishna, you may say, “Oh, why are you stealing my flower?” But what is the guarantee that the flower belongs to you? These are different

stages of bogus conceptions of reality. A man who has possession of some land declares himself the owner. Then a big landowner comes and says, “You are not the owner. I have real possession of this land. I have allowed you only to use it.” But beyond the landowner a king may come and say, “Oh no, this is my land. Your ownership is only relative. I am the ruler of this land. It belongs to me.” In this way one relative conception of truth fights with another. And morality stands only on this conception: “this is mine, this is yours.”

All these conceptions of ownership are false. All these transactions of morality are false, because they are not in connection with the Supreme Truth. So the devotee’s apparent misbehavior is quite the contrary in reality.

‘dvaite’ bhadṛābhadrā-jñāna, saba – ‘manodharma’
 ‘ei bhāla, ei manda’, – ei saba ‘bhrama’

Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 4.176

“In the material world, conceptions of good and bad or right and wrong are all mental concoctions. Therefore, saying, ‘This is good and this is bad’ is all a mistake.” So in the deepest plane of reality, the deepest wave of Krishna consciousness is moving, and there so many *jīva* souls are dancing. And that dance is the absolute dance wherein everything surrenders to Krishna in the mood of Vṛndāvana: *sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ*. Everything belongs to Krishna, and for His satisfaction anything and everything can be done. This is the only principle followed by the exclusive devotees without caring for the many relative demands and strictures of this false plane. That is *nirguṇa*,

transcendental. In that plane the calculation of false ownership can't be applied. All claims of ownership have no value in Krishna consciousness.

There is another point that may also be considered in this verse. Once, Parāśara Muṇi was crossing a river. A young lady was piloting the boat. As the boat reached the middle of the river, Parāśara suddenly became charmed by that young lady. He proposed that they unite, and they did. As a result of their union, Vedavyāsa was born. Parāśara was already a man of higher sense control. But the time had come for the birth of Vyāsa, and this created a necessity at a particular stage in him. Suddenly he was overwhelmed by lust and united with that lady. From their union came Vyāsadeva, the compiler of all the Vedic scriptures. So this was the determination of the Universal Will. Parāśara is not to be accused or condemned. He is not a party to that. He is an instrument of the Universal Will. We should not consider this an event of lustfulness and criticize Parāśara for his immoral action. He was inspired by some inner will and overpowered by the divine force of the *nirguṇa* will of Krishna. Only then did these things take place.

Therefore Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that it is not the action, but the background of the action that is to be considered. That is to be examined, not the action alone. The motive underlying the action, not the *karma*, but the purpose – that is the culprit. Draupadi had five husbands, but not of her own accord. She had to accept the trouble as her duty; she did not do so for the sake of pleasure. So Draupadi should not be held responsible for this; it cannot

be said that she is unchaste. She cannot be held responsible for having many husbands. It is said in the *śāstra* that Draupadi or Kuntī may seem to be unchaste, but if you chant their names you will be purified. So the internal meaning of an act, its purpose, should be considered – not the external action.

The higher principle is served not by following ordinary law, but by following some higher law. In that case, the ordinary law is surpassed. One might think a devotee a culprit from the consideration of ordinary law, but from the consideration of a higher law, Krishna has said that if you can appreciate their law-breaking, you will be uplifted.

ajñāyaivam guṇān doṣān
mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān
mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.11.32

Krishna says, “The rules of the scriptures come from My direction, My order. But if anyone breaks those rules to satisfy Me, he should be considered a better devotee.” Sometimes it may be necessary to show even greater loyalty to the king by crossing over the laws of the king. So here God is above law. When we consider the nature of divinity, we must conclude that Krishna is above law. Law is for us. But law may not be applied in His case. He is absolute. When one has actually come in connection with the Absolute, he cannot but ignore the laws meant for ordinary people. Of course, this means in a higher sense. It is not that

devotees shall not observe the ordinary laws governing society in the name of devotion. But in the higher sense we have to understand that Krishna is all in all. He is the creator of law and He Himself sometimes breaks the law and especially likes those who are ready to break the law for Him. They are His favorite who are ready to take risks for His service, who are ready to bear the consequence of breaking the law.

This is the nature of Krishna's entire *vraja-līlā*. In Vṛndāvana, all considerations of individual and local interest are sacrificed. In Vṛndāvana, there is the highest self-sacrifice, to the degree that everyone's own particular interest or consideration is sacrificed into fire. Only when you come to that stage of self-sacrifice can you take birth in Vṛndāvana; not before. This is the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaranam vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

Krishna says, "You must risk all your prospects, you must risk everything, with no prospects other than Myself. I cannot tolerate the presence of any second entity in your heart. I cannot tolerate that you will come to Me with some consideration. My relation with you must be unconditional. I can't tolerate any other interest in the heart of My devotee. Only one interest, and that is Me. Sacrifice all your so-called interests, all your prospects, everything. Then you can come to meet Me in Vṛndāvana."

The Subjective Bhagavad-Gītā

Both Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana have commented on *Bhagavad-gītā*, and Jīva Goswāmī has also given his explanation of different verses. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given his own explanation, and he has included both Baladeva's and Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentaries in his Bengali translation of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Śrīdhara Swāmī's commentary was the original one, and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu had great appreciation for his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*.

I have attempted to shed some new light on some verses in *Bhagavad-gītā*. On the basis of what the previous commentators have said, I have shown the further development of *mādhura-rasa* in *Bhagavad-gītā*, and even the paramour relation of *parakīyā-rasa*. When I discussed my explanation with Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, I asked him, "In this place in *Bhagavad-gītā* I have given my interpretation to include *mādhura rasa*. What do you think?" He told me, "What more can be said? Your interpretation is perfectly correct."

Still, it was a new conception I had given there. I found *parakīyā*, the paramour devotion of the *gopīs* for Krishna, represented in the verse *teṣāṃ satata yuktānāṃ...yena mām upayānti te*. Just as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has four essential verses, there are four essential verses in *Bhagavad-gītā* which contain the very gist, the very substance of the whole ontological conception of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.8, the first of the four nutshell verses is as follows:

aḥaṁ sarvasya prabhavo
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ

“I am the origin of everything. Everything emanates from Me (including all conceptions of the Absolute Truth and even My own worship). The wise who know this fully worship Me with *bhāva*, deep devotional ecstasy.”

Here, Krishna says, *aḥaṁ sarvasya prabhavo, mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*: “Everything emanates from Me, including all conceptions of the Absolute Truth.” In *Bhāgavatam* the three main conceptions of the absolute are given: Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Brahman means the all-comprehensive aspect of the absolute. Paramātmā means the all-permeating aspect of the absolute, and Bhagavān means the personal conception of the absolute.

In his *Bhakti-Sandarbha*, Jīva Goswāmī has given the real meaning of Bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead. The general meaning of Bhagavān is “one who commands all

sorts of potencies.” All sorts of potencies are controlled by Him personally. That is the conception of Bhagavān found in Nārāyaṇa of Vaikuṇṭha. But Jīva Goswāmī has given a particularly fine interpretation of Bhagavān. He says that Bhagavān means *bhajanīya sarva-sad-guṇa-viśiṣṭha*: the nature of Bhagavān is such that whatever comes in contact with Him feels a natural serving tendency towards His charming personality. He is endowed with such qualities that everyone is drawn to worship Him, to love Him. He attracts the love of everyone. Everyone wants to serve Him – this is Bhagavān. He is endowed with qualities that attract everyone to serve Him.

I have included this special interpretation of Jīva Goswāmī in my commentary on the above *Bhagavad-gītā* verse. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, three phases of the Absolute Truth have been described (all-comprehensive Brahman, all-pervading Paramātmā, and the all-attractive, absolute person, Bhagavān). I have explained in my commentary that Krishna’s statement here (*aḥaṁ sarvasya prabhavo*) means: “I am *svayam bhagavān*, the Original Personality of Godhead. I am at the root of all these three conceptions of the absolute. And I am the origin not only of Brahman, the all-comprehensive absolute, and Paramātmā, the all-permeating absolute, but also of Nārāyaṇa, the master of all potencies who commands the respect of everyone. I am the origin of all of Them: I am *svayam bhagavān*.”

In this way I have interpreted the meaning of *aḥaṁ sarvasya prabhavo*. And in the next line, when Krishna says

mattah sarvaṁ pravartate, here we must concentrate more finely. Krishna says *sarvaṁ pravartate*, “everything comes from Me.” With this Krishna is saying: “Even worship of Me comes from Me. I reveal it first. I Myself worship Myself. I do this as *guru*, as My finer potency. This potency is nothing but Myself. And My finest potency is Rādhārāṇī. Through My potency I worship Myself. Every movement begins from Me; even My own worship, My own service is begun by Me, in My role as *guru*. I reveal that to the public so that you will properly worship Me. For this reason *guru* is called Bhagavān, for he is nondifferent from Me (*ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyām*).”

The finest potency of Bhagavān is Rādhārāṇī. So *guru* in the highest sense, as well as service in the highest sense, is represented in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Next, Krishna says, “Those who know this will worship Me: *iti matvā bhajante mām*.” Those who understand this conception that Rādhārāṇī serves Him in the highest way, will serve Krishna in subjugation to Her. That is *rādhā-dāsyam*, the divine service of Śrī Rādhā. And it is with this understanding that a worshiper will come to worship Krishna.

In my interpretation, I have taken it that this is Krishna’s intent when He says, *iti matvā bhajante mām*: “Knowing this, they worship Me.” He means “those who know that My worship comes from Me, and that My finest potency worships Me best, will worship Me under the direction of My finest potency.” Here we find the importance of *rādhā-dāsyam*, the service of Śrī Rādhā, the highest goal of the followers of Rūpa Goswāmī, the *rūpānuga-gauḍīya-*

sampradāya. Here, Krishna is saying, “Knowing that it is My finest potency that worships Me best, one will worship Me under the direction of My first-class worshiper (Śrī Rādhā). With this idea one will always worship Me under the guidance of My finest *śakti*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, or Her representation, Śrī Gurudeva. In this way, they will always worship Me under their direction, and never as a direct worshiper.” This is the meaning of *iti matvā bhajante mām*.

Then Krishna says *budhā bhāva-samanvitaḥ*. Here, *budhā* means those of fine theistic intellect (*sumedhasaḥ*). In *Bhāgavatam* it is said that those of fine theistic intellect will be able to appreciate this (*yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*). Fine theistic intelligence is the outcome of good fortune which comes from above (*sukṛti*); it is not self-acquired. That fine intellectual inner direction and guidance can only come from the *nirguṇa* or transcendental plane. *Budhā* here means “one who has a direct connection with the *nirguṇa* or transcendental plane.” His intelligence doesn’t come from this *māyic* quarter; rather it springs from the spiritual platform. Only such a person can appreciate these subtle points. This is said in *Bhāgavatam*:

kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam
 sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
 yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
 yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ

“Those who are of fine theistic intellect (*sumedhasaḥ*) will worship Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in *saṅkīrtana*, not others.”

So this verse from *Bhagavad-gītā* means, “One whose devotion is the product of the *nirguṇa* wave, whose faith is not collected from this world of misunderstanding, shall worship me through *rādhā-dāsyam*.” Here *bhāva-samanvitaḥ* means *rāga-samanvitaḥ* – that is, they worship Krishna with *anurāga*, love. Their affinity for Krishna, their devotion to Him, is not governed by rules; it does not spring from strictly following the scriptural rules, but from *bhāva*, inner inspiration. This worship is called *rāga-marga*, the path of spontaneous attraction.

Scriptural rules involve calculations of loss and gain. But worship which is *bhāva samanvitaḥ* is not drawn from any consideration of loss and gain; it flows naturally through love and attraction for Krishna. It is *jñāna-śunya-bhakti*, free from calculation, free from profit and loss: *jñāna-karmādyanāvṛtam*.

The next of the four essential verses which contain the entire message of *Bhagavad-gītā* is as follows (10.9):

mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā
 bodhayantaḥ parasparam
 kathayantaś ca mām nityam
 tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca

“The hearts and minds of My devotees are always filled with Me, and they are forever experiencing pleasure and ecstasy in talking about Me.”

Here, Krishna says, “I am in their hearts, in their thinking (*mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā*). Their whole life, their entire energy is spent for Me, utilized for Me. Their

prāṇā-śakti, their life-energy, is also fully devoted for My cause. Internally they are always thinking about Me and devoting their whole energy for Me, and externally they talk about Me to enhance their mutual understanding (*bodhayantaḥ parasparam*). They love to talk about Me with one another; they talk about nothing else. In private life, and in public life also, they love to talk about Me, and nothing else. I am the only subject of their discussions (*kathayantaś ca māṁ nityam*). Whatever they do, wherever they are – everywhere, I am the subject of their talk.”

And next Krishna says, “In this they find great satisfaction (*tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca*).” The internal meaning of *tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca* is as follows. Here two levels of devotees are described. Up to *vātsalya-rasa*, or the parental mellow of devotion, Krishna’s devotees are feeling great satisfaction (*tuṣyanti*). And above this is the higher kind of satisfaction (*ramanti*) experienced in the *mādhura-rasa*. Just as a wife and husband enjoy a particular kind of connection, Krishna’s devotees feel ecstasy (*ramanti*) in His connection, simply by talking about Him. Here the *āchāryas* have agreed that the word *ramanti* indicates consorthood, and that devotees in consorthood can experience the very deep connection of husband and wife in relation to Krishna. In the company of Krishna they feel the ecstasy of consorthood, *ramanti ca*. They also feel that ecstasy even when they are only talking about Krishna. This meaning of the word *ramanti* has been explained in different places by Viśvanātha, Baladeva, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and is also admitted even by Śaṅkarāchārya, who agrees that the word *ramanti* indicates consorthood.

Then there is the next nutshell verse of *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10):

teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām
bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ
yena mām upayānti te

“To those who constantly worship Me with devotion, I give the intelligence by which they can come to Me.”

This is the ordinary meaning of this verse, but there is a deeper meaning. Here, Krishna says: “Those persons who are continuously engaged in Me without interruption (*satata-yuktānām*), who are always in Me, who are connected with Me, who serve Me with great love and respect with their heart, *dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ* – I inspire them with the intelligence by which they will come to Me. They will come to Me in a closer connection.” But I found that this is redundant. Krishna has already said *satata-yuktānām*, “Their devotion is continuous; they are always there in My connection.” If they are already in connection with Krishna, then we must ask why He would again say, “They will come to Me.”

Krishna has already said that these devotees talk only of Him, think only of Him, take pleasure in Him, and are always engaged in His service. He says, “They are always connected with Me without interruption, and they are serving Me with heart felt love.” They are already serving with heart-felt love, and then Krishna says, “I shall give them the inspiration by which they will come to Me” (*mām upayānti te*).

This is redundant. It has already been said that they are connected to Krishna; how is it that again they will “come to Him”? How is Krishna’s statement “they come to Me” to be harmonized? So I found a deeper meaning to the words *mām upayānti te*. I took here the word *upayānti*, which ordinarily means “they come”, to indicate *upapati*, or “paramour.” So *upayānti* – “they come to Me” – means they consider Krishna as *upapati*, as a paramour.

In society there is the lawful husband, or *pati*, and there is the paramour, or *upapati*. In Vṛndāvana, Krishna is not considered by the *gopīs* as their lawfully married husband, but as master, as the Lord of their hearts.

Here Krishna says, “I inspire those who are constantly engaged in devotional service to come to Me.” Which devotees does Krishna here inspire? Those who are *ramanti*, the highest group of devotees, those who are related to him in consorhood, in full *rasa* – *mukhya rasa*. Krishna says here, “I inspire them to come to Me, considering Me as paramour, *upapati*. Here Krishna says *bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam*: this means *prema*, which is generally found in *mādhura rasa*, consorhood. So the real meaning of this verse is that Krishna inspires those who are in consorhood to come to Him, seeing Him as paramour, *upapati*. And how do they come to Him? He inspires them to come to Him without any consideration of social and scriptural demands. And so, inspired by Him from within, crossing the line of scriptural and social regulations, and even deceiving their own husbands, the *gopīs* are united with Krishna in paramour consorhood (*parakīyā*).

Krishna's position is absolute, and He relishes more the devotion of those who can cross everything for Him. And He inspires his devotees from within with this message: "Externally you have to fulfill social and scriptural demands, but My position is over and above the scriptures. My position is above whatever the social laws and scriptural laws tell you to do. I am above the *Vedas* and everything else. The *Vedas* are My instructions for the ordinary people. Their instructions are meant for those who are deviated from Me. Society is also under the guidance of those instructions which were given to the fallen. But My connection with everything is intrinsic; it is independent of the laws of scripture and society. I do not require recognition from anyone. My connection with everything is the constant in all equations. It can never be avoided. So you must neglect all the demands from your previous life's connections and come to Me. You have no freedom to do anything else. When your devotional nature will come to demand you to come to Me, you are not free. Your heart must come towards Me."

That is *upapati*, paramour devotion. The devotion of Vṛndāvana, *vṛndāvana bhajana*, means paramour devotion: *yena mām upayānti te*. So here Krishna says that to those who are *ramanti*, who are already inclined to come in connection with Him in consorhood as husband and wife, He gives some special feeling and inspiration within their hearts, and they shall come to Him as *upapati*, as paramours. Here Krishna is saying, in effect, "This paramour devotion is so great that it crosses the rules of both society and scripture. It is independent of everything. Connec-

tion with Me is independent of everything that you can conceive. It is most innate and natural. It does not require any scriptural or any social sanction. You may live in society showing formal respect to scriptural and social convention, but from your inner heart of hearts you are Mine. That is *yena mām upayānti te*, the special instruction or nature or insight I give to these devotees.”

In other words, these devotees do not allow a second *pati* or husband to come between them and Krishna. They cannot tolerate the interpolation of any second thing, even if it involves social laws or scriptural regulations. Their devotion is so high that all the *Vedas* are searching after this idea, this divine position.

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
 vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
 yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-patham ca hitvā
 bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.47.61

“Although the most exalted devotion of the *gopīs* is only hinted at in the *Vedas*, I can now understand their most exalted position. O when shall I take birth as a creeper in Vṛndāvana, so that I can take the dust of the lotus feet of the *gopīs* upon my head? Those great souls gave up society, friendship, love, their relatives – and even the Vedic principles – to take shelter of the holy lotus feet of Krishna.”

Here, one thing should be mentioned: *parakīyā-bhāva* has a broader application. It does not only mean paramour devotion. This feeling of crossing scriptural and

social rules for an “unsanctioned” relationship is found not only in *mādhura-rasa* or consortherhood. *Parakīyā* literally means “belonging to another.” *Vātsalya-rasa*, parental affection, and *sakhya-rasa*, friendship, are also infused with the sentiments of *parakīyā*. This is the method of love for those who follow *rāga-marga*.

In the case of Yaśodā, *parakīyā* takes the following form: Yaśodā says, “Some people say that Krishna is not my son. They say that he is Devakī’s son!” This feeling enhances her heart’s affection towards Krishna, for then she thinks, “I could lose Him at any moment.” This idea draws more intense affection towards Krishna. It increases the affection of her service.

In *sakhya-rasa*, the sentiments of *parakīyā* are also found. “Some say Krishna has come from Mathurā and he may again go to Mathurā. He does not belong to us; he is not exclusively our friend.” This apprehension also fills the minds of the cowherd boys, and they become anxious, thinking, “We may lose Him at any time.” So that sentiment makes friendly service towards Him more intense. In this way, the whole sentiment in Vṛndāvana is *parakīyā*.

In the mood of servanthood, or *dāsyā-rasa* also, there is some sentiment like that. Devotees feel, “Some say that Krishna comes from Mathurā, that He is the son of Vasudeva. He is here only for a while; He is not an ordinary man like us.” This idea is more or less current in Vṛndāvana. So *parakīyā* is not only found in *mādhura-rasa*; Krishna may capture all with that sentiment.

Parakīyā is a very special thing in *mādhura-rasa*. Its

speciality is that in *mādhura-rasa* it is more objectionable both to the scriptures and to society. But for the *gopīs* it is not objectionable. In *mādhura-rasa* they have to cross over the directions of both the *Vedas* and society – they must take that great risk. In other *rasas* there is only the fear that “We may not have Krishna permanently, He may go away, He does not belong among us...” This suspicion increases the intensity of their service, but in *mādhura-rasa*, they must cross the positive directions of the *Veda* and society. They must go against these authorities, as if to take the risk of committing sin. This is the special feature of *parakīyā* in *mādhura-rasa*, so there the intensity of devotion is in its highest condition. So the inspiration towards *parakīyā* (*yena mām upayānti te*) that Krishna discusses here with special reference to those who are *ramanti*, who are connected to Him in consorhood, is also present in all the servitors in *Vṛndāvana*.

Finally, we come to the last of the four nutshell verses *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.11:

teṣāṃ evānukampārtham
 aham ajñāna-jaṁ tamaḥ
 naśayāmy ātma-bhāvastho
 jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā

Krishna says: “To show them special mercy, I enter their hearts and destroy their ignorance with the lamp of knowledge.”

The inner meaning of this verse is more difficult to draw out. The words *teṣāṃ evānukampārtham* may be

interpreted in two ways. The external interpretation is that Krishna favors His devotees, and the internal explanation is that Krishna is saying, “I want their favor: I aspire after the favor of the devotees of the highest order.” As in *Bhāgavatam* (10.82.44), Krishna says:

mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām
amṛtatvāya kalpate
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho
bhavatīnām mad-āpanaḥ

“My dear *gopīs*, everyone considers themselves fortunate if they possess devotion for Me, and by that they achieve an eternal life of nectar. But I must admit that I consider Myself most fortunate because I have come in touch with the wonderful affection found in your hearts.”

Still the paradox is that Krishna seems to say that after such grief and continued engagement with Krishna, then He gives these higher devotees pure knowledge, and by that knowledge they get salvation by attaining Brahman. That is the point of argument made by the followers of Śaṅkarāchārya. But I have taken it in another direction.

Jñāna-dīpena is a troublesome expression – “I enlighten them with knowledge” – so I have given another interpretation: When the pangs of separation felt by Krishna’s devotees comes to its extreme stage, Krishna suddenly comes and shows Himself. For example, Śacīdevī feels extreme separation when she cooks for Nimai, and then by His mercy she can see clearly that Nimai has come and taken *prasādam*. Similarly in Vṛndāvana, when the pangs of separation reach



their highest degree, then suddenly the devotees can see that “Krishna is here in our company.” So when Krishna says that out of His mercy He appears and removes their ignorance, their *ajñāna*, he means that when the devotees are experiencing separation from Him, He appears before them and removes the darkness they feel from separation. Out of His mercy, He gives them sustenance. And when that sort of medicine has been applied, they can go on further. In Vṛndāvana, when His devotees felt separation, sometimes He had to come and to show His friends, “I am amongst you. I have not left you.” This is what is meant by dispelling darkness with the light of divine knowledge: *jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*. Here the word ignorance or *ajñāna* means *jñāna-śunya-bhakti*, knowledge-free devotion. Devotees do not think that they are part and parcel of the *līlā*, the pastimes of the Supreme God. No; their devotion is free from such calculation. It is *jñāna-śunya-bhakti*: most innocent.

Here Krishna is saying, “I can’t tolerate the pangs of separation felt by My devotees. I must run towards them and show them, ‘I am here, My mother. You see? I am here taking food.’” Sometimes Śacīdevī prepares food for the Deity, and after offering it, she sees that it is all gone. At that time, she thinks, “Was this a dream? I saw Nimai. He was taking *prasāda*, and of course nothing was left in the pot. But Nimai has gone long ago. But then who has taken this *prasāda*? What was it I saw? Was it a dream, or has some dog taken the food? Or is it that I forgot, I have not cooked today? Perhaps I did not give the *bhoga* to the Bāla Gopāla deity. What did I do?”

In this way, Śacī is confused. This may be seen as her *ajñāna*, her “ignorance.” Then Śrī Chaitanya sends some devotee to her, saying, “You tell all this to my mother: on those days when such things occur I actually go there; I take food from her hand. It is not a dream. Remind My mother of this and console her. Tell her that I come to her and I take her cooked *prasādam*. Remind her that this has occurred.”

So this is the meaning of the fourth nutshell verse from *Bhagavad-gītā*: by His mercy Krishna removes the darkness of separation from His devotees. And those that remind us of Krishna, and thus remove the darkness born of separation from Him, are the real humanitarians. They are distributing the highest cure. The *gopīs* tell Krishna: “We are suffering from this pang that is created by You. But the messages about Your pastimes give us life and sustenance. We are eager to hear this, and then we may feel that we are getting our life back. There is no other medicine but Your assurance and consolation: that alone can save us from these pangs of the burning heart.” This is their statement in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.31.9):

tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad-ātataṁ
bhuvi gṛṇanti ye bhuridā janāḥ

“O Krishna, we are always suffering in this world, but just hearing the nectar of Your words and pastimes gives us life and as a by-product it removes all of our sinful reactions.

This sort of hearing is all-auspicious and fills us with spiritual wealth. Those who deliver this message of Godhead are doing the highest relief work for human society and are actually the greatest humanitarians.”

The Gāyatrī Mantra

The meaning of the *brahma gāyatrī* must bring us to the conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *gāyatrī mantra* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are one and the same. It is the very gist of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the elaborate commentary of *gāyatrī*:

artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇām
bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rupo 'sau
vedārtha-paribṛṁhitah

Garuḍa Purāṇa

The meaning of the *gāyatrī mantra* must be in the line of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If we analyze how this is possible, we shall uncover the steps leading the *gāyatrī mantra* to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

What is the meaning of *gāyatrī*? The word *gāyatrī* is a combination of two Sanskrit words: *gānat* (what is sung) and *trāyate* (gives deliverance). This means, “A kind of song by which we can get our salvation, relief, emancipation.” *Gāyatrī* is known as *veda-mātā*, the mother of the

Vedas. And Gāyatrī has produced the whole Veda. If we examine the Vedic conclusion from its most condensed aphorism to its most extensive expression, we shall find that it begins with *om̐kara*: the Vedic syllable *om̐*. That truth is expressed as the *gāyatrī mantra*, then it appears in the form of the *Vedas*, and then as the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Finally, the Vedic conclusion is given its fullest expression in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Since the meaning, the purpose of Vedic knowledge progresses in this line, the *gāyatrī mantra* must contain within it the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – that is, that the Krishna conception of Godhead is the highest.

This must be the meaning of the *gāyatrī mantra*, but the problem is how to extract *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – the Krishna conception – from within the womb of *gāyatrī*. I heard that Jīva Goswāmī has given such an interpretation, but I could not find where it is written. I heard that he has given the meaning of *gāyatrī* leading to Krishna consciousness. Anyhow, the tendency awakened in me to draw the meaning to the Krishna conception.

The general meaning of *gāyatrī* is “that song which grants liberation.” Liberation must have some positive meaning. Liberation means not freedom from the negative side, but positive attainment. This is the definition given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: *muktir hitvānyathā rūpaṁ svarūpena vyavaṣṭhitih* – unless and until we attain the highest possible positive position, real *mukti*, real salvation, has not been effected. Mere withdrawal from the negative plane cannot be called liberation. Hegel has said that the object of our life

is self-determination. We must determine our normal function in the organic whole – not mere emancipation from the negative side, but participation in a positive function in the domain of service. This is considered to be the highest attainment of life. This is the real meaning of *gāyatrī*.

The word *gāyatrī* comes from two Sanskrit roots: *gānat* and *trāyate*. *Trāyate* means positive attainment to the final stage (*sva-rūpena vyavasthitiḥ*). And *gānat* means not mere sound, but musical sound. That musical sound which grants us the highest positive deliverance indicates the *saṅkīrtana* of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the flute-song of Śrī Krishna.

The purport of the *brahma-gāyatrī mantra* is as follows: The first word is *om̐*. *Om̐* is the seed mantra which contains everything within it. The next word is *bhūr*. *Bhūr* is where we are, Bhū-loka, the world of our experience. The next word is *bhuvaḥ*. Bhuvar-loka is the world of mental acquisition. It is the support, the background of our experience. Our present position of experience is the effect of our mental acquisition. That we are here in the world of experience is not an accident; we have acquired this position by our previous *karma*. The physical sphere, this present world of experience, is only the product, the outcome of our previous mental impulses. And the subtle world of previous *karma*, the mental sphere, is known as Bhuvarloka.

The next word in the mantra is *svaḥ*. Above Bhuvarloka is Sva-loka. The mental world (Bhuvarloka) means acceptance and rejection: what to do and what not to do – “I like this, I don’t like that.” Sva-loka, however, is the plane of

decision, the world of intelligence (Buddhiloka). Our intelligence tells us, “You may like this, but don’t do that, for then you will be the loser.” That plane, the plane of reason, is known as Sva-loka. In this way, this material world is composed of three general layers, *bhūr*, the physical world, *bhuvah*, the mental world, and *svah*, the intellectual world.

Of course, a more detailed analysis will reveal seven layers: Bhūr, Bhuvah, Svaḥ, Mahā, Jana, Tapa, and Satyaloka. This has been dealt with in detail by Sanātana Goswāmī in his *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam*. Here, these seven strata have been summarized in three planes of existence: physical, mental, and intellectual. And these three planes of experience have been summarized in a word, *tat*.

The next word in the *brahma-gāyatrī*, is *savitur*. *Savitur* generally means *sūrya*, the sun. And the sun means, figuratively, that which shows or illuminates; that by which we can see. The three gross and subtle strata within this world are shown to us by a particular thing, *savitur*. What is that? The soul. Actually, the world is not shown to us by the sun, but by the soul. What really gives us perception and allows us to see gross things? It is not actually the sun that helps us see; we see with the help of the soul. This is found in *Bhagavad-gītā* (*yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ kṛtsnam lokam imam raviḥ*). The soul reveals this world to us just as the sun does. The sun can show color to our eyes, the ear can reveal the sound world, and the hand can reveal the touch world. But really in the center is the soul. It is the soul who gives light to this world, who gives us an understanding of the environment, the world of perception. All

perception is possible only because of the soul. Here, the word *savitur*, which generally means sun, can only mean soul, for the soul, like the sun, shows us everything.

All seven strata of our existence – represented by *bhūr*, the physical plane, *bhuvah*, the mental plane, and *svah*, the intellectual plane – have here been reduced to one entity: *tat* – “that.” “That” is shown by the sun which in this context indicates the soul. Here soul means individual soul. The individual soul is the cause of his world. Not that the mind is in the world, but the world is in the mind. Berkeley has said that the world is in the mind. Here it is being expressed that everything is seen with the help of the sun. If there is no sun, everything is dark – nothing can be seen. So without light, nothing can be seen. And in a higher sense, light means the soul. The soul is the subject and the soul’s object is the seven planes of experience within this world.

The next word in the *gāyatrī mantra* is *varenyam*. *Varenyam* means *pūjya*: worshipable, venerable. This indicates that although within this plane – the objective world – the soul is the subject, there is another domain which is to be venerated and worshiped by the soul. That is the Supersoul area.

That worshipable plane of transcendental existence is known as *bhargo*. *Bhargo* means the supersubjective area, the area of the Supersoul. This is mentioned in the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: *dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmahi*. Śrīla Vyāsadeva says that here he is going to deal with another world whose pristine glory is so

great that by its own ray, all misconceptions are brushed aside. The subject is the soul, and its object is all these worlds of experience. And the supersubject is the venerable area which is superior to the subject, the soul – that is the supersubjective area.

The word *bhargo* means “more subtle than the soul,” and “holding a more important position than the soul.” So this means the Supersoul, the Paramātmā. In general, of course, the word *bhargo* ordinarily means light. Just as an X-ray can show us what the ordinary eye cannot see, *bhargo* is *svarūpa-śakti*: higher, more powerful light that can reveal the soul. And that energy – *bhargo* – belongs to whom? It belongs to *deva*. What is the meaning of the word *deva*? *Deva* means “who is beautiful and playful”, that is, Śrī Krishna: Reality the Beautiful. He is not a nondifferentiated substance, but is full of *līlā*, pastimes. *Deva* means pastimes and beauty combined, and this means Krishna.

His domain is *bhargo*, brilliant, and it is *varenyam*, to be venerated by the *jīva* soul. What is the nature of the *svarūpa-śakti*? It is the *vaibhava*, the extension of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. She holds the full service responsibility and the energy to serve Krishna. *Bhargo* is no less than the *vaibhava*, the extended body of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, which contains everything for the service of Krishna. *Bhargo* represents Mahābhāva, the predominated moiety, and *deva*, Krishna, is Rasarāja, the predominating moiety.

In the *gāyatrī mantra*, we are requested, *bhargo devasya dhīmahi*: “come meditate.” What sort of meditation is possible in that plane of dedication? Not abstract medita-

tion, but service cultivation, *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*. *Dhīmahi* means “to participate in the spontaneous flow, the current of devotion in Vṛndāvana.” And what will be the result (*dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt*)? The capacity of our cultivation will be increased. As we serve, a greater capacity and willingness to serve will be given to us in remuneration – just as interest is added to capital in the bank (*dāsa kari’ vetan more deha prema-dhana*). In this way, our dedicating principle will be increased again and again. *Dhīmahi* means *ārādhana*, worship. It cannot but be explained in terms of *ārādhana*, *pūjā*, *sevā* – worship, adoration, loving service. The word *dhī* is derived from the word *buddhi*, which generally means that which we cultivate with the help of our intelligence. But here, *dhī* is a reference to that venerable intelligence which descends into this plane to help us cultivate service. So *dhīmahi* does not mean abstract meditation, but devotional service. This is the underlying meaning of the *gāyatrī mantra*.

Gāyatrī, the song for deliverance, also means *saṅkīrtana*. *Kīrtana* is also sung, and it also improves us towards the highest goal. The *saṅkīrtana* of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu also reinstates us in our highest serving position. So *brahma-gāyatrī* in connection with Mahāprabhu comes to mean Krishna-*kīrtana*. Then it reaches Vṛndāvana and the flute-*kīrtana*. And when we enter Vṛndāvana, we shall find that the sweet sound of Krishna’s flute helps to engage all the Lord’s servants in their respective duties. When the flute is sounded, the *gopīs* and others are adjusted in their respective duties. At night, the *gopīs*, hearing the sound of

the flute, will run to the Yamunā, thinking, “Oh, Krishna is there.” And when Yaśodā hears the song of Krishna’s flute, she thinks, “My son is there. He is coming home soon.” In this way, the sound of the flute engages all the servants of the Lord in their respective positions and inspires them to be mindful of their service.

In my Sanskrit commentary on the *gāyatrī mantra*, I have written *dhīrārādhanaṁ eva nānyaditi tad rādhā-padam dhīmahi*: All other services are represented fully in Rādhikā. Like branches they are all part of Her. *Mādhura rasa* is the chief or *mukhya-rasa*, the combination of all *rasas*. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is Mahābhāva – She represents the entire serving attitude.

The flute-song of Śrī Krishna, expressed as the *gāyatrī mantra*, is reminding us and engaging us in our service. And what is our service? Our service must be to surrender ourselves in the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī – to accept the suggestion of Rādhārāṇī. The *gāyatrī mantra* will excite us to be mindful about Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s lotus feet, to obey Her orders. She is mainly representing the whole serving area. So to try to engage ourselves in Her service, under Her order – to accept Her direction and to obey Her – that is the service of Śrī Rādhā. In this way, the meaning of the *gāyatrī mantra* has been drawn to *rādhā-dāsyam*, self-determination (*svarūpena vyavasthitiḥ*).

In the meantime, the partial representations in *vātsalya* and *sakhya rasa* are also part and parcel of the original mellow of conjugal love, *mādhura rasa*. The *vātsalya rasa* devotee will serve Nanda and Yaśodā, the *sakhya rasa* devotee

will serve Śrīdāma and Sudāma, but ultimately, the whole system in one conception is included in Rādhārāṇī.

Rādhā-dāsyam, the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, is the ultimate meaning to be extracted from the *gāyatrī mantra*. That is the supreme end of our life. It cannot but be so. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the ultimate or full-fledged theism to be extracted from the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, and so many scriptures. All the revealed truth rises to its acme, to its highest position, in the conception given by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* teaches us that the highest realization, self-determination, is to be found in the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī – that under her guidance we may serve Śrī Krishna. We aspire for a direct connection with Her service.

What, then, is the inner meaning and purport of the word *bhargo*? *Bhargo vai vṛṣabhānuja-ātmā-vibhava-ekā-ārādhana-śrī-pūram*. *Bhānu* means the sun, or “who shows us by light.” Rādhārāṇī is the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu. So I selected the word *bhānu*. To represent her personal extended self, I have given the word *vaibhava*. *Vaibhava* means, “what comes out,” or “extended self.” *Prābhava* is the central representation and *vaibhava* is the outer extension. The very gist of *svarūpa-śakti* is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and the whole *svarūpa-śakti* is Her extended self. The town of Her beautiful service, that is, the country, the abode of Her beautiful service is the whole *svarūpa-śakti*.

Just as rays of light extend from the sun, the whole internal potency is an extension of Mahābhāva, Śrī Rādhikā. She has developed Herself into such a beautiful area of

brilliance, of internal energy, and thereby She serves Her Lord. All these necessary things have sprung from Her. To help Her in serving Her Lord, they all come out. When the entire internal energy is condensed in a concise form, it is Mahābhāva, Rādhārāṇī. And when Rādhārāṇī wants to serve, She extends Herself in limitless different ways. And with some contribution from Baladeva and Yogamāyā, the whole spiritual world, including Vṛndāvana, Mathurā, and Vaikuṇṭha, evolves to assist Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the service of Śrī Krishna.

In this way, I have drawn out *rādhā-dāsyam*, the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as the meaning of the *gāyatrī mantra* and have tried to represent it in Sanskrit verse.

Gaura Haribol!

About the Author

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Deva-Goswāmī Mahārāj was born in Hāpānīya, West Bengal, India in 1895. In 1927 he was initiated as a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the founder-*āchārya* of the Gauḍīya Maṭh and foremost Vaiṣṇava scholar of the twentieth century. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's scriptural genius, penetrating realizations, and strict practice of the devotional principles of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism were soon recognized by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who in 1930 awarded him the renounced order of *sannyāsa*. He was named *Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara*, or "guardian of devotion," after the original *Bhāgavatam* commentator Śrīdhara Swāmīpāda.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī saw him as especially fit to protect the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line from misrepresentation. After reading one of his Sanskrit compositions glorifying Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remarked, "Now I am satisfied that, after I leave, there will be at least one man who can represent my conclusions (*bhakti-siddhānta*)."

After the passing of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja established his own temple, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, on the banks of the sacred Ganges in Nabadwīpa Dhāma, the holy land of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Having deeply assimilated the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya, he began composing original texts. His first work, *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam*, was a comprehensive scriptural study of surrender. His Divine Grace composed numerous songs, prayers, and commentaries. Among these important works are his commentary on Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Śaraṇagati*, Bengali translations of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and his own original Sanskrit poem summarizing *Chaitanya-līlā*, *Prema-dhāma-deva-stotram*. An outstanding contribution to the Rūpānuga Gauḍīya Saṁpradāya is his commentary on the *gāyatrī mantra* in the line of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Original works in English translation include: *The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute (Bhagavad-gītā)* and *Life-Nectar of the Surrendered Souls: Positive and Progressive Immortality (Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam)*.

At an advanced age in his fully matured stage of realization, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja spoke extensively on the teachings of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and the great predecessor *ācāryas*. Some of his English language publications are: *The Search for Śrī Krishna: Reality the Beautiful*, *Śrī Guru and His Grace*, *The Golden Volcano of Divine Love*, *Loving Search for the Lost Servant*, *Subjective Evolution of Consciousness: The Play of the Sweet Absolute*, *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam: Life Nectar*

of the Surrendered Souls, Heart and Halo, Holy Engagement, The Golden Staircase, Home Comfort, Inner Fulfillment and Sermons of The Guardian of Devotion I – IV.

After his passing in 1988, he was succeeded by his dearest beloved disciple and appointed successor, Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume One



All Glory to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord
Sri Krsna Chaitanya

Bhakti Rakshak Divya Vani

Edited by Tridandi Swami Sripad B.A. Sagar
Assisted by Sriman Mahananda Prabhu

Dedication

This, the first volume of an intended series of publications of „Sermons“, is dedicated to the immense spirit of unrivalled dedication to Guru-seva excited in we disciples by Srila Guru Maharaja, the author of the worshipful, energetic conceptions contained herein

All Glories to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga

Declaration of the Spiritual Succession of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat
Math

His Divine Grace
Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

Founder-Acarya of the Math
(Gaura-purnima, 26th March, 1986)

According to the desire of my Divine Master, I have been maintaining this disciplic succession but it is no longer possible for me, as I am now too old and invalid. You all know that from long ago I have chosen Sriman Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaja and I have given him sannyasa. All my Vaisnava Godbrothers are very affectionate towards him and it is also their desire to give him this position. I have previously given to him the charge of the Math and now I am giving him the full responsibility of giving Harinama, diksa, sannyasa, etc. as an Acarya of this Math on behalf of myself.

Those who have any regard for me should give this respect and position to Govinda Maharaj as my successor. As much as you have faith in my sincerity, then with all sincerity I believe that he has got the capacity of rendering service in this way. With this I transfer these beads and from now he will initiate on my behalf as Rtvik. The Rtvik system is already involved both here and also in the foreign land. The Rtvik is the representative. So if you want to take from me, and you take by his hands, then it will be as well and as good as taking from me.

In the Mahamandala, Sagar Maharaj and many others are also Rtvik of Swami Maharaj and also myself. They may do so, but in this Math and in any Math under this Math, he will be the representative. If anyone cannot accept this, he may leave the Math rather than stay here and disturb the peace of the Math. With all my sincerity and good feelings to Guru-Gauranga, to the Vaisnavas and the Acaryas, Mahaprabhu, Panca Tattva, Radha Govinda and Their Parsadas, with all my sincere prayers to Them, henceforth he will represent me in this affair beginning from today's function.

Now I shall go from here and he will do the necessary. On my behalf, he will give Harinama, diksa, sannyasa, and everything.

Introduction

Here in Koladvipa, Navadvipa, we find a happy place where the Absolute is the most generous in His benevolence. When the Absolute is distributing Himself, He becomes Sri Caitanyadeva. And that Sri Caitanya-deva in the highest stage of His mercy is found here in Koladvipa.

*kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya
hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya*
(C. Bha: Antya 3.541)

At Koladvipa - the Govardhana Hill of Vrndavana, concealed in Sri Navadvipa Dhama - the Most Generous Absolute expressed Himself in His maximum generosity. Without considering any crime, He absolved whoever He found. He accepted them all. After sannyasa, when He returned to Bengal with the intention of going to Vrndavana, He showed His most generous and dignified temperament at that time. He recruited the sinners of the world. Anyone who came to Him received the highest mercy. This is the speciality of this place. By 'place' we should not think of a mere geographical location. Of course, it has such a location, but really this is where the Most Generous Absolute gave Himself to the worst sinners. Here, even the most fallen souls receive the grace of the Lord.

Our highest necessity is distributed from here, Navadvipa Dhama; here is the key to the highest and sweetest mood within our heart. The key to enter into the conception of our sweetest home is given from here. Here is the key to that world of faith, sraddha, that world of love. If I can know my real prospect in life, I shall find that the key to my sweetest home is here. I am wandering in the jungle of an unsafe position, where I may be devoured at any moment. My so-called ego, my conception of my own self, is not eternal; it may be attacked and destroyed at any time. But the key is here, for my real life and my real home. This has been given to us by the spiritual experts.

God the father, God the son, and God the consort - we can know Him in different ways, and such truths are revealed here in Navadvipa Dhama. In the conception of God as father, we are what we are and He is supplying our food, home, and necessities in this plane. But if we truly approach Him, neglecting our wealth and achievements in this world to make a genuine heart's approach - not merely a formal approach - an exclusive approach - we shall discover what He is, as He is, and not as He is needed by us in our fallen stage. We are faulty. Our feeling of necessity is also imperfect, and thus our prayer is faulty. But He came to give us what is best from the standpoint of His will, and that is distributed from here. "Take Me, accept Me, I am your most innate and intimate friend. You have no friend like Me. I am guardian, friend, and everything to you. Come to Me."

Chapter One

Homeward Journey

Any experience about the Lord must come from upper to lower. It does not depend on us. We can only increase the intensity of our hankering, of our serving attitude (*sevonmukhata*), and whether He will descend to this plane or not depends on His whim. There is transcendental substance He moves according to His sweet will. He may come down or He may not, at His whim. He is free. We can only increase our earnestness for His presence. Although the potency and the potent are inseparably connected, we must generally know ourselves to be of the marginal potency.

He is everywhere - He is nowhere; everything is within Him - nothing is in Him. Such is His peculiar and mystic position (Bg. 9.4-6). Thus, our duty is to try to serve Him. We should not put much emphasis on 'feeling' Him either by mind, by body, or even by intelligence. He is everywhere, and He is nowhere: in a flash He may show, "Yes, I am here"; yet, when we are earnestly searching for Him, He may be nowhere to be found. His nature is independent. We can search, but we cannot say that we shall find Him.

He can only be served through His devotees... Real devotion is unconditional

Aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam, adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va: our duty is to devote ourselves cent-per-cent and most intensely for Him. We are only to serve Him. And service does not mean that we must necessarily come into direct contact with Him. Remote service is also service; through His devotee it becomes tangible. We should try to serve Him through His devotees, without expectation of any reward. We should have no desire except to serve, even without expecting to see Him once, to have His darsana. We shall only want to be utilized by Him. The little energy we have must be utilized for His cause. We are His potency, and we should prove that we belong to Him. Mahaprabhu says, "He may embrace me or reject me, or He may even be indifferent towards me. Whatever He likes, He may do, but I have no alternative but to serve Him." We must adopt such an exclusive and unconditional attitude. Not that, "If He doesn't want to reciprocate according to my will, I won't like to approach Him; so I shall join the atheists or the mayavadis. If You don't come forward to satisfy me, then I shall seek my own way - I don't want You!" If there is any tinge of such an attitude, we are far, far away.

Yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato, mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah. „We have no alternative but to serve You." To search means to serve: 'I want to be utilized for His cause. However petty the service may be, nothing is petty when in His connection, the least connection, even from far away. He need not please me, even by giving His darsana in a lightning way. Everything depends on His will."

Unconditional offering unto Him shows faith of the highest type. If our offering is conditional, we shall have to remain far from Him. The characteristic of the highest faith is absolutely unconditional: "I am only to be satisfied with just the chance to serve Him from afar, through some medium; or many mediums, not only one. *Dasa-dasa-dasanudasatvam* - servant of the servant of the servant of the servant . . . I have His connection from afar, and my energy passes through the devotees, towards Him, towards the center of fulfillment. Whatever

my position may be, I want my connection with the greatest fulfillment of the whole world!" Everyone is searching for such fulfillment of all their innermost necessities.

Sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja (Bg. 18.66): the search for Him eliminates all other duties. A true devotee thinks, "There is no obligation to anyone except one, and He is my Lord, Krsna." And His most laudable and greatest servitors are those who are in contact with His greatest agent. Not His direct contact, but contact with the greatest agent of His service will constitute the safer and higher relationship of *ananya-bhajana*, exclusive service eliminating all else.

Be fully purged of the enjoying spirit ...to be a member of the infinite world

No trace of exploitation should be traced in us. We should not run after any type of enjoyment including even the enjoyment of 'God-association.' We must be fully purged of the enjoying spirit. If a trace of enjoyment remains in us, we shall have to remain in one of the planes of this brahmāṇḍa, this universe, such as Bhur-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, and Satya-loka. And if any tinge of renunciation or retiring spirit is in us, we will not be allowed to enter into the world of infinity, Vaikuntha. Kuntha means 'limitation,' and Vaikuntha means the unlimited world. We want to be a member of the infinite world. 'Finite' only refers to the attempt of our separate interest to measure the infinite, and thereby, we conceive of finite. When our ego wants to measure a portion of the infinite, considering, "This is my kingdom, that is my friend's kingdom, etc.," then whatever we see with our separate interest is maya - misconception and misunderstanding in the infinite. All such things must be dissolved. And the attitude of retirement, "If I can't enjoy, I shall stop work; I shall go on strike" - that type of reactionary mentality must also be abandoned.

All points, everywhere, are active to satisfy the center

Then, we shall be face to face with the positive side only. What is the

positive side? It is the wave from the center, lila, the play of the Absolute. That wave is fulfilling the desire of the Supreme Lord, and we will be face to face with that. If the tendency for separate interest or reactionary retirement remains in us, we cannot have a touch of that eternal flow to satisfy the Absolute. When we are free from these two kinds of whims, we can come into connection with the eternal flow where all points, everywhere, are active to satisfy the center. Such a plane is not dry; it is happy, constructive, and nourishing, and that, we shall be able to feel. Only a small touch of it will make us understand that we do not want a particle of anything else. This is our homeward journey, and any other want or demand will keep us in a foreign country filled with death, disease, infirmity, rebirth - all these troubles. These troubles all occur because of misconception and identification of the soul with mortal things.

*bhukti-mukti-sprha yavat
pisaci hrdis vartate
tavad bhakti-sukhasyatra
katham abhyudayo bhavet
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 2.22)*

"How can the joy of holy devotion appear in the heart as long as it is haunted by the ghosts of desire for exploitation and renunciation?"

These two ideas of renunciation and enjoyment are foreign to us. They possess us, like ghosts. They have taken possession of our ego and are playing with it. We are prey in their mischievous hands, and we must escape from such a conspiracy of maya. We must be free members of the infinite world where the noble flow of dedication flourishes. No limited aspiration exists there; a current of wholesale dedication flows towards the center and all concerned. And that is our home, the soil where we can live eternally. There, all are individuals, and there is no death, no birth, no infirmity and no disease. Our inner self will emerge and mingle with the residents of that land.

Real devotion is a very, very rare achievement

Our own experience should not be easily relied upon, such as thinking, "This is God, this is my conception - I have a touch of God." There was a Babaji who was thought by many to be a great devotee. Whenever he took the name, he shed incessant tears. Liquid also oozed from his nose, and he was seen to be in some abnormal meditating position. On either side of him his attendants would be constantly cleansing his tears and face with napkins, as he madly chanted the name. Some atheistic persons considered that he was displaying religious fanaticism, while common people who had some simple faith in God estimated him to be a very high-class devotee. But our Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhakti-siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakura Prabhupada, rejected him and his antics as devoid of proper God conception.

*atha nihsattvah - nisarga-picchila-svante, tad abhyasa-pare 'pi ca
sattvabhasam vinapi syuh, kvapy asru-pulakadayah*
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Daksina, 3.89)

"Whenever shedding tears, horripilation, etc., are seen in persons whose hearts are soft externally and hard internally, and who are habituated to crying, rapture, etc., even though they do not possess a semblance of divine emotion - such an imitative sentiment should be known as totally unsubstantial and lifeless."

Mental imitation of devotion is possible, even with-out a tinge of pure devotion. In a drama also we may find a man who is fully drunk playing the part of a devotee, shedding tears and dancing madly as if he is a great devotee. By practicing, one can acquire that mental condition of shedding tears, and one can show many feats as though he were a real devotee. Merely the display of some peculiar external characteristics does not prove the presence of pure devotion. Real devotion is su-durllabha - a very, very rare achievement.

When we feel we are bereft... that is a sober and healthy

When we can neglect the proposal of emancipation, we might think that we possess a speck of real devotion. In the face of devotion, emancipation is belittled as very lowly (moksa-laghuta-krt, Bhakti-

rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 1.14). Yet, devotion is so rarely to be found, we may not expect that we have attained it (sudurllabha, ibid.). In one word, when we say that we have some devotion, we are not in devotion. Rather, when we can feel that we have nothing, although we have no aspiration for any other thing, at that point we may be making some progress. We do genuinely want something, although we can't clearly understand what; but we appreciate the devotees and the divine scriptures of devotion. When our appreciation is on that side, yet we feel we are bereft, that is a sober and healthy position. So vacant. We ought to remember that although we are negative, infinitesimal parts, we have come forward for a relationship with the Infinite, the Absolute. What price should we be prepared to pay for that? What form does that price take? We ought not to purchase such a thing very cheaply. To serve the devotees will be tangible, and to continue with the devotional practices and program that has been recommended by the scriptures and saints is most important. To go on - that in itself should be our reward. We are reading about Him, we are serving the saints and hearing their words. This is an engagement in itself. If we are thus satisfied, we have something that must not be underestimated.

"Every part of my being cries for the corresponding part of Him."

There is a great value in having the company of the saints and the scriptures, without mixing with the robbery of this material world. What is present here at this moment becomes nothing at the next. We are not of this world full of treachery. We are disgusted with the treacherous aspect of the world that charms us and engages us in a treacherous soil. Now something - next moment, nothing. We must give that up and try for something substantial: sat, cit, anandam - eternal existence, uncontaminated consciousness, and finally, the fulfillment of all our inner necessities - the corresponding engagement of the whole of our existence. *Prati anga lagi kande, prati anga mora* - "Every part of my being cries for the corresponding part of Him." (Jnana Dasa.) And Krsna says, "Only I can give you complete fulfillment, so come to Me and give up everything else":

**Acting on the basis of faith... in the association of
His exclusive devotees**

*sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo, moksayisyami ma sucah*
(Bg. 18.66)

"I shall accept the reaction you have earned in the relativity of this mortal world - I shall clear your debt! You need only come to My feet." If we are charmed by this universal call of the Lord and we try to abide by it, then that is sufficient. If we are answering that absolute call to our best ability, Krsna assures us: "I shall free you of your burden; you simply come to Me. Give up all your duties." Faith in this call, and acting on the basis of such faith is a great thing in us. We should try to follow this according to our best capacity, and this is possible only in the company of the exclusive devotees of the Lord.

We shall relish being in the company of His devotees. We have found children of the same soil - we are meeting our home associates. If our internal satisfaction is of that type, we are holding something of a safe position. We want to recognize our home, but we are now traveling in a foreign land. We should try to find the inner feeling of our hearts, without wanting some miracle.

We are but tiny souls and many things may be miraculous to us. Yogis and mystic persons can show many miracles and captivate us. It is easy to capture a tiny soul by miracles. There are many powerful miracle-men in the world. Let God save us from their hands! We must not allow ourselves to be the prey of so many miracles; may that charm leave us, once and for all.

*yadi karibe krsna-nama sadhu-sanga kara
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-vancha dure parihara*
(Prema-vivarta)

"If you are going to chant the holy name, keep the association of the pure devotee and totally abandon all your desires for enjoyment, liberation, yogic perfections or miracles.

May all these alternative prospects - exploitation, renunciation,

miracles - retire forever. We want only the Lord of our heart, who can award the deepest satisfaction. All the atoms of our innermost constitution have their corresponding engagement with Him, and that too, is of the highest quality. This proposal is given by the Gaudiya Vaisnava school under the direction of Sri Caitanyadeva and Sri Nityananda Prabhu.

Try your fortune, however negligible it may be

In the Vrndavana proposal, the Infinite is in the nearest position with the finite: aprakṛta. Aprakṛta is where the Infinite has come nearest to the finite, as though one of them. When He is so close, so near, no one can easily recognize whether He is infinite or not. Mahāprabhu has suggested to us, "Try for the chance for your fortune in Vrndavana. There is such a wonderful process: Nanda and Yasoda (Kṛṣṇa's father and mother) have captured the Absolute and He is crawling in their compound (*aham iha nandam vande yasyalinde param brahma*). Try to secure a position there, however negli-gible it may be. Try your fortune." So, we are in search of such a fortune where all other proposals are eliminated.

*kam prati kathayitum ise
samprati ko va pratitim ayatu
go-pati-tanaya-kunje
gopa-vadhuti-vitam brahma
(Padyavali, 98)*

"To whom can I tell it, and whoever will believe it, that the Supreme Absolute, Param Brahman, the Paramour of the damsels of Vraja, is enjoying in the groves on the banks of the Yamuna?"

It is inconceivable that the Brahman, the greatest, the Absolute, has come to search for the least love of the cowherd damsels of the Gopi class. He has approached in such a near and close way, and in such an ordinary, rural style. Try your fortune there. We are out to do just that, under the guidance of Sri Caitanyadeva, who is understood to be the combination of the positive and negative aspects of the Absolute. The positive is busy distributing Himself to others. Mahāprabhu is that

infinitely and inconceivably generous aspect of the Supreme.

Exclusive preference for service to Sri Guru

We must not search for any sentiment in ourselves, divine or otherwise. Once, one disciple was engaged in the service of his Guru, when a messenger from Vaikuntha came to fetch that disciple, saying, "The Lord is satisfied with your service to your Gurudeva and he is calling for you, so please come."

The disciple replied, "No, no, I have no time to attend to your call of Vaikuntha; I am very busy in the service of my Gurudeva."

This should be our attitude. "I have my engagement under the guidance of the Vaisnavas here; I don't like to be disturbed from this position."

A safe and entirely wholesome position

sakhyaya te mama namo 'stu namo 'stu nityam
dasyaya te mama raso 'stu rave 'stu satyam

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, the greatest exponent of the faith of servitude to Srimati Radharani, Radha-dasyam, says, "I won't allow myself to become fascinated by the proposal of the higher level service as a friend, sakhya. Rather, I shall tend always to do the lower service, dasya, the service of the servant. I shall not consider myself to -be a high-class servitor and I shall always tend to go towards the lower class of service. But He may forcibly take me to a higher service - "No, you are no longer to serve there; now you must serve in this higher category."

"But I consider that I am not fit for that confidential service, my Lord. You may engage the higher servitors in Your confidential group, while I may serve in the lower level."

**The tendency of the servant will always be toward
the -lower service**

That sort of tendency is safe for us. We should always be tending towards the lower service; and it is His business to forcibly take us up to a higher group, should He wish: "No, you are qualified to render such service, and you should no longer remain in the lower group." But the tendency of the servitor will always be toward the lower service - dasyaya te mama raso 'stu: "I would like to be engaged in service as a servant, not as a friend." That should be the normal tendency of a devotee. With such a mood, he is safe. Even in that world, he should have no ambition except to be the servant of the servant . . . Hearing of such things from the devotees and from the scriptures, we may think such a conception to be exaggeration; but it is the reality, and we should search out this pristine substance within us. This is a safe and wholesome position.

Chapter Two

The Direction to Your Wealth

Sri Caitanyadeva is both Radha and Krsna combined. He is Krsna in the mood of Radha, searching for Himself. He is both the positive and the negative aspects of the Absolute combined. The Sankara school and other impersonalists claim that when the positive and negative combine, the result is a kind of equilibrium. But according to the Vaisnava philosophy, the combination is dynamic. His nature becomes that of searching for Himself - searching for His own positive self, in the mood of the negative. In that search, He distributes Himself to others. The negative attracts the positive, and the positive is thus distributed to the public. This is the essence of Sri Caitanyadeva. The intimate associates of the Lord have revealed such a conception, and we shall be able to conceive it according to the intensity and degree of our faith.

Instruments to measure the infinite

Faith is the only instrument for the finite to measure the infinite. To survey the infinite, all other methods are futile. Faith is the most

spacious substance within us. It can cover a long, long distance. In the infinite, what faith can we have in faith? We fear blind faith. Yet, in the infinite, the impossible becomes possible. Everything is possible, but only faith has the possibility of connecting us with the infinite, while all other methods are useless.

When our experience deceives us, faith will save us

Sraddha, faith, can go a long distance. And we shall be able to feel and conceive that faith is not merely imaginary. It has its tangible position, a most efficient position within us. When we can disconnect from all phases of perceptual experience, we can live in faith alone. When all the wealth of our experience deceives us and makes treachery with us, our faith will save us.

High prospects for one interred in a burial ground

The whole world of our experience will vanish one day, with the final wholesale dissolution (*janma mrtyu jara vyadhi duhkha-dosanudarsanam*, Bg. 13.9), but faith will remain, faithfully attending us. That is the innate thing with our soul. And with the wholesale dissolution of our body, mind, and senses, the whole world of our experience will go where? No one knows. The sun, the moon, the ether, the air - everything will vanish in wholesale dissolution. Only faith will live, even at that stage. Faith is eternal substance within us, and we are told that with the favorable circumstances of faith we can go back to God, back to home. Back to home sweet home! Such highest prospect is given to us who are in this world of mortality, which is a burial ground and cremation ground. Here, everything is bound to be buried.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
All that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."
-Gray's Elegy

This is the world of experience everything leads but to the grave. But

faith is not treacherous. It will remain within, with the soul, and grant hope, Faith will prospect, and sustenance. And what kind of grant home sustenance? Home comfort. Back to God, comfort back to home. When there is the proposal of such an alternative, who would be such a fool to run after the experiences of this 'civilized' atomic world? Experience and science are all the jaws of death.

Faith is nothing vague.

Everything may vanish but faith stands forever

*ya nisa sarva-bhutanam, tasyam jagarti samyami
yasyam jagrati bhutani, sa nisa pasyato muneh*
(Bg. 2.69)

Some persons are awake in the world of experience. Their day is the world of experience and their night is the soul's world, God's world. And another class of men are wakeful in the soul's world and are sleeping in this world of experience. This world is darkness to them, and they are quite awake in the world of faith. They find that the world of faith is a permanent world.

The soul, however tiny, has a substantial position in eternity; it is an eternal factor in that world of faith. There, we shall find: "Whatever I see is eternal. Nothing will be effaced at any time. I am a member of the world of reality, and through faith I can reach such a subtle plane that never dies or changes. There is such a subtle, higher plane, and my soul is a member of that plane. The soul is wakeful there and is asleep in this world of experience, having no connection with it. And the man of the world of experience with flesh and blood, he is wakeful here, whereas that real world - the soul world - is like dark night to him."

In our present condition it may seem almost non-existent, but such a plane is the substantial eternal reality. Its existence supersedes all. All may vanish, but faith stands forever. Faith is the particular potency of Srimati Radharani.

The halo of Srimati Radharani

*sukha-rupa krsna kare sukha asvadana
bhakta-gane sukha cite 'hladini' - karana*
(C.c. Madhya 8.158)

Ecstasy personified is Krsna Himself, and He feels, tastes and enjoys Himself; but only through faith is it possible to transmit and distribute that ecstasy and joy to others. Faith is the very nature of the hladini-sakti, the ecstasy potency, which is represented in full by Srimati Radharani. It can transmit total Krsna consciousness to the devotees outside. Faith is the halo of Srimati Radharani, by the light of which others may understand Krsna. When the negative combines with the positive, realization of Their function is distributed to all other negative parts. The central, 'mother' negative can expand and transmit such faith and joy. Sraddha, faith, is a special substance about which we must inquire. It is not merely abstract.

We are wakeful in this material world, but there are others who are completely awake in that plane of faith, while this world of matter, this tangible world of enjoyment and exploitation, is underground to them; it is far, far away from their conception. They are deeply engaged in the world of service, through sraddha, faith (*ye nisa sarva-bhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami*).

Devotees won't disturb His Sweet Will

To them, even to see Krsna is a type of enjoyment. They think, "No, we won't disturb His sweet will; when-ever He likes to, He may call for us, and then we shall have a chance to see Him - otherwise not." If for my personal satisfaction I desire to see Krsna, "O Krsna, come and stand before me so that I can see You and satisfy my eyes or inner hankering," this is a kind of imposition by our exploiting nature. A devotee does not want this. Actual devotees do not allow these thoughts to enter their minds, but they maintain the mood, "Whenever He wishes to, He will call for me, and then I shall have a chance to see Him."

The height of devotion found in the Goswamis

Madhavendra Puri maintained his body by eating only what automatically came to him without begging from others; otherwise, he would fast. One day Krsna Himself came and supplied some food and He asked, "Why, Puri, don't you go and beg for food? Why do you act in this way, sometimes fasting?" Hearing of this incident, we may think that Madhavendra Puri was greatly fortunate - Krsna Himself came and supplied food to him. But we find higher devotion in Srila Sanatana Goswami.

When Srimati Radharani came and supplied food-stuffs to Srila Rupa Goswami for cooking paramanna, milk-rice, Srila Sanatana Goswami was very disturbed at heart.

"What is this Rupa? Did you aspire after something for me?"

"Yes, I did, my lord, my Gurudeva. I thought that if I could obtain some milk and rice I would be able to prepare some paramanna which is very dear to you. Then I would invite you to take that prasada."

"Oh, you have done a great wrong! This is so tasteful, I have never found such tasteful things in this world. Therefore, it must have some extraordinary origin. Who gave you the necessary ingredients you wanted for this preparation?"

Srila Rupa Goswami replied, "A girl came and gave it to me in the name of her family guardians."

Srila Sanatana Goswami wanted to know who the girl was, but she was nowhere to be found in the nearby village. Sanatana Goswami could understand the Srimati Radharani Herself had come and supplied those ingredients.

"We are searching after Her in order to serve Her, and She came and served us? What is this? Just the opposite! My dear brother, what have you done? You wanted some- thing for me and that was supplied by Her? We want Her so that we may serve Her but She came and served

us, and went away. This is a great misfortune." He was greatly dissatisfied and left that place with these thoughts.

Rupa Goswami could not take that prasadam. He thought, "I invited my Guru Srila Sanatana Goswami in order to serve and satisfy him, but quite the opposite result came. He has left dissatisfied." He ran after Sanatana Goswami to try and satisfy him.

So, we see that Krsna Himself brought foodstuffs to Madhavendra Puri, and that may be considered a very great fortune; yet, in this instance with Srila Rupa and Srila Sanatana Goswami, a similar event occurred but was considered a grave misfortune. In the higher type of devotion there is never any desire that Krsna or His Associates will come to serve and supply us, or that He will show Himself to us. To impose our whim on Him is not actual service. Whatever He likes to do He may do. And whatever may be necessary from us, we shall consider ourselves fortunate if we are given the chance to supply it. Exhaustively eliminating all our desires in the extreme, we are to place ourselves fully at the disposal of the command of the Supreme Lord, who is never to carry out any order or wish of ours.

The faith of the higher devotees

By nature, He is eager to supply everything to His devotees (*yogaksemam vahamy aham*; Bg. 9.22). But the higher devotees do not like that Krsna will supply them with anything, or that He will render service to them. Such is the purity of their devotion. Through their faith, they think, "He is my Lord. I don't want to have His darsana merely to satisfy my lower faculty of perceiving that 'He exists.'" To consider, "If I can see Him, I shall be satisfied that He exists," is a very low standard of faith. We have no capacity to see Him. To make Him our object, keeping ourselves the subject, is a low standard of faith. But higher, intense faith fully proves that He is; that wonderful cause of everything - He is present.

Give up everything; try only to have faith

A certain section claims, like the philosopher Carvaka, that, No, no,

there is no God or higher substance. Whatever we see on the surface is everything." But deeper faith says that the cause is He from whom everything emanates, He by whom everything is maintained, and He into whom everything finally enters:

*yato va imani bhutani jayante, yena jatani,
yat prayanty abhisamvisanti, tad vijijnasasva,
tad eva brahma*

(Taittiriya Upanisad, 3.1.1)

Merely the effect is not everything, but the cause has its existence. And what is the nature of the cause? Some identify Him as Brahman, some as Paramatman, and some as Bhagavan. God is the destiner and designer of everything - He has created everything, and He is controlling everything. Everything is automatically exist-ing with Him, as a particular potency of His.

Give up everything; try only to have faith, and everything will be found. Everything is there (*sakala chadiya bhai, sraddhadevira guna gai*). Do not demand for any proof, because that is meanness. To search after proof as to whether He 'is' or 'is not' is meanness. With deep faith, automatically it is known, "Yes, He is."

*yo mam pasyati sarvatra, sarvan ca mayi pasyati
tasyaham na pranasyami, sa ca me na pranasyati*
(Bg. 6.30)

"For one who sees Me in everything and everything in Me, I do not remain unseen and he also is not unnoticed by Me: he never sways in his thought of Me."

Everything is in Him, and He is also everywhere. This is the characteristic of He for whom we are searching.

Om-kara, the monosyllable Om, is the seed of theism. Om means Yes. Always, wherever we cast our glance to search in one word the answer is yes. "Yes, what you are searching for, is. You are searching for happiness, pleasure, joy, fulfillment. You are in want, and in one

word, - 'yes,' fulfillment is there."

Intimacy which even the Vedas could not give to the public

Om takes the form of Gayatri, then Veda and Vedanta Sutra; then it takes the shape of Srimad-Bhagavatam and the lila, the divine pastimes, of the Lord. After they had the opportunity of participating in the Rasa-lila of Krsna, the Sruti, the Upanisads, remarked, "Oh, we could not conceive this much. We could not inform the public about rasa, ecstasy, of such a high type. Raso vai sah - He is rasa, anandam, ecstasy. It plays in such a way? We could not understand so much, and we could not give it out to the public. So, our Lord, we beg Your forgiveness. In the full play of your joyous pastimes, the magnitude of Your ecstatic nature is inconceivable. Please forgive us, we failed to reveal to the public that the highest joy is of such fulfillment in the extreme; so much so, that kama, lustiness, the most nasty thing in the mortal world, is found here to be the most beautiful, and of the highest type of charm. Even the union of men and women, which is normally to be hated and rejected - we find that this ecstatic joy includes even that. We could not understand, our Lord. Rather, the conception we presented is dry in comparison to this joyous life."

Faith in the devotees grants us the most substantial help

Thus, we should be careful to appreciate genuine faith. We should approach the devotees for faith. They are like many pillars of faith. We are told that electricity can flow everywhere, but practically, we must be connected with the dynamo. Dynamos can show electrical power, and similarly, there are many devotees, past and present, in whom we can find real Godliness. They stand like pillars of faith, in their dealings and example. If we approach Christ, his ideal and sacrifice will encourage faith in us. If we examine the history of Prahlada, we will come to understand what a great devotee he is. Our hearts will become filled to the brim: "Here is faith - here is the presence of the Almighty."

When we pay heed to the devotees, with their help we are raised to a particularly high standard of faith. We are in a safe position when we

turn our attention towards the devotees. They are like so many pillars standing and proving His presence. Summarily neglecting the enjoyable objects of this world, they stand with their heads erect, proving and declaring their experience of the Supreme Entity.

The devotees are above even sastra, the scriptures

Faith in the devotees, the Vaisnavas, grants us the most substantial help. Such a position is not flickering, but firm. One who has faith in the Vaisnavas achieves devotion of a tangible character. Otherwise, with only abstract faith in the Lord, without faith in the devotees, we are but beginners, in the stage of *kanistha-adhikara*. This is an unreliable platform. Our devotion reaches a reliable standard when we can find devotion in the devotees, and recognize their importance. The devotees are above even sastra, the scriptures. The tangible stage when our real faith in them develops is the middle stage, *madhyama-adhikara*. In that stage, the opposition of the non-devotees may sometimes seem to partially hide the Lord in our consciousness, like an eclipse.

But these barriers within are dissolved when direct contact with the Supreme awakens. In the highest stage, *uttama-adhikara*, one can trace the Supreme Entity everywhere and in every movement (*yo mam pasyati sarvatra*, Bg. 6.30; *sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah*, Bha: 11.2.45). It is His will, He is there, in His lila. He may play hide and seek with His devotees. Sometimes He may be clearly visible to them, sometimes He may hide, and the devotees cry, "Oh, where are You, my Lord? I don't feel Your presence, I can't see You. How can I stand? How can I lead my life? Without You, I can't live. You are so charming and so joyous and the giver of so much fulfillment; I can't live without Your relationship." In this way, they begin to wail and cry.

When we find His personal beauty and charm, we realize that this is the cause of everything, the final objective

Everything is dependent upon Him alone. If we attempt to trace the cause of everything, we will find that the cause is something which in

turn has its cause which also has its cause, and soon. But when we find His personal beauty and charm, we will realize, "Yes, this is the final objective that we and the whole world are searching for." There is a Bengali song -

"O mountain, O Himalayas, O Alps, O Sumeru, what are you searching for, with your head erect? Have you seen the creator of this world and have you attained the fulfillment of your life. Have you seen Him. In this way, the devotee feels in his heart that everything is searching for the Lord who is the fulfillment of life itself. In the phenomenal world of birth and death, there is nothing tangible that should attract our attention. Our inner heart's search is for sat - the eternal, cit - consciousness that satisfies our perception, and anandam - the satisfaction of our hankering after beauty and love. When love awakens, the function of the brain retires. We will understand that love is the fulfillment of life. This is a special phase of our life. Wherever we may be, we are automatically always searching, searching, searching ... searching for that 'Yes,' ,Om.' Om means, a big 'Yes.' What you are searching for - it is. What your inner heart is hankering after - that is existing.

Where the Infinite comes so close, the finite thinks He is one of us

Your search must progress from the apparent to the inner substance. The Lord of your search is there. Thus, Omkara takes us to Gayatri, then the Veda, Vedanta, and Srimad-Bhagavatam, which describes the ecstatic, joyful side of the Lord. The Infinite comes so close to the finite that the finite thinks, He is one of us." He plays the part of such a close friend that we think He is one of us. This is His highest grace and kindness upon us, and this is our highest attainment, which is found in Vrndavana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught that we must abandon everything and make our only aim that Vrndavana Lord Sri Krsna: svayam Bhagavan, God of gods, Lord of lords. He is the source of unlimited manifestations of supernatural power. Therefore, Mahaprabhu announced, "Search for Sri Krsna. You have no other duty in this world. Take His name, talk about Him, and whatever you do, go on in this way. Very swiftly, you will achieve the fulfillment of your life. Go on taking His name, go on searching for Him, go on

talking about Him whether you are sleeping, eating, quarreling - whatever you are doing, combine it with Krsna."

But that search for Krsna should not be hypocritical. The sincere seeker will receive help and direction from the real devotees. With the help of the scriptures and the devotees, and with sincerity within you, go on searching after Krsna, everywhere. Whoever you meet, talk about Krsna, and don't talk of anything that is a prey to death. Wife, children, money everything will evaporate at the next moment, so don't think about them any longer. But in every step of your life, do everything only for the Eternal Joy. Krsna is not your concoction. He can be known through sadhu and sastra, not this mundane world of your enjoyment. Nor can you find Krsna in abhorrence - renunciation, but Krsna is with the sadhu, the pure saint; Krsna is the fulfillment of the positive inquiry of the heart.

Those who are carried away by the charm of the external world cannot understand their inner temperament; they are unfortunate (*na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum, durasaya ye bahir artha-maninah*, Bha: 7.5.31). The main necessity is to keep company with the sadhu who has real faith in Krsna. Such a sadhu, is very, very rare in this world, but if you want to achieve the highest good, make that ideal the crown of your head - in any way possible, take the help of that association.

*sadhu-sanga, sadhu-sanga - sarva-sastre kaya
lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya*
(C.c. Madhya 22.54)

"A moment's association with the sadhu awards all success, and this is the verdict of all the scriptures."

*kim pramattasya bahubhir, paroksair hayanair iha
varam muhurtam viditam, ghatate sreyase yatah*
(Bha: 2.1.12)

"Imperceptibly, many, many years pass uselessly in the life of a person intoxicated by mundane pleasures. Better if only for a moment he realizes that he is losing valuable time, for he may thus become

serious to attain his eternal benefit."

Here, Sukadeva Goswami says that one moment is sufficient to solve the whole problem of life, if it is properly utilized in sadhu-sanga. At all costs, try to utilize the opportunity of sadhu-sanga, the association of the agent of Krsna. What is the necessity of living for ages and ages if we are unconscious of our own interest? One moment properly utilized is sufficient to solve the whole problem of our life, for which we are eternally wandering about in this plane. We must be wakeful to our personal interest, not negligent.

With the help of a proper guide, search your own heart

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to direct us to our real interest within: "You do not know your own heart. You are a foreigner to your own heart and its demand. There is a wealth within your heart - try to find it: eliminate the foreign things, and you will find your heart to be a temple of Krsna. With the help of a proper guide, search your own heart and you will find Krsna there. This is not a foreign thing to you. Every heart is a temple of the Lord. It is your property, it is your home. Back to God, back to home."

Chapter Three

The Success of Faith

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written:

*sakala chadiya bhai sraddhadevira guna gai
yanra krpa bhakti dite pare*

"Giving up everything, let us sing in praise of Sraddha-devi - faith - whose grace can take us to Krsna."

Sraddha, faith, is the most subtle thing, and it is also the most tangible. It is not imaginary. We must realize that it is reality, it is concrete, and not merely an abstract sentiment of mere individual consciousness.

Faith is universal as the most fundamental element that can connect us with the finest objective.

Power and grandeur are not proof of faith

Through electricity or radio we can establish communication over a long distance. The science is very subtle, and not known to anyone and everyone, yet, we cannot deny its existence; it has its tangible position. But faith is much more subtle, and through it one can establish both higher contact and reciprocation. Subtle faith is not approachable by anyone and everyone; it has its tangible existence and it may function in any circumstance if we have its peculiar contact. We cannot give false statements that we possess it; our power and grandeur are not necessarily any proof of its presence in us. Despite great pomp and show, all we personify may be falsehood. We should be very cautious to maintain our contact with genuine faith.

The main qualification for faith

Of course, sincerity is the main requirement for faith's connection. No price, however valuable in this world, can purchase it. The qualification is *laulyam* - our sincere and earnest desire for the thing. No one can purchase the Absolute, and no price can purchase Him. The absolute necessity is our sincere desire and earnestness. With insincerity, we cannot make trade with Him; He is not so foolish as to become an object of trade for anybody! Sincere desire for Him is required, and that will awaken the conception to serve Him. We want Him, sincerely - through affection. We love Him, so we desire Him. And to love means to sacrifice for the object of our love.

Srila Jiva Goswami Prabhu has given a beautiful definition of the word 'Bhagavan':

bhajaniya sarva-sad-guna-visista - "The Supreme Lord, Bhagavan is of such a nature that everyone who comes in contact with Him will want to serve Him and to sacrifice themselves for His satisfaction."

This is the result of faith in its developed form. He is so noble, we shall think that if we die to satisfy Him, our life's objective will be fulfilled. His noble quality is such that it draws so much sacrificing

spirit for Him; it draws everything towards Him. "Die to live." Faith is such.

The agents of faith

We are in the ocean of faith, and the devotees are the essential agents. Each helps the other. We are much relieved from the fatigue and trials of a long journey if we have a companion or the association of a group. Similarly, in this ocean, if we obtain the help of devotees of similar nature to ours, that will be most conducive. Even our Guru Maharaja, in a speech he delivered on Vyasa-puja, his Holy Appearance Day, addressed his disciples, "*Vipada uddharana bandhugana*: Oh my friends, who can give me relief from danger."

"To me, you are my deliverers from danger! In the ocean of faith, it is very difficult to journey onward alone, so you have come to help me in my dangerous, ambitious journey in the infinite. You have come, and you are engaging me in talking about only Him, and so, you have given me some engagement. Otherwise, to live and move alone in the infinite is very difficult, troublesome and dangerous. You have all come to hear something, and in this exchange of talks about Him the situation has been made very safe and easy to journey so far toward Vaikuntha."

Faith is the only capital - Faith in the real devotees brings us to a tangible thing

We must be conscious of our real position when we are searching for Krsna. It is not easy, and also, it is very easy - both simultaneously. Faith is the only capital by which we can make our journey towards the Infinite. Bhakti, devotion, has no beginning and no end (*ahaituky apratihata*). There is no beginning - it is there already. Before we came to know about it, it was there. It was there, it is there, it will be there. No one can resist it - that bhakti, that faith, is irresistible. It is part of the eternal substance. Its very nature is eternity - none can oppose it. We only have to make contact and associate with it, and the wave will carry us towards our goal. And if we can have the company of the devotees, the journey becomes very easy and pleasant, whereas to go alone is very difficult.

In the progress of our contact with faith, when we come to take benefit from devotees and have faith in them, we are more safe and our progress is also tangible - it comes to reality. From a vague, abstract position, faith becomes deeper within us. We can then recognize many others with the same objective in life, and the journey becomes easier. It becomes conceivable. It comes into measurement. When we have faith in the real devotees, we can come into contact with such a tangible thing.

Thus, the position of the devotees is very important in our journey, especially in the middle stage. In the primary stage, not much importance is given to the devotees. With only a vague conception from the scriptures and with the help of previous accumulated merits (sukrti), the journey is begun. But gradually, the beginners find that to journey onwards in the infinite is not an easy thing: "We thought that with a little progress we could attain the desired end, but now we find that it is not so." When we come to consider the real position of devotion, of what is God - He is universal, He is the ultimate goal - we may gradually become disappointed. But if along the way we take help from the devotees of similar objective, we shall feel much relief by their company, even though the destination may be far away. The difficulties of the journey are more prominent in the second stage. In the primary stage, we are not very exclusive in our objective, and so, we do not experience much difficulty. Real difficulties begin when we enter into the journey exclusively, with no other objective than to engage our whole energy towards that high and elevated path. And if we actually achieve a touch of the highest stage, the maha-bhagavata stage, the journey again becomes easier. But the middle portion is difficult, and at that stage the devotees are very important to save us. This is the period of both tangible acquisition and difficulty; our failings on the path to realization are to be rectified in this middle stage.

The association of devotees is of ultimate importance

When we enter into war, in the beginning we have much hope. We feel confident. But the real test is when the fighting begins. And when

we finally conquer, we again become very satisfied. But the middle - when the war is being conducted - that is the difficult period. At that time, our co-workers, our comrades who fight along-side us, are very, very important to us. "I am not alone, but there are many others battling alongside me in that middle fighting period of war." Those companions are important. Some may disappear from the field but there will be others to encourage me.

Similarly, on this journey, we may see that many stalwarts are falling. It may discourage us to see such respected persons -going away - falling in the middle path. Nonetheless, in the midst of those unfavorable circumstances there are others who are bravely making progress with unflinching faith, and they will help us. To stick it out to the end is difficult - but important and valuable. The test comes and shows how much faith we have. Nothing comes in vain, and we must take everything that happens in that way.

There may be so many stalwarts, like Bhishma and Drona, who fall flat in the battlefield, but still we must go on (*karmany evadhikaras te, ma phalesu kadacana*, Bg. 2.47). We are out to fight to the end. We must achieve our end of life, and we can imbibe such firmness from the character of the devotees. The sastra will also offer helpful advice, but the association of the devotees is nonetheless of ultimate importance.

How to persevere on this journey?

We need lasting faith, not flickering faith: "Oh, I attempted for some time but I did not find any tangible fruit from bhakti, so I left"; or, "To me, it seemed very, very vague. When I began, I thought this to be something tangible that I would quickly attain, but it is not so. It is uncertain. I am giving so much energy for the cause, but still the desired result is not achieved." Previous tendencies also draw from the negative side, and so we find that many stalwarts are falling.

Still, we have to persevere in this journey, and we shall have to take courage from those who are standing and who are deeply engaged. Though it is told hundreds of times that the Absolute is infinite, in the beginning we still tend to take it in the conception of the finite. We are

accustomed to think of anything and everything in terms of finite. So, although we hear that it is infinite, it is Vaikuntha, it has no limit - we nonetheless cannot grasp the proper meaning. But when we make practical progress, many new conceptions must come to our knowledge.

Now, when our Guru Maharaja addressed his disciples as *vipada uddharana bandhu-gana*, "My dear friends who have come to deliver me from danger," we should, of course, recognize such a statement from both the relative and absolute standpoints. Students are a necessary part of a professor - when a professor has students, he feels the practical utility of his life has been successful. Thus, from the relative point of view, disciples can help the Acarya. But from the absolute stand-point, Krsna's will is everything, and the nitya-siddha or eternally perfect great souls who inwardly know the Lord's intentions cannot be disturbed by any danger in any respect, but outwardly such an appearance may be manifest in their dealings.

By mutual understanding and discussion, a nectar arises to nourish the devotees

*mac-citta mad-gata-prana, bodhayantah parasparam
kathayantas ca mam nityam, tusyanti ca ramanti ca*
(Bg. 10.9)

Mac-citta: "Their attention is in Me"; *mad-gata-prana*: "Their energy is also spent for my cause"; *bodha-yantah parasparam*: "They mutually assist one another." This reminds us of the 'Napoleonic chair.' Once, when stranded in a marsh, Napoleon arranged that each man sit on the lap of another, in a circular formation; each automatically protected the other from the otherwise fatal cold and they could all remain awake to pass the whole night of intolerable cold. Otherwise his army would have perished. So, by mutual help, one devotee is asking questions, another is answering, and they are both getting engagement. The questioner is giving some energy and the answerer is also energizing. *Bodhayantah parasparam*: those of equal standing exchange their thoughts about Krsna - *kathayantas ca mam nityam* - and thereby their blissfulness is generated. By mutual

understanding and discussion, a kind of nectar arises that nourishes the devotees. "One is asking something about Me and another is answering, and thereby that discussion creates a flow of nectar that nourishes both parties." *Tusyanti ca ramanti ca*: "Satisfaction is generated from that mutual understanding, and it develops up to *ramanti ca*, up to the quality of the absolute reciprocation, the 'wholesale transaction.' It rises up to that standard, *ramanti ca*, and again I give them a further installment, an illumination of new light (*dadami buddhi-yogam tam*), and they take a new course and are promoted into the 'suicide squad,' that squadron which is eligible for every type of service."

To be competent for any type of sacrifice or service

That particular type of 'soldier' is competent to fight on the land, in the water, in the sky or in any circumstances, and he is prepared for any form of fighting, any form of service. "I direct them to that section."

Yena mam upayanti te (Bg. 10.10). Unconditional service: they are ready for any service demanded of them. They are ready to sacrifice their lives for any form of service, and that peculiar group is in Vrndavana. I mentioned to Sripada A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja that in Gita, after *ramanti* (10.9) comes *buddhi-yoga and then upayanti* (10.10); according to me, the meaning is that *ramanti* or divine service in *madhura-rasa* progresses through *buddhi-yoga* or *yoga-maya*, up to *upayanti*, or the highest plane of service in Vrndavana. Sripada Swami Maharaja responded, "What more could it mean than this!"

Hence, *upayanti* means *kama-rupa*. In his *Bhakti--rasamrta-sindhu*, Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned *sambandha-rupa* and *kama-rupa*, the two types of *Ragatmika-bhakti*, or devotion rendered by the Eternal Associates of the Lord, headed by the residents of Vraja. In *sambandha-rupa* the Lord's Associates cooperate according to their fixed relative positions of *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* or *madhura*, whereas in *kama-rupa* they come forward to serve any necessity that is demanded of them. They are ready to serve any and every desire of the Absolute.

They are like that group of soldiers who have been trained to do any service in the war without being limited to fighting only in a particular division such as the army, navy or air force. They are prepared for all sorts of service, anywhere. Such is the kama-rupa group. This is upayanti te; they are awarded the instruction (*dadami buddhi-yogam tam*) by which they earn such capacity in the service of the Supreme. Krsna is ready to cooperate with the servitors in any position. In Mathura, He gave even Sairindhri, Kubja, the chance to render higher service. Krsna is prepared for anything, and so the other side, His servi-tors, must also be prepared in that way. The high conception of kama-rupa is very, very abstruse. It is most difficult for ordinary mortals to comprehend.

*tesam evanukampartham, aham ajnana-jam tamah
nasayamy atma-bhava-stho, jnana-dipena bhasvata*
(Bg. 10.11)

"I am so indebted to those devotees that whenever they feel the pain of My separation, I cannot tolerate it. I immediately run to cooperate with them in accepting My service. Such is the intensity of the demand I feel from them."

Try to keep company with the successful candidates

In an examination hall, many of us may sit for the examination, yet many are unsuccessful and fall back. But we are not to dwell on them. Rather, we shall try to keep company with the successful candidates. They should be the focus of our attention, and with their help we shall progress. Progress means selection and elimination, and there is no end of making progress. We must take courage to that extent.

Everywhere and in whatever direction we may go, we shall find both successful and unsuccessful candidates. We shall try to avoid the unsuccessful. Some may be brilliant in the primary classes, but in progressing further, we find that they are proving dull and cannot pass the test. And there may be many who were not very successful in the primary classes but flourish in higher education. Thus, we should not be discouraged and disappointed on hearing that so many once respected stalwarts are falling away. We should try to feel the actual

soil. We need a sincere acquaintance with the soil on which we are moving. It is unintelligible to the fullest extent, but we must spare some energy to cultivate a deeper feeling for where we are, what we want, and where we are going. We must have a deeper feeling for the plane of our objective and achievement. We must not allow ourselves to be captured by the outer charm of things, but we should try to feel and trace the reality as our friend.

Liberation belittled

*klesa-ghni subhada moksa-, laghuta-krt sudurllabha
sandra-nanda-visesatma, sri-krsnakarsini ca sa*
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva 1.17)

"Uttama-bhakti, the purest devotion, is the vanquisher of all sin and ignorance, and the bestower of all auspiciousness; liberation is belittled in the presence of such devotion, which is very rarely attained, the embodiment of the deepest ecstasy, and the attractor of Sri Krsna Himself."

Even if we achieve liberation from all the undesirable forces around us, pure devotion undermines this position of liberation (*moksa-laghuta-krt*). We may be a liberated soul, free from the reactions and apprehension of the future, but association with the positive engagement, bhakti, is much more difficult to attain (*sudurllabha*). To obtain a 'passport' is not the same as securing a 'visa.' One may have a passport, but in order to secure a visa it will have to be necessary to undergo more trouble. In other words, we may be released by the reactionary plane, yet we may not have entrance into the higher plane. To have entrance there is far beyond this liberation. The qualification to eagerly aspire to give oneself wholly for the other plane of life is hardly to be found in anyone. Such a person has no motive to acquire anything for the plane in which he had previously been living for so long.

Furthermore, if he is appointed to be a preacher, an agent to do relief work here, he will execute that duty solely under the appointment of, and in the interest of, that higher plane, without any attachment that "I shall bring some good to the people." He will think, "I must put

myself wholly at the disposal of the higher plane, and I shall not be eager to become an acarya, a spiritual master. Otherwise, there is the danger of committing namaparadha, offense against the Lord's name."

Asraddadhane vimukhe 'py asrnavati, yas copadesa siva-namaparadhah. It is an offense to give the holy name to the faithless. It betrays the motivation to gain a 'position' in the higher sphere. This is a type of mundane attachment, a spiritual tradery, as is the habit of caste 'Goswamins' and other spurious lines. Rather, the healthy attitude should be, "If I am appointed from above, then I shall serve as appointed, and that too, only for the interest of those who have appointed me. I am entering that rank solely for the interest of that higher land." That should be the pure and perfect approach.

So, with a passport alone we cannot hope to enter easily into that higher plane which is *sudurllabha*, very rarely attained. But if we can enter, we shall feel *sandrananda visesatma*, "Yes, the very plane itself is most happy and full of independent spirit. I desired to secure a 'visa' to enter this country, and now I find that it really is as promised. I directly perceive that I am breathing in a far higher, sweeter atmosphere - a homely atmosphere that far excels anything of my previous soil." And finally, *sri-krsnakarsini ca sa*: Krsna Himself, Reality the Beautiful, who attracts the hearts of all - even He is attracted by the dedication of his surrendered servitor. Neither power nor knowledge have any play in this domain, but the Sweet Absolute is captured by the love of His devotee.

Chapter Four

The Honest Inquirer

We should note the difference between a servant and a trader. Many approach with some trading purpose, but the character of the real devotee should be that of a servant. Sri Prahlada Maharaja has mentioned that one who associates with the sadhus, wanting something in return for his personal interest, is making 'trade' with the

sadhus. He thinks, "How much can I gain, and how much shall I have to give?" But a pure devotee should not have any such separate interest. Rather, he should try to merge within the interest of the Lord. In whatever position he is, it does not matter - whether he is a brahmacari, a sannyasi, a grhastha, a vanaprastha or any other position - he must be willing to merge (*visate tad anantaram*).

He will not like to keep any separate account. His sole objective will be to enter into the family of the Godhead. This is the very basis of pure devotion. *Tato mam tattvato jnatva, visate tad anantaram* (Bg. 18.55). We want to surrender, to be one of common interest with the Lord, and not to approach, ask some questions, pocket the answers, and then make trade with them elsewhere in any way. Once, when I was being asked many questions, I replied, "This is not an inquiry office. The inquisitive want to satisfy their idle curiosity; or, they want to be masters of many keys - that they will be able to give solutions to everyone's problems, and attain some status. They have many motives but they cannot understand the real necessity.

My sole inquiry is, 'How can I be utilized here?'

We require specific articles to execute worship, such as incense, flowers, lamp, etc. Similarly, if we wish to realize the supersubjective plane, there are three specific necessities: pranipata, pariprasna, and seva. Without these three ingredients, our search will be imitative, unsubstantial and farcical.

Pranipata means 'to fall flat near the feet of the worshipable': "I have come to the end of all enterprise with my previous plane of life; I could find nothing there to fulfill my life's objectives. Finally, after 'completing my errands,' I have come here." This is the practical symptom of pranipata.

Pariprasna means 'sincere inquiry.' Honest and sincere inquiry is allowed. The spirit of such inquiry is, "I want to know how I can be utilized in any way. All the charm for living elsewhere is over. My sole inquiry is 'How can I be utilized here?' "

And seva, service, is the all-important factor. "I have come to serve and to be utilized for the cause of the subject about which I have inquired. I have not come to take anything from here. I have come

only to serve, with no other motive."

*tad vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet
samit panih srotriyam brahma-nistham*
(Mundaka Upanisad, 1.2.12)

Abhigacchet means *samyak-gacchet* - 'not with a return ticket.' *Abhi-* means *samyak*, 'fully.' I have completely lost my charm for the previous life; I have come to surrender to *srotriyam brahma-nistham*, one who can teach me, being already in a position in the divinity and possessing both theoretical and practical knowledge about the objective. Without this process, everything will be futile.

*tasmad gurum prapadyeta, jijnasuh sreyaḥ uttamam
śabde pare ca nisnatam, brahmany upasamasrayam*
(Bha: 11.3.21).

Tasmat means 'consequently' - because the candidate has lost all charm for the world of his previous experience - he has consequently approached with the sole objective of seeking an honorable place here for his future life. *Prapadyeta* means *prapannam*, 'surrender' he will exclusively devote himself for the cause. *Jijnasuh sreyaḥ uttamam*: he has come in search of a higher life. "The lower lives are over; can I have an elevated life here?" He is therefore surrendering to one who is versed in both aspects of the truth - the reality (*pare*) as well as the literary description of that reality (*śabde, or śruti-sāstre*), which is revealed truth extended from the higher quarter, beyond this world of sensual experience.

In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Sri *Prahlada Maharaja* refused to accept any boons offered to him by the Lord. He said, "One who accepts boons in return for his service to You is not Your servant but a merchant" (*na sa bhṛtyaḥ sa vai vanik*, Bha: 7.10.4). Those who approach Guru and Kṛṣṇa with their separate interest have come only to make trade. They have come to acquire something to satisfy their own purpose. We must be very cautious to avoid such traits within ourselves. For what have I come? There may be many motives.

Trading with Bhagavatam is a grave offense, aparadha

After a famous renowned Goswamin who was well-versed in Srimad-Bhagavatam had explained the Bhagavatam in a public gathering, Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja, who was present during the lecture, later ordered his servant, "Purify this place with water and cow-dung!"

The servant was wonderstruck. "Why? It is already purified; the recitation of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavata-katha, took place here."

Srila Gaura Kisora Babaji said, "You heard Bhagavatam, but I heard only 'money, money, money.'" In other words, the Goswamin had been very eager to have Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji present at his lecture; the publicity that Srila Babaji was present to hear his explanation of Srimad-Bhagavatam would give the lecturer greater scope to make more money in his trade. He came to read Srimad-Bhagavatam only for that purpose, and not to satisfy Bhagavatam or Krsna. He came for his own business; not for the purpose of Bhagavatam. Trading with Bhagavatam is an offense, aparadha, against the Bhagavatam, most detrimental to pure devotion. One's attitude in devotion is all-important. Srila Sridhara Swami, the renowned commentator of Srimad-Bhagavatam, has stated, *sa carpitaiva sati yadi kriyeta, na tu kṛta sati pascad arpyeta*: "Devotional services must be first offered to the Lord, then performed; not performed and offered afterwards."

We should be already committed when we come to serve, and not that we shall collect capital and later try to utilize it in the service of the Lord. The commitment is to Him, to Krsna. I have come to know about Him for Him, not for me or anyone else. Then, why is there a preaching department for others' benefit? That department exists only because of the instruction from above. Only if I receive an impression from that higher quarter, "Go and preach," shall I do so, and only then will my preaching be service, and never if it is done for the name and fame that "I am a good preacher doing good work, etc." I must have engagement from the higher office, and only on their behalf I shall preach; then it will be genuine preaching. Otherwise, it will be trading.

Na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik: Prahlada Maharaja has warned us against this trading mentality in the name of spiritual truth.

Devotion is a separate and distinct plane where we live only for the center; we aspire to live and move only as an agent of the center, never disconnected from the center - this is Krsna consciousness. Reality is for itself, and we must strictly abide by this rule. He is for Himself, everything is for Him - and I am for Him. And whatever I do must also be for Him. We must strictly adhere to this conception, and always examine whether what we are doing is for Him or for any other part, however important we may think it to be.

The audacious reject the Vaisnava's guidance

And what is the guarantee? The guarantee is Vaisnava and sastra. One should not be so audacious to think that he can conceive the whole thing; one should do everything with the approval of a Vaisnava (*vaisnavera anugatya*). In the beginning, when I joined Gaudiya Math, my Godbrother Professor Sanyal remarked one day, "If we read Bhagavatam on our own accord, we may perhaps acquire some knowledge, etc., but not bhakti, devotion. But if a Vaisnava orders us to read, our reading will be in devotion." Even reading of the scriptures is not devotion unless done on the order of the Vaisnava; independent reading is only knowledge-seeking. By following the Vaisnava, our bond with the Lord is guaranteed. *Sadhu-sange krsna-nama*: in the company of the devotees, chanting the name or whatever service we render is guaranteed to reach Him. And what is the guarantee of that? The reply will be, "His agent is saying so, and I am therefore engaged. I am not my master - I am his servant." Such consciousness must be genuine, as far as possible; success depends on this principle.

Reality is for itself. This truth, however hard it may seem, must be accepted. 'Die to live,' and 'Reality is by itself and for itself' - these sayings of Hegel can be very nicely employed by the Vaisnava school.

First surrender: then serve

aham hi sarva-yajnanam, bhokta ca prabhur eva ca
(Bg. 9.24)

In Sri Gita, we find that 'Reality is by itself and for itself: I am the Lord and Enjoyer of all sacrifices.' Thus, Sri Sridhara Swamipada has remarked, "First surrender, then serve." Otherwise you will try to acquire something, pocket it, and fly away. No. Sign the contract for everything that is given to you, then do the needful service without relying on yourself.

Is such a life desirable? We have to think it out: there is so much risk - 'Die to live.' Must we first die in order to live in the future? Are we prepared to take such a risk? Are we sufficiently disgusted with the present environment that we can risk so much for some bright future? "I shall jump!" Are we disgusted enough to take such a step?

If I am sincere to myself, and if I have a glimpse of the bright future, then only can I take such a risk. Otherwise no one would be so foolish to take such a risk and jump, giving up the present for the uncertain future. To feel the courage to jump, one must have caught a glimpse of even the tiniest ray of such a bright existence.

Sukrti, devotional merit, and sraddha, good faith, are required. If only a point of noble faith has arisen in one's heart, he may take such a bold step and he must jump; otherwise it is impossible. First sraddha, then sadhu-sanga and bhajana-kriya: with faith, when one has the association of the devotees, the practices of devotional service follow. With faith, one can embrace the process of realization. *Sakala chadiya bhai, sraddhadevira guna gai:* give up everything and with your utmost energy praise the nobility of faith, the ray for a new and noble life.

Even great scholars and stalwarts of the religious world cannot comprehend the quality of the life of surrender to Krsna (*na vai vidur rsayo napi devah*, Bha: 6.3.19); what, then, can common humans comprehend? Those remaining outside may be trying, but they have not yet come to the soil.

**If we do everything for Him, everything
will be very beautifully done**

When prospecting for oil or minerals, one may see many outer symptoms indicating the presence of those elements within the earth below, but only after penetrating deeper can one confirm his find. Despite many outer symptoms without substance, only when the search has reached to a certain stage can one know, "Yes, we have struck oil, or iron, or gold." So, Sri Caitanyadeva said, *eho haya, age kaha ara*: "The divine life you are searching for is; now go further."

In this way, with good faith, *sraddha*, one can thus progress. Faith must be of this nature: if we supply food to the stomach, naturally the whole body will be nourished; we shall not try to nourish a particular part by a local injection. If we supply water to the root, the whole tree will be fed. Similarly, by faith we can realize that if we do everything for Him, the center of Beauty Personified, everything will be very beautifully done. With all your might contribute your quota, however small, and from that point your efforts will be distributed beautifully. And this is the highest harmony. The highest life for every part is of the nature of harmony with the whole.

If you have a good cook, why try to cook separately yourself; If you simply assist him according to his directions, your ingredients cooked by his hands will be tasteful to all. So engage yourself with that principle. Whatever might you have, however small, place it at the disposal of the highest beauty, love divine, and it will be distributed; and you will also be inundated with the highest quality and degree of joy and fulfillment. Such a life of devotion has been recommended as the key to our life. Prahlada Maharaja, who is a *suddha-bhakta*, a pure devotee, of the primary stage, *santa-rasa*, has warned us of the contamination of the 'trading temperament'; it is a great danger in our approach to pure devotion (*na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik*). So we must scrutinise ourselves and abandon this trading temperament. At its root is *pratistha* - the quest for self-establishment, name and fame. Genuine devotion is devoid of such a temperament.

Chapter Five

Unconditional Service

Try to adjust yourself through sound only, the subtlest element of this plane. Through sound, go on cultivating spiritual life; and that too must be approached with a serving attitude, otherwise it will be futile. We are recommended to approach divinity through the most subtle element of this gross world. Although it is apparently nothing to us at present, this divinity is actually everything.

So, accept the subtlest thing. But if the very life is absent, our search will be futile. Learn to give yourself, learn to 'die,' to embrace so-called death at every second. Even in this world we find the 'do-or-die' attitude in ambitious politicians, social workers, etc. In every duty and at every step they are ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause. If one embraces that do-or-die principle of life, he is sure to progress very intensely and become a great success.

Here also, when approaching the high spiritual life, you must invite death at every step. Give yourself with the most intense desire: do or die. At every point, keep your life as your guarantee: "I shall succeed or I shall die." Approach the sound, giving yourself with this spirit. No giving - no getting. If you can desire to give with such an intensified nature, you will be transformed into a bonafide candidate for the higher world.

Service means self-giving, self-dedication, and this should be our attitude to approach the plane. In that way, all the coatings of ego will vanish one by one, and the genuine self will come from within and select its own soil: "This is my home." So many coverings are deviating us in different directions, taking us far, far away from our svarupa, our real noble self - a servant in the highest plane of the whole organism. The Beautiful is playing, dancing in His own sweetness and affection, and we can reach Him, following such a course of 'do or-die' at every moment.

Through self-giving I can acquire my fortune, and not as a master

sitting in my chair gathering information from different quarters to utilize for my selfish plans. *Adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sanga 'tha bhajana-kriya* (Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 4.15): to progress with faith, keeping the association of devotees and dedicating one's activities to the Lord, means this - you must go forward in your life with the spirit that you are willing to give away this life. 'Do-or-die' is, of course, not in the physical sense but the internal sense (bhajana-kriya). This is self-giving, ego-giving.

Mean desires won't be able to touch you

Tato 'nārtha-nivṛtīḥ syāt: if you can adopt this, the undesirable things within you will disappear very easily and swiftly. *Tato nistha*: then you will find a continuous connection with such a principle in your life. That principle will always act continuously, and other fleeting, mean desires won't be able to approach or touch you. Next, you will find *ruci*, a real taste for divinity. Other- wise, before that continuous stage, whatever taste we may think we have is only treachery and not real taste. *Nistha* means *nairantarya*: when we are established in twenty-four hours a day continuous connection with that charming substance, a real taste will arise, and we can rely on that taste. Any taste that we may find in any other position is unreliable. Twenty-four hours a day connection with divinity eliminating all other charms of this world is necessary. Then, the *ruci*, the conscious taste that arises in us, is a reliable guide.

After that, *asakti*, natural affinity, arises, and then the symptoms of *bhava*, the 'bud' stage of the 'flower' of *prema*, divine love, makes its appearance. This is the way of our progress. But if there is any imitation, only offenses will be created. Those offenses will be recorded in that circle of the examiners of the upper quarter, and they will give a stamp of disqualification that we are criminal and unfit. This will go against us and hamper our future progress. Thus, we must be very careful not to commit offense, *aparadha*. It is better to be a newcomer with a new introduction than to have a criminal record, for that will go against us. We must be very, very careful in our quest for the highest objective of our eternal life. This caution has been especially given by our Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta

Saraswati Thakura, and he attracted us to the line of exclusive devotion.

The very life of the practice is all important - this is self-dedication

Sevonmukhe, serving attitude was foremost. Our Guru Maharaja did not allow us to read much, even of the lower types of scriptures dealing with general sadhana or practices, not to speak of the higher books. Rather, we were expected to actually follow those practices by hearing from the proper source and practicing accordingly whatever was instructed from there. Serving - learn to give yourself properly. There are different methods of service: sravana, hearing; kirtana, chanting; smarana, remembering; vandana, praying, etc. Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned sixty-four kinds of devotional practices, and it has also been further mentioned that there are one thousand types of devotional practices. But practices are not very important; the very life of the practice is all-important, for this is self-dedication. Thus we should be very particular to learn that dedication is work under a Vaisnava.

Try to get practical training, working under a proper agent; that will help you most to learn and practice true dedication. Guidance must come -from above. It may be very rare, but it is most valuable. We must selflessly surrender to whatever directive descends from above. "I won't serve my whims or the whims of men of my level, but whatever comes from the plane above, I shall obey very eagerly." This is the key, and this is service.

Sevonmukhata, serving attitude, means what? One day, during the latter days of his presence in the world, our Guru Maharaja Srila Prabhupada said to a certain sannyasi who had led a full twenty years of life in the mission, "You did not see me - you could not see who I am. Like a zamindar you have kept some householder servitors under you, and from them you periodically give a donation to me. You have become like a broker, but you should be wholesale mine - my agent. You are not doing that. You are dependent on those householders while maintaining some connection with me. This is not necessary. You are not a member of this world. You are mine alone. Whatever I

say, you should do. You should not sell yourself to anything or any proposal of this world. You are to be wholesale my servant." Thus, this necessary attitude is rarely to be found. We should surrender to whatever flows from the higher plane and thereby substantiate its reality.

*viracaya mayi dandam dinabandho dayam va
gatir iha na bhavattah kacid anya mamasti
nipatatu sata-kotir nirbharam va navambhas
tad api kila payodah stuyate catakena*

The bird known as Cataka always looks above for rainwater, but it will never take any water from the ground even if there is an abundance there. He waits only for whatever water will come from above. Sufficient rain may come, or thunder may come, yet he will not take even a single drop from the earth. Our attitude should be like that. We must follow whatever instruction and direction comes from above, and never try to fulfill any plan from the mundane world. "The Director, the Master, the Lord above - I am connected with Him." This sort of practice is conducive.

We may chant the name, hear the musical kirtana, etc., but the very life will be present only as much as our activity is on the order descending from the plane above, and as much as that order is earnestly being carried out by us. In that way, we may be taken above. We may be promoted to the higher layer by preparing ourselves only to carry out the order from above, without question. If we are certain that the order is coming from the higher layer, we should surrender without question. By living at the disposal of the higher, we learn selfless service of the higher, which is not of any mundane source. This is our necessity: Vaisnava-seva and Guru-seva - service to the Vaisnava and Guru. By Guru-bhakti alone - devotion to the service of Sri Gurudeva - in one stroke, all desirable pursuits will be accomplished (*etat sarvam gurau bhaktya, puruso hy anjasa jayet*, Bha: 7.15.25). There are also many symptoms by which to recognise the genuine Guru, and by obeying the directions of the higher, we can make progress towards the higher; we may hope to be selected by the higher and be taken up to that layer if we are considered sufficiently

qualified. This attitude will be the main tenure of our lives if we want to go to the high, super-conscious region.

If we apply reason, we shall be nowhere

In the Vedanta-sutra, it is mentioned that the process to reach that region is by revealed truth and not by reason (*tarka-pratisthanat*). If we apply reason, we shall be nowhere. Among expert arguers, there may always be one more expert - in this way, on and on, no end. Thus, *tarka*, reason and argument, is inconclusive (*apratistha*). Intellectualism has no standing here, because super-consciousness is beyond our jurisdiction. It cannot be an object of our intellect. By serving, by honoring, by self-giving, by heart-giving, and never otherwise, can we invite that high guest. It is not possible to capture and encage Him by intrigue and conspiracy. Such an attempt will betray Satan in another color.

Not only self-abnegation, but self-surrender is necessary to approach God. Deep self-surrender will take us into connection with the higher, noble substance, and it must be cultivated by all means. And service is not service to maya. I must be very careful to perceive that I am not merely serving maya, who has appeared in a charming or 'godly' form. In our present position we must be extremely cautious regarding who and what we are serving. The main wave will be *jñane prayasam udapasya* (Bha: 10.14.3): hatefully discard (*uda-pa-asya*) all proposals that your intellect may offer you. Whatever the intellect can judge and accept or reject must necessarily be of a lower type. So, you are to summarily reject that, and understand that you must bow down your head (*namanta eva*).

Try to connect with that section where you can never be master

The beginning of your interest is to bow down your head, and your heart will be captured automatically. Try to connect with that section where you will always be with folded palms, and where you can never be master. Such abnegation and courage of self-giving is necessary if you want to live in the higher plane. Otherwise, you may reign in hell. According to Satan's word, "it is better to reign in hell than to serve in

heaven." But just the opposite is necessary.

Even tears and crying have no value if the inner tendency of self-giving is absent. Seva, service, mean self-giving, and that is the standard principle in the life of a devotee. This self-giving must really be to the higher sphere and not just haphazardly around us, for that is another way to be captured by hateful things.

Jnana, knowledge, is generally regarded as being very pure. By the majority of people, jnana is considered to be very innocent because it has no relationship with gross, material things. It is always admitted that to handle the gross material energy is very unwholesome (*sasvad abhadram*); and knowledge is considered by the higher personalities to be very pure, very innocent and spotless (*jnanam alam niranjanam*). But if it is not connected with Krsna, such knowledge must be hatefully rejected.

*naiskarmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjitam
na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam*
(Bha 1.5.12)

Here, in the Srimad-Bhagavatam, it is said that knowledge is widely considered to be spotless, pure and innocent, but if it is not connected with the positive absolute good, then it is your enemy. A qualified candidate will consider things in this way. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti*: Surrender is so pure, that any connection with knowledge, which is considered to be very innocent and pure - even that must be hatefully rejected. Such a degree of surrender is necessary for the higher association of genuine devotion.

Both the charm of material acquisition, and the charm of the mastery of knowing everything, are to be rejected (*jnana-karmady-anavrtam*). It is not possible for you to know anything about the infinite, either in magnitude or quality. The infinite is a flow of auto-cracy, so what can you know of it? Therefore, knowledge means more than storing so many relative or false incidents, and 'selling' that information to the world in order to fulfill some other function such as personal name and fame. Hatefully give this up and engage in unqualified and

unconditional service. That is noble, and that will take you up to the nobler region.

Thus, karma and jnana - handling matter and handling knowledge - both are discouraged. Knowledge won't be allowed to enter that 'market' where the absolute will and autocracy reign. No rule and regulation can work there. False gathering and false store have got no standing there.

Only surrender, and we will have that high relationship. Serving attitude is our friend. We are a unit of serving attitude, and service means to surrender to the higher. And the higher means the plane uncontaminated with material and intellectual acquisition. We must serve such a higher plane.

Chapter Six

The Highest Conception of Conduct

One day, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was chanting the Lord's names and wandering in the sky, at his sweet will. Suddenly he found that he was just near Yamalaya where Yama, the lord of death, holds court for judging the sinners of this world. He also found there Brahma, Narada, Siva, and others, discussing with Yamaraja the meaning of two slokas spoken by Sri Krsna in Bhagavad-gita (9.30,31); but they could not solve the problem of discerning the proper meaning of the slokas.

*api cet suduracaro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah, samyag vyavasito hi sah*

"Externally, a person may be seen to commit many sins, but if he is exclusively given to My devotion, he should be considered most pure - a saint. Whatever he does, he does cent-per-cent rightly."

*ksipram bhavati dharmatma, sasvac chantim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijanihi, na me bhaktah pranasyati*

"Very soon, he will become religious in his behavior, and he will be seen to acquire real peace in his life. O son of Kunti, confidently declare to the public that my devotee never meets ruination."

The exclusive devotee is transcendental to piety and sinfulness

But one who is engaged in the Lord's exclusive devotion, *ananya-bhajana*, has been defined by the Lord in His own words, *sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja*: "My exclusive devotee is he who gives up all phases of duties (*sarva-dharman*) and surrenders to My feet, accepting only his duty to Me." How, then, having already surpassed all phases of duties and surrendered to the Lord, can that exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhak*) further be seen to become a 'dutiful' or an externally 'pious man' (*ksipram bhavati dharmatma*)? This is an anomaly.

Yamaraja, Brahma, Narada, etc., discussed this point, but could not arrive at any solution. How can one become "righteous in the near future" when he has already abandoned all kinds of duties, either righteous or unrighteous, in order to exclusively surrender to the feet of the Supreme Lord? Finding no solution, they sent for Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura who, they noticed, was moving in the sky and taking the name of the Lord: "He is a pure devotee - and not an ordinary devotee - he has deep knowledge of the scriptures, so let him come and explain these verses of Bhagavad-gita."

And so, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was invited, and he went there. He gave the meaning. *Api cet sudura-caro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak* - despite his outer practices, the exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhak*) is to be accepted (*mantavyah*) as a cent-per-cent saint (*sadhu*). Therefore, the conclusion is that he who can realize this, he who declares that an exclusive devotee of Krsna, regardless of his outer practices, is cent-per-cent saintly - he will soon become *dharmatma*, virtuous and religious. His statement and conclusion is cent-per-cent correct, and his conduct will soon become very pure and he, too, will have the chance of accepting the path towards eternal truth.

Whether or not we obey provincial laws, we must obey His Absolute law

"So Arjuna, you take advantage of this and boldly declare to the public that My devotee who gives himself wholly unto Me can never come to ruination. Even if he may be seen to be outwardly doing something wrong - he will be saved. His successful life is assured. By this declaration, you will get the benefit of becoming righteous and have the chance of attaining eternal spiritual peace. Whoever can understand this and has the courage to declare that My exclusive devotee is never subject to ruination - he, in turn, gets his chance to come to this path of exclusive devotion, and he will attain eternal peace."

He will attain everything because he has the proper appreciation for exclusive devotion. Everything is for the Lord, and not for any other part. In the Absolute, everything is 'for itself.' 'The Absolute is for itself.' Whether we obey or disobey the laws of provincial or separate interest, we must without fail obey the rule that everything is for Him. This is the main rule, and all others are subsidiary. We may or may not carry on our duties, but we must carry on our duty towards the center; this is the all-important factor in every case. Thus, one who can appreciate this and boldly assert it to the public must have substantial appreciation for this conception, and he is sure to survive and improve his future condition very soon. "He will attain the path of eternal peace, and that is the service of Myself, Kṛṣṇa." This is the underlying meaning.

The highest quality in every part of the whole is that everyone must be dedicated towards the center, even crossing his dutifulness in respect to any other environmental position. And one who can feel, appreciate, and assert this - he will also soon achieve such a position. His inner heart can appreciate, and that is something of a realization on that path; it will very soon take effect, and the public will see, "Oh, he is also entering this path of ananya-bhajana, the exclusive adherence to the call of the Absolute Center, and that is all-in-all."

Consider him free from fault

"*Dharma* means morals, duties, including duties to father, mother, country, society, humanity; etc. But if one neglects all these and keeps a straight relationship towards Me, he will be considered free of any fault. He is in the line of *sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja*. He is doing right, and one who can simply appreciate this will also very soon be converted to the same class." This is the whole purport.

In the standard or most general interpretation, the beginner in devotional service may have so many bad tendencies in his behavior, but when he matures these must disappear. Nonetheless, undesirable behavior may sometimes be seen to persist, at least externally.

By chewing his poison, poison will come to me

The more we are particular about the conduct of others, the more we lose our own time and energy. Instead of benefiting us, such a practice is reactionary. If I try to find fault with anyone, especially a devotee, the fault will come back to me. By chewing the poison in his body, that poison will come to me. Avoid such association. Try to find the good in others - that will help you.

There was a system in our Math at the time of our Guru Maharaja: he ordered one devotee to praise another - especially one that the devotee disliked. Thus, the devotee would be forced to find the goodness in the other devotee who he didn't particularly like, and thereby be benefited. Eliminating what was bad in his conception of the other person, he was to search for what good he could find, and thereby be benefited.

Dare not criticize those under charge of Krsna

There need be no culture with any bad thing, anywhere, especially in the devotees. Krsna has taken charge of His surrendered souls (ananya-bhak). Thus, whatever good or bad may be present in them is His responsibility. Any badness or evil in a devotee may disappear at any time by His will, otherwise Krsna may have that tendency

continue in order to serve some purpose of His. We must have this vision. We must not dare to criticize those who are directly under the charge of Krsna, or we shall accrue great difficulty. We should try to find the good in them, for that will help us a great deal. This is not a theoretical matter, but a most practical consideration.

Srila Rupa Goswami has given the example that the sacred Ganges water may externally appear to be filthy, but that outward filthiness of mud, bubbles and foam cannot change the purifying capacity of the Ganges water; similarly, the devotee himself, the pure soul or atma, is the purifying agent - the purest and most normal factor in the world. Whatever may be externally seen in his character is like the mud, bubbles and foam that is found in the Ganges water. The purifying capacity of the Ganges water is separate, and cannot be disturbed by any foam or dirt mixed with the water. The spiritual capacity does not depend in any way on the apparent material capacity. A Vaisnava may sometimes be seen to be a little greedy, a little angry; or physically he may be blind or deaf or lame - but the saintly character of the Vaisnava is independent of the mental or physical characteristics.

During Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's tour of South India, there was the case of Vasudeva-vipra, at Kurmaksetra. He was a leper, but at the same time he was a great devotee. His physical behavior was also uniquely exemplary: if any worms fell from his open sores to the ground, he would pick them up and replace them in the sores so the worms would not die. He was a thorough devotee. Mahaprabhu embraced him, and by the touch of His embrace, the leprosy disappeared.

Also, Srila Sanatana Goswami contracted sores all over his body due to the contact of bad water in the jungle, when he was returning from Vrndavana to Puri. Mahaprabhu used to welcome him by embracing him, but Sanatana would try to withdraw. He objected, "Don't touch me! This is the body of a sinful man." The sores were oozing and emitting a bad odor, but Mahaprabhu embraced him forcibly. Sanatana had decided, "I shall either leave this place or I shall invite death by falling under the wheel of the cart of Lord Jagannatha." But as the Lord in the heart of all, Mahaprabhu knew Sanatana's mind. He

chastised him, and embraced him, forcibly. All the sores disappeared, and Sanatana's body immediately became like gold.

Exclusive devotion to Krsna is the only necessity

Mahaprabhu said, "Sanatana, you are a Vaisnava. Your body is not defective. *Aprakṛta- deha tomara 'prakṛta' kabhu naya*. Kṛṣṇa is testing Me. I am a sannyasi, and He is examining whether there is any partiality in My dealings with a Vaisnava simply because of his externally having so many sores. He is examining whether I will shrink from the association of such a Vaisnava and cast him aside. But your body is already pure, and only for the purpose of testing the public, Kṛṣṇa has created this; and if I cannot see this, I will have failed His test and will have been deceived by Kṛṣṇa. It is a mere show, it is nothing; your body is pure because you are a Vaisnava, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. This impurity is only an appearance in order to serve Kṛṣṇa's divine purpose. Wherever there is Vaisnavata, true saintly devotedness, there can never be any contamination. Only to test my devotion has Kṛṣṇa sent you to Me in this condition." So Mahaprabhu embraced him and demonstrated that he was absolutely pure.

Whether externally pure or impure, the whole principle is that our exclusive devotion for Kṛṣṇa is the only necessity. In the ordinary sense, the Gopis are also sinners. They crossed the laws of society and the sastras, so they are 'sinners.' But they hold the highest position of purity by their exclusive devotedness to Kṛṣṇa and no other. They cannot help but to serve Kṛṣṇa cent-per-cent, even at the risk of crossing the entire code of morality. They are considered to be the highest devotional ideal.

But that sort of devotion is not so cheap that everyone will go on with their activities in this world, taking advantage of such ideals. That won't do. The real measure of devotion must be there, not that anyone may do anything passing in the name of pure devotion, like the prakṛta-sahajiyas. That can't be allowed.

Chapter Seven

The Grand Victory of Love

Devotion is above all. Saranagati, surrender, is the highest property of everyone. Surrender to Him, and He may graciously make His name known to us, and we will be able to know Him.

In the Upanisads, it is said, *yam evaisa vrnute tena labhyah*: whoever He chooses to make Himself known to can know Him. Otherwise, no one can know Him against His will. He has reserved all the right of not being exposed to the senses of anyone and everyone. He is so high, He can do that. If He does not wish to make Himself known, no one can know Him - whenever He wishes to make Himself known to someone, they can know Him. This is His position.

On the order of his Gurudeva Devarsi Narada, the scripture Srimad-Bhagavatam was given by Vedavyasa as the conclusion of his teachings. After giving the Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas, Mahabharata, Bhagavad-gita, etc., the last gift of Vedavyasa in the world of scriptures was Srimad-Bhagavatam. And the message of the Bhagavatam is that beauty is above all - not knowledge or justice. Mercy is above justice. Affection, love, beauty, charm, harmony - these are above all, and this absolute conception of the ultimate reality is in the Krsna conception.

Hanker for neither power nor knowledge but hanker after the service of the Beautiful

Beauty is above knowledge and power. Knowledge is above power, and above knowledge is beauty, charm, love. That is the supreme. Srimad-Bhagavatam has declared, *krsnas tu bhagavan svayam*: the Krsna conception of Godhead is the most original conception of the Absolute. This is the prime declaration of the Bhagavatam: the Lord, as Beauty, is above all. And below Him is awe, reverence, power, etc.

And Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanyadeva pointed out, "Go to the beautiful - Reality the Beautiful - He is your highest attainment. Hanker neither

for power nor knowledge, but hanker for service of the Beautiful, and thereby, you will be taken in and given entrance into the land of the Beautiful." This is the highest realization. Don't waste your energy by engaging yourself in any other pursuits, but go straight - *jnana-sunya-bhakti*. By the help of sadhu-sanga, take the name of the Lord and try to march straight onwards to the Krsna conception of Godhead. Krsna consciousness is our highest achievement, and this is given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommended, "Don't waste your energy for anything else. Utilize your energy for the Krsna conception of Godhead."

So we try to make our progress in this line, and at the same time we also ask our friends to try to embrace this life. The fulfillment of life for every particle of existence of this world can be found here.

March towards universal good. Wherever and whoever you are, it does not matter. Take your course towards Krsna consciousness. This is the highest fulfillment of the life for everyone. You are only to turn your face towards Him and march, and the Sweet Absolute, Sri Krsna, will welcome you. This is the campaign of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

Srila Rupa Goswami described Krsna in a scientific way: *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*. Our hearts are hankering for satisfaction and happiness of different types but He is the emporium of all such rasas, flavors of ecstasy. All types of rasas are in Krsna and He is the personification of them all, so everyone can find his corresponding place in Him alone, and nowhere else. He is Krsna - *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*. All our necessary satisfaction is personified in Him. So only He can say, "Give up everything and come to Me, and you won't have to repent. You will find your highest satisfaction." No one else has ever said such a thing in any place. Only Krsna has said this, and Mahaprabhu pointed it out. "Go directly that side and don't go any other way, but march straight for the Krsna conception - that is your home."

Chapter Eight

The Brightest Sun

*parivadatu jano yatha tathayam
nanu mukharo na vayam vicarayamah
hari-rasa-madira-madatimatta
bhuvi-viluthama-natama nirvisamah*

"The gossipers may slander us, but we shall not heed them. Completely intoxicated by drinking the wine of the ecstasy of Sri Hari's service, we shall dance and roll about on the ground, and faint."

There is a class that think they can take intoxication and chant and dance and roll about on the ground, imitating the divine intoxication mentioned in this verse written by Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. They think they can purchase 'divine' ecstasy very cheaply with the help of intoxication, but their whole attempt is deception. Not to mention them, even the yogic attempt is inferior.

*yamadibhir yoga-pathaih, kama-lobha-hato muhuh
mukunda-sevaya yadvat, tathadhatma na samyati*
(Bha: 1.6.35)

"The agitated mind, repeatedly taken captive by its enemy in the form of depravity rooted in lust and greed, is directly mastered by serving the Supreme Lord, Mukunda. It can never be likewise checked or paci-fied by practicing the eight-fold yogic discipline, which is generally based on sensual and mental repression (yama, niyama, etc.)."

Here, Sri Narada Muni is saying "You yogis think that by the process of controlling the breath you are getting peace of mind and also control over the senses. But it is only for the time being. Even if it continues for lives together, it is an artificial thing. It cannot have any permanent contribution. You think that control of lust and anger is everything, and that you will find a sort of peace within yourself that you are master of lust, anger, and greed, etc. (kama, krodha, lobha,

etc.). But you cannot retain that position. That is a lower position, a lower peace, and it cannot be maintained permanently. You will have to fall down. It is temporary (*hato muhuh* - controlled repeatedly). But *mukunda-sevaya yadvat . . . samyati*: the peace you attain from yoga practice cannot reach to the degree of peace you will find in yourself by serving Mukunda. This yoga is the artificial means of checking the *kama*, *krodha*, etc., that disturb the mind and bring quick reactions. By the practice of controlling the breath, the *prana-vayu*, one can become a 'master' of the senses, but it is temporary.

In the narrative of Ajamila, we also find mention of the atonement of the 'elephant's bath':

*kvacin nivarttate 'bhadrat, kvacic carati tat punah
prayascittam atho 'partham, manye kunjara-saucavat
(Bha 6.1.10)*

"Sometimes a person refrains from sin, but in time he again commits the same kind of sin. Therefore, I consider atonement (in the line of *karma-kanda*, or in the calculation of worldly deeds) to be as futile as an elephant's bath. (The elephant is habituated to immediately rolling about in the dust after taking a dip in the river.)"

I have done something sinful, and if I follow that by an opposite practice as atonement (*karma-prayas-citta*), the sin is absolved. But the next moment I will compulsively commit that sin again. By *jnana-prayascitta* we may gain a somewhat more permanent abstention from the sinful activity.

*tapasa brahmacaryena, samena ca damena ca
tyagena satya-saucabhyam, yamena niyamena va
deha-vag-buddhijam dhira, dharmajnah sraddhayanvitah
ksipanty agham mahad api, venu-gulmam ivanalah
(Bha: 6.1.13,14.)*

"Austerity or one-pointed attention, exclusive celibacy, subjugation of the internal and external senses, charity, truthful speech, cleanliness, sensual discipline (*yama*) headed by nonviolence, mental regulation

(niyama) headed by regular utterance or concentration on mantras - by the strength of such practices, faithful liberationists (jnanis) who know the mysteries of religion drive away even the most grievous sins committed in thought, word, or deed, as bamboo clusters are destroyed by fire.“

The landscape may be clear for a whole year, but next year with the coming of the rainy season, many shrubs will inevitably sprout again. But the type of purity we shall attain when coming in connection with the service of Vasudeva, Sri Krsna, is of eternal factor and peculiarly purest nature. We cannot hope to attain this by any other method than our submission to, and acceptance of, the service of Lord Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful.

*kecit kevalaya bhaktya, vasudeva-parayanah
agham dhunvanti kartsnyena, niharam iva bhaskarah*
(Bha: 6.1.15)

"But most rarely, the devotee who is cent-per-cent absorbed in the service of Lord Vasudeva annihilates all sins at the root by his practice of exclusive devotion which is indifferent to the above mentioned practices of austerity, etc. As the sun completely destroys a mountain of snow, the exclusive devotees absorbed in the service of Vasudeva are also similarly able to totally uproot sin by the strength of their devotion, that is, even without exerting themselves."

Such peace can never be found anywhere else. Our proper understanding and adjustment with the highest center will give us such peace and freedom from anxiety of all types that cannot be achieved by any artificial methods which are devoid of understanding of the highest center.

*tapasvino dana-para yasavino
manasvino mantra-vidah sumangalah
ksemam na vindanti vina yad-arpanam
tasmai subhadra-sravase namo namah*
(Bha 2.4.17)

"I offer my repeated obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, who is all-famous as the Supreme Good. Without offering their actions unto Him, neither the liberationists (jnanis) who are dedicated to austerities, nor the charitable worldly workers (karmis), nor the world-famous, nor the performers of Asvamedha sacrifices, nor the sages or yogis, nor persons dedicated to chanting mantras, nor persons of virtuous behavior - none of them can attain any auspiciousness in life."

Here in his inaugurating speech before delivering Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Sukadeva Goswami says to the scholars, "I know that in this assembly there are many scholars, yogis, and tapasvis of different types, but I present my case before you all: tapasvino - there are many penance-making ascetics; dana-para - there are those who are famous for their big donations; yasa-svino - there may be many famous for their writings or their sacrifice; manasvino - there are many great thinkers; mantra-vidah - there are those who are well-versed in the application of the mystic words, and so on. But you must realize that none of them can be successful in life without surrendering to Krsna. Understanding with the highest central truth can give you your peaceful and harmonious life, and no partial attainment can compare with such an acquisition."

Concentration induced by drugs is artificial concentration. All contributions from the mundane cannot but be artificial and of lower nature. In other words, this is 'fossil- fatherism.' 'The fossil has created God.' From the fossil conception, God consciousness has 'come.' The fossil is supposed to evolve to the human species, and the God-conception grows in the human section. So fossil is the 'cause' to produce God-conception. Fossil is the 'father' of God. So, to think that mundane intoxication can give birth to the happy ecstasy of the conception of the absolute beauty and sweetness - this is atheism.

Although consciousness is subtle, it is more durable than these fossils of the mundane. We must not be afraid of transforming, or 'dying'; we should welcome the death of our ego. 'Die to live.' If our motivation comes from the proper source, we shall also know the troubles we face as not mere renunciation. We must not accept only trouble, but

we have to fulfill His purpose. The inner sacrifice is more necessary than the external sacrifice. So yukta-vairagya (abnegation in the spirit of devotion) has been recommended to be the most useful. Physical affliction is not our aim and object. Our object is to satisfy Him, and thus, whatever policy may be considered best for us will be recommended from there. We have to accept wholesale surrender to the higher agency. That is necessary. If we are allowed to consider our own case, we shall accept yukta-vairagya, because privation or affliction is not our end. Our end is to satisfy Krsna. The fire lit by our Guru Maharaja must be allowed to burn. We must not keep a feeble fire. The ideal that Gurudeva has given is very rarely found in this world. Out of thousands and millions of chances, we may have such a seed sown in our heart.

*manusyanam sahasresu, kascid yatati siddhaye
yatatam api siddhanam, kascin mam vetti tattvatah*
(Bg. 7.3)

"Out of countless souls, some have reached the human form of life, and among many thousands of human beings, some endeavor to attain direct perception of the individual soul and the Supersoul; and among many thousands of such aspirants who have attained to Seeing the soul and the Supersoul, only a few receive actual perception of Me, Syama-sundara."

*brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva
guru-krsna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija*
(C.c. Madhya 19.151)

"According to the thread of their karma, the living beings are wandering throughout many species of life in the universe. Among all such wandering souls, one for whom the fortune of spiritual merit (sukrti) has arisen by which devotion is facilitated, gains the seed of the creeper of devotion by the grace of Guru and Krsna; that seed is good faith (sraddha)."

It is not a light thing. We must know that this seed of Krsna consciousness is the most valuable thing in the whole of creation.

"Everything - good or bad - belongs to Krsna, and I am His unconditional servitor." Our general thought must be like this, and the details will develop gradually. We need not apprehend any injustice. He is Absolute Good, so His mercy is absolute, His love is absolute; He is the loving center. We must make our heart broad, wide, to accept such a seed. Love is the widest thing. Love can accommodate even the enemy. Love is not afraid of any sacrifice, so it can accommodate even the enemy, and he is thereby conquered. Such conquering is complete and perfect. Our conquest is not perfect, but love's conquest is perfect. So we must be prepared to pay the value of this greatest achievement. 'Die to live.' What can I give? Everything belongs to Him, and I also belong to Him. I must admit that I am His. This much is necessary. This is the central knowledge, and it is not unreasonable. I am not out of central control, and His all-controlling potency is not power, but love. This is the most liberal proposal, good news, and fortune.

Suspicion leads to suspension

Suspicion and hesitation are the worst enemies. We may be near to the truth, but because of our previous karma, our suspecting nature deceives us. In Sri Gita it is mentioned, sam-sayatma-vinasyati - the suspicious are doomed. Time is valuable, but it is passing in mere hesitation. If a general is sent to the battlefield and he harbors a suspicious mentality, what can he attain? Nothing. He will put all his soldiers into the jaw of the enemy general. But he should have a definite plan, and engage with proper intensity; to fight with maya - and maya is willing. The enemy is willing. One should feel his personal deficiency, and fight for the center. And supplies and fortifications must be had from the highest and most special department - sadhu-sanga. Sadhu and sastra. With the help of the saints and the scriptures we must subdue the enemy within us and within our house. The worst part of the problem is that the enemy is not without but within. And we must get help from without - the most intimate friends of the Krsna world. They are our real friends. We are troubled by our enemies lust, anger, greed, etc., (kama, krodha, lobha, etc.), and doubt or suspicion is also our enemy. There is also insanity, illusion, and hatred (mada, moha, mat-sarya). Hesitation comes out of

ignorance, or moha.

*parinisthito 'pi nairgunye, uttamah-sloka-lilaya
grhita-ceta rajarse, akhyanam yad adhitavan*
(Bha: 2 1 9)

Sri Sukadeva Goswami explained to Maharaja Pariksit and all the topmost assembled sages, "This illusory world is full of variety and movement, and above it is the Brahman, the non-differentiated plane of the Absolute. But on the other side, there is again a differentiated and specified world, the adhoksaja world (beyond sensual perception). This Brahman is not the ultimate existence, but crossing Brahman, on the other side, there is an adhoksaja world. There, we find Krsna-lila, which is not a thing of this mundane world. You all know I have no charm for this world whatsoever. And my mind was attracted by the charm of that higher lila. Today I shall speak to you all about that lila (divine pastimes)."

The king and the sages had to give their undivided attention. "What does he say? This young boy, over sixteen years of age, does not even care to use any clothing. He goes naked. He feels no excitement, and he is constantly engaged in Brahman conception. And he says that there is another world on the other side of this Brahman! And Krsna-lila is the wealth of that side." They could not but give audience attentively. "And what does he say? How does he know? And what is the nature of that lila he speaks about?" They became more and more attentive to hear.

Sometimes musicians think that music will create disturbance in the stage of Brahman, but in the highest stage we are told there are musical instruments such as the flute, vina, and many others. There are expert musicians there, but they are already fully established in satisfying Krsna's senses, doing nothing for their own. Otherwise, music captures and attracts our minds towards this material plane. The element must be spiritual - all service. Krsna-lila springs up from the land of dedication, and the imitation is in the land of exploitation. And midway is Brahman, the land of cessation - sever everything. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvadau, svayam eva sphuraty adah*: when the Lord's

transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes are spiritually served with all our faculties, He personally makes His gracious appearance within our spiritual senses. We must be very attentive to the tests that face us in service. No deception can stand there.

ataeva kama-preme bahuta antara
kama - andhatamah, prema - nirmala bhaskara
(C.c. Adi 4.171)

"There is a gulf of difference between lust and love; lust is dense darkness, love is the brightest sun."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says,

kama-preme dekho bhai, laksanete bheda nai,
tabhu kama 'prema' nahi haya

"My brother, lust and love appear as one and the same; yet, lust is never love."

Karma-mamsamaya kama - lust is only concerned with flesh and blood, but *prema* is the *cid-ananda-dhama* - the abode of consciousness and blissfulness. There is no question of perceiving it through these mundane senses. Our ideal must be pure, and we must strive for it. We may be in a lower position but if the ideal is clearly before us, that will help us in our real improvement of life. A man who possesses the true ideal is a real 'capitalist' in gaining a better position.

jato-sraddho mat-kathasu, nirvinnah sarva-karmasu
veda-duhkhatmakan kaman, parityage 'py anisvarah
(Bha: 11.20.27)

"A person who has developed faith in narrations of My divine nature and pastimes may still for some time suffer the reactions to his worldly deeds (karma); although he perceives his addictions to worldly pleasures to be the essence of his misery, he is unable to abandon them."

He knows what is good, what is bad, but he can't help himself from falling into the clutches of the mundane senses. Still, he will repent.

*bhumau-skhalita-padanam, bhumir evavalambanam
tvayi jataparadhanam, tvam eva saranam prabho*
(Skanda-purana)

"For those who have stumbled and fallen upon the ground, that very ground is the only support by which they can arise once again. Likewise, for those who have offended You, O Lord, You alone are their only refuge."

In the beginning, when a child tries to walk, he falls down. But he gets up and tries again. In this way, we must proceed but we must not stoop to deceive ourselves. That is maya, deception. To deceive our own self and others is only to live in the world of deception. Such persons are deceiving themselves, and the environment also.

Those who can conquer their partiality and prejudices can stand amongst the most qualified. The eye to detect our disqualification is our real wealth. And we are given the eye to see by the grace of our Gurudeva. *Om ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya, caksur unmilitam yena, tasmai sri-gurave namah*: "I worship my Guru who has opened my eyes that were blinded with the darkness of ignorance, by adorning them with the collyrium of knowledge." Most important is the eye to see what is good, what is bad, and then to accept and reject. First the eye is necessary. Then there is justice, and above that there is mercy. Justice is the standard, but above that we can conceive that there is also a land of mercy, compassion, grace.

Increase the power of your position as a negative unit

With our faith and earnestness we can aspire after that mercy. If we increase the quality of our negativity, or the feeling that we are so mean, the positive will be automatically attracted. Try to increase the power of your position as a negative unit.

Trnad api sunicena (by feeling oneself lower than the grass), dainyam (humility), atmanivedana (surrender).

Hankering in surrender is our wealth. We are the sakti, the potency, and potency refers to the negative unit of the positive, the Potent. Increase your negative side, your hankering. The positive will be automatically attracted to you.

In the impartial judgment, tatastha-vicara, we must find that the more humility, dainyam, we possess, the more devotion and intimacy we possess. Health depends on hunger. The more one feels hunger, the better his health may be; that is, real, natural hunger. It is something like this. And humility is to feel, 'I am the lowest.' So in this comparison, the more one has realized the Infinite, the more he thinks, 'I am the lowest.'

How could I keep my life if Mahaprabhu did not come down to this plane?

*yadi gaura na ha 'ta, tabe ki haita
kemanee dharitam de*

In the pastimes of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, one of the principal Gopis of Srimati Radharani, one of the asta-sakhis of Vrndavana, came here as Vasudeva Ghosh. In appreciation of Mahaprabhu's descent here, he says, How could I keep up my life if Gauranga Mahaprabhu did not come down? If I did not come in touch with Gauranga Mahaprabhu, how could I live at all? That is so near to life, so near to vitality. It is the vitality of the vitality. If I had not come in touch with such a potent vitality, I should have been finished." In this way, our intimacy may accommodate Sriman Mahaprabhu. Vasudeva Ghosh said, "I could not live at all if such nectar had not been extended into me. It would have been completely impossible to go on with my life."

Chapter Nine

Faith in the Land of Sacrifice

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is putting the questions and Sri Ramananda Raya is answering: in this posing, the entirety of theological development was expressed there on the banks of the Godavari River. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is magnanimity and sweetness combined. And that meeting on the banks of the Godavari was the only time Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu revealed His real identity. He revealed it to Sri Ramananda Raya in that place only, and we never find it anywhere else. *Rasa-rajā, mahābhava - dui eka rūpa*: Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is both Radha and Kṛṣṇa combined. The most secret portion of the Truth was shown there, only once; and we never find that it was expressed in any other place.

A new grant never given to the world before

The whole cause of existence is twofold: the Predominated Part of Beauty and the Predominating Part of Beauty. This has been taught by Sri Caitanya Mahā-prabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam. Not power or force, but beauty and love is the Prime Cause. This is a new grant to the world, which was never given to the world before: the Prime Cause of the whole infinity is beauty and love. And this is the speciality of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

So we need not be afraid. Apprehension is a superficial thing - it is *māyā*, illusion. In the depth of our life's achievement, there is no apprehension; all is love and beauty. Our future is guaranteed in a most optimistic way. In his *Brhad-Bhagavatāmṛtam*, Śrīla Sanātana Goswami tries his best to take us through the path of gradual development in devotion. Prahlaḍa Mahārāja has been accepted as the basis, the beginning of pure devotion, *suddha-bhakti*, in peacefulness or *santa-rasa*. Hanuman is above that, in servitorship, or *dāsyā-rasa*. Above that are the Pāṇḍavas in friendship or *sakhya-rasa*. And Uddhava is somewhat in friendship, connecting with parenthood, *vatsalyā-rasa*, and consortherhood, *madhura-rasa*. In this way, adherence in devotion for Kṛṣṇa automatically flows towards Vṛndāvana. The acme is in Vṛndāvana. This is also found in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's conversation with Sri Ramananda Raya.

Rsis are seers and feelers of spiritual current, not creators

Tebhyas tah pasu-pala-pankaja-drsas-tabhyo 'pi sa radhika (Sri Upadesamrta, 10): and the high devotion of Srimati Radharani is categorically different from that of all the Gopis. The type of service found in Her is practically unaccountable, inconceivable. *srutibhir vimrgyam* (Bha: 10.47.61): the Rsis, the Seers, saw that the Vedic mantras were eternal. They are not creators of the mantras in the Vedas, they are only seers and feelers of spiritual current; they are only observers.

The knowledge that is contained in the Sruti (Vedas) is not created by anyone or anything. It is eternal and flowing. The Rsis are onlookers and recorders. And that Sruti has come to reveal the Fundamental Truth underlying the whole creation; still, they are only inquisitive of some-thing, they are inquiring about something. What that thing is, they do not know. They are only searching for the highest revelation that ever came down in the world. They are only searching for that reality, but they have not yet come into its connection. And this is Krsna-bhakti and Vraja-bhakti - loving devotion for Krsna in Vrndavana. And Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam came with the quality of that type of adherence to the Truth: unconditional surrender, adherence, searching, and serving attitude, seeking such fortune of serving the Truth. That higher type of truth and existence is such that if we can be only a seeker after it, we may consider ourselves to be possessors of the highest fortune. We can really post ourselves in the path leading to that Highest Truth.

The criterion for our self-surrender

That quality is the very basis and the degree of self-surrender (atma-nivedanam). What ever beautiful and valuable things we come across, we cannot but surrender ourselves to them. That is the criterion. If we come across anything higher within our vicinity, our appreciation means surrendering ourselves unto that. So according to the degree of our surrender, we have to measure what degree of quality of truth we have come across. That can be measured only according to the degree

and intensity of surrender, or how much we could surrender to what we came into connection with, to the point of no return. And the true devotees know no satisfaction or fulfillment of feeling that "I have it. They feel no trace of such satisfaction that "I have achieved."

Never. The inner sweetness of the truth and its infinite characteristic is such. It attracts. It can attract to the highest degree and magnitude. When some of the Brahmanas performing sacrifices wanted their wives to attend the yajna, some of the ladies were on their way to see Krsna at the time. One Brahmana came and forcibly opposed this. He stopped his wife, "No! I will not allow you to see Krsna." He stopped her body, but the life expired. The dead body remained there. She felt so much attraction to have a darsana, a divine glimpse, of Krsna. Immediately a lifeless body stood there, the life vanished.

A 'oneness' in which one's separate existence is maintained

Krsna is Beauty - Reality the Beautiful. Beauty absorbs us. The mayavadis, the impersonalists, say that the Brahman absorbs the individual soul so much that no trace of it remains. But this is an artificial conception of absorption. In the real conception of absorption, the existence of the seer of the truth is not done away with. He remains, but he is absorbed with life. He is so absorbed and attracted that he becomes one. Even maintaining his separate existence, he is always one, full of Krsna consciousness to the highest degree, and this is visible to the world outside. The 'oneness' of the mayavadis is of course crossed in the beginning. *Brahma-bhutaḥ prasannatma na socati na kanksati, samah sarvesu bhutesu*: "I am one with Brahman" - that stage is surpassed, and then - *mad bhaktim labhate param*, devotion is attained. There is oneness in divine attraction, union, and separation, in different lila or pastimes. To maintain the setting of lila, the lila is maintained. Here, complete absorption and oneness does not mean that everything is annihilated. Lila is also eternal; the Lord's nama (name), rupa (form, beauty), guna (qualities), parikara (entourage), lila (pastimes) all are eternal. His relationship is a dynamic thing, not a static one. There is even union in separation. There is unity in every stage. The dynamic character of His pastimes requires unity, otherwise His Self-giving and the devotees' God-attainment would have been impossible.

When I entered Sri Gaudiya Math, I received Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's small Bengali book, *Saranagati*, for the very first time. It was so sweet to me that I purchased several copies and distributed them amongst my friends. Its price was only four paise. It is so sweet, it touched my heart. I thought, "Here is Krsna - Krsna-katha (talks of Krsna) is Krsna Himself. Here is talk about Krsna, the adhoksaja, the transcendental." I later composed a short commentary when I was in Nandagram, and it is published along with Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's commentary in Bengali.

I wrote an introductory poem to the commentary of *Saranagati*:

*svairacarabddhi-sammagnan, jivan gauranghri-pankaje
uddhrtiya saranapatter, mahatmyam samabodhayat*

"All the conditioned souls are sammagnan - they are diving or struggling in the ocean of *svairacara* or pleasure-seeking - *anyabhilasa* - immoral or whimsical activities, energizing there. *Gauranghri-pankaje uddhrtiya*: taking them out of that ocean, you put them in the lotus - you took them to the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga. You collected them from the wide, troubled ocean, and gave them to the lotus feet of Gauranga. *Uddhrtiya sarana-patter mahatmyam samabodhayat*: and so, having placed them there, you began to instruct them about the great nobility of and high value of *saranagati*, exclusive surrender *Samabodhayat*: you tried to make them understand and realize the efficacy of *saranagati roper*. You, my Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada did so, so I bow down unto you first." Then I also wrote a verse offering obeisances unto the writer of *Saranagati*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Admission of *saranagati*. When our appreciation for *saranagati* comes, we will realize that we have come into the relativity of a great substance. Otherwise, one cannot find the necessity of *saranagati* at all. "Why *saranagati*? We want mastery over everything!" Modern science, the exploitationists, the karmis - they want everything under their control. But this is just the opposite, and opposite to the highest degree. In this, we shall find such a great and noble aspect of nature

that we will voluntarily offer ourselves to be the eternal servant of it. "I am in the relativity of such a magnanimous, noble thing!" Saranagati, herself, is reality. She contains Krsna within her boundary. Come to saranagati, and you will find Krsna. The halo of Krsna is saranagati. Through saranagati you can approach the Krsna conception, but not by inquiry. Not by barren inquiry, but sincere and substantial inquiry - and that requires saranagati. Prani-pata, pariprasna, and seva. Pranipata: first you must give exclusive respect to Him. If you want to approach Him at all the first qualification is pranipata: you must surrender.

We are approaching a great thing, great in the infinite. And then, there is pariprasna, inquiry, to a certain extent. And then service - to be utilized by Him. To serve means to taste the juice. Only by serving can we connect, feel, and have any experience. This is just the opposite of enjoyment and indifference. Enjoyment, indifference - and service. And there is service as duty, and service as love - loving service. Thus, service is generally of two kinds. Service from the standpoint of duty is found in Vaikuntha. Of course, that also fetches something. But service in love, service actuated through love only, is most amply giving. That gives us amply. And there is also a gradation therein - santa, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya, madhura. This is reality. In this material world, in the world of 'enjoyment,' we also find the most intense enjoyment in lady-love, but this is the perverted reflection of reality. But there in the divine plane, in devotional service, divine consortherhood is found in madhura-rasa. There also, in that section of devotees, there are gradations of servitors.

The Ramanuja Sampradaya (Divine Succession founded by Sri Ramanujacarya) divided into two, the Tenkalai and Vadakalai sections. Vadakalai refers to those who give more importance to the Vedic scriptures, and Tenkalai are those who give stress to the Tamil scriptures. They are known as Alwars, beginning from Sathakopar or Nammalwara. In the process of surrender, the Tamilian school lay stress on marjjara-nyaya, or the maxim of the cat. Marjjara means 'cat.' In the cat's dealing with her kitten, the kitten does not do anything, whereas the mother catches the kitten's neck in her teeth and moves it here and there, wherever she likes. The kitten is passive, no attempt

can be seen on its part. He simply accepts what-ever the mother does. She feeds him, moves him, etc. This is marjjara-nyaya. The Vedic school, which was headed by Desikacaryya, favor the markata-nyaya, the maxim of the monkey. The cub catches hold of the mother's body, and then the mother wanders and moves the cub here and there. But the beauty of the cub is to clasp the mother's body. So the Vedic school says, "You have free will, O jiva soul - you have something to do. In saranagati, you have your part to play. It may be very small, but still you have some part to play. You are endowed with free will, so you must properly utilize your free will." And in the Tenkalai system they say, "No, we have nothing to do. We only need to think that we are His, and He will do whatever is necessary on our behalf." This is the difference between the two schools. The Vedic school holds that some action for free will is necessary. Your pure acceptance and consent is necessary, and the rest will be done by the Lord. But your consent or free will of acceptance, however meager it may be, must be present. This is pure consent. And the Tenkalai section hold that we have nothing to do.

Our consideration is nearer to this Vadakalai school, the Vedic school. The jiva has something to do in the way of cooperation or consent. Otherwise, how can the jiva be a part of the Absolute? If the jiva has nothing to do, then everything is God's lila, spontaneous pastimes, and the jivas are all dolls of play in the hand of the Lord. No doubt, this may be so in the highest stage of realization. but that stage is yet to be attained. In the beginning, one has to acquire such a position. Because the jiva is part of the subjective world, he is naturally endowed with freedom. There can be no consciousness without freedom. Because he is an infinitesimal particle, his freedom is also very small, still, because he is spirit, he cannot but possess free will. In divine service that freedom is maintained otherwise vilasa, freedom of movement in pastimes, cannot be maintained. In Goloka, everyone is mostly actuated by feeling, by Yogamaya (internal divine potency); they are actuated by love, but still they have their meager personal consideration, and that is influenced by the all-good and favorable environment of the divine plane. Otherwise, how would they maintain their particular name, pastime, and service? So individuality in the atomic energy is maintained all through. We do not deny the influence

of the environment, but the environment cannot devour the personal character of existence of anything and everything.

Of exploitation and renunciation (bhukti and mukti), renunciation is more dangerous, because it holds a greater position than exploitation. It can exploit more, just as half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood. It can misguide the devotees more. It has its own special glamour, over and above exploitation. It can capture the scholars. One who wants relief can think, "Oh, this is the conception of relief; there is no further." Renunciation captures those who may have been making real progress towards their good, and tells them, "Yes, you have come here, you have succeeded." It captures them in the name of the higher plane. Renunciation holds some prestige over exploitation; people think, "Oh, that must be the highest goal." So, in this way, half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood.

*se du 'era madhye visayi tabu bhala
mayavadi-sanga nahi magi kona kala
(Saranagati, 27)*

"The association of a materialist is preferable to that of a mayavadi."

If the mayavadi can make you enter into the cell of sayujya-mukti, the liberation of merging with the Ab-solute, you are finished. There is no calculable time when you will be able to emerge from it. But if you are in materialism, visaya, the recruiters may come to you. You may get the chance of meeting a preacher in this material world. But in sayujya-mukti you are nowhere. It is very difficult and rare to awaken you from the deepest possible sleep. So that is more dangerous, as half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood.

The mayavadi may even try to bring others into his impersonal conception, because he is suffering from that disease. He thinks that impersonal liberation is the highest, so he recruits for his own purpose. *Ye nye 'ravindaksa vimukta-maninas tvayi astabhavad avisud-dha-buddhayah* (Bha: 10.2.42). They do not perceive the mistake in their calculation, but they think they have attained the highest type of liberation, and so they try to recruit others for their

purpose. But there is a mistake in their calculation. They are not aware of the fact. They are misguided and they also help to misguide others. How can one who is not established in the truth guide others towards the truth? If it had been possible for him to know the truth, he would have gone toward the land of truth himself; but he has no knowledge of it. He has miscalculated.

Yam evaisa vrnute tena labhyah: but there is a conscious land, and whoever is accepted by that land can enter it. Otherwise, by dint of one's own power, no one can enter that land. This point has been missed by the mayavadis. That is an independent element; the soil is independent. Matter is not independent, and the soul is 'independent' here in the material world. But the conscious world is made of supersoul - the very soil is independent. If the minutely independent soul accepts that land, he can enter that land, otherwise not. There is such a land. So the question of becoming a slave must arise.

Accept slavery to its perfection

The highest qualification within us is our acceptance of the slave mentality for the Absolute. This is the only way to be earnest for the association of the highest existence. We must be ready to accept slavery to its perfection, and then we will be allowed to enter into that domain. Otherwise, we have no hope. It is not very easy to embrace slave mentality - eternal slavery. Slavery is also our future prospect. Are you ready to think like this? You have to be so broadminded and hopeful that such a higher entity exists. Your hope and faith will have to be of such a magnanimous type to enter that land. You will sign the bond, the contract: "I am going to accept eternal slavery! I want to enter that land!" You have to search your fortune, and sign the bond of slavery: the association there is so high that even as a slave I want that association. I earnestly hanker for that sweet land where my meager personality can become a slave. Such intense faith is necessary, where all other experience, even knowledge, fails. Only faith can carry us there.

Become a slave there you will become a master

Sraddha - faith in devotion to Krsna is the unit with which the whole structure has been constructed there. All is faith. The land of faith. There, faith holds autonomy. Everything moves through faith - no calculation, no robbing, no stealing, no cheating. This is automatic there in the land of faith. None of this nasty life. "I shall always be alert that I may not be cheated in the land of so many cheats; Here, I always have to be alert - I will be cheated, I will be cheated." That is a nasty life. So we must enter into a life where there is automatically no cheating, no calculation, and no reasoning. All are good - all are busy to give you something. Here, we are suffering from the opposite. But there, everyone is promoting you in your progress, pushing you towards your highest fortune. Such a land is there. To become a slave there is really to become a master. Whoever tends most toward slavery will be held by all as the head!

Just as in love of country. If a leader is most sacrificing, he naturally becomes the head of the party. Sacrificing is his qualification. Generally, men have faith in one who has sacrificed much for the country, and they take him as their leader. But here in the mundane world, love of country is only extended selfishness. They will fight with another country. Or, for humanitarianism they will fight with other minerals or the vegetable or the animal kingdom. They are constructing a great civilization at the cost of the vegetable and mineral substances. The 'civilized' section are busy only to exploit nature, and that will have to be paid to the farthing to clear the debt.

All their comfort is more than a loan. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu wants his followers to be agents to preach Krsna's devotion to the public (*yare dekho, tare kaho, 'krsna' upadesa*) - speak about the special prospect of the land of Krsna, Vrndavana. To give oneself is the substance of devotion.

*sravana-kirtanadinam, bhakty-anganam hi yajane
aksamasyapi sarvaptih, prapattyaiva harav iti*
(Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam 1.40)

If one is not able, or does not have the opportunity to execute the different forms of services to Krsna, if he has only saranagati, he will

accomplish everything in the future. Saranagati will give everything. Saranagati is the most fundamental and basic substance in the devotional world. The whole structure of the devotional world is based on saranagati. Without saranagati there can be no real entrance into the domain of service. Saranagati is the very life and essence of devotion, so it must be present in all forms of services. Without saranagati, service will be mere imitation, mere lifeless activity, and not devotion proper. Saranagati is the first condition. Prahlada Maharaja has said, *manye tad etad akhilaṁ nigaṁasya satyaṁ, svatmarpanaṁ svasuhrdaḥ paraṁasya pumsaḥ*: the whole gist of Vedic teachings is svatmarpanam - to give and fully dedicate oneself to the Lord. To give oneself is the substance of all devotional activity. This is also stated by Sri Sridhara Swamipada in his commentary of the nine basic devotional practices (*śravaṇam kīrtanam viśṇoḥ smaraṇam*, etc.). If devotional hearing, chanting, etc., is already dedicated to Him, only then will it get recognition as devotion, bhakti. Otherwise, everything is bogus. If I hear to fulfill my mundane purpose, then it is no longer bhakti. If I perform kirtana or speak Hari-katha to make some money, then it will not be bhakti. "Whatever I shall do, it is for Him." That sort of bond must first be 'signed' and then whatever will be done on that basis will be recognized as bhakti. This is the foundation of bhakti. Without saranagati, all attempts will be exploitation, renunciation, meditation (karma, jnana, yoga), anything but bhakti. "The result must always go to my Lord; I am His slave - nitya dasa."

"I am wholly His servant, without any independence to keep my independent property. Whatever I shall acquire, or whatever I shall do, the owner is He "

Jivera svarupa haya kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa: *nitya dasa* means eternal servant, that is, slave. He has the right to make or mar, to do anything with me as He likes, according to His sweet will. So whenever we perform devotional hearing, chanting, remembering, with this feeling, that will be devotional activity. But if that is withdrawn, everything will go to hell. If the plank of the dancing stage is withdrawn, the whole show is gone. Therefore with saranagati, self-dedication, devotion is possible. Only the activity of the man of dedicated self can

be reckoned as bhakti. He does everything on behalf of Krsna. He always takes Krsna's side, abandoning all separate interest for the fruit of his work.

Consciousness of separate interest (*dvitiyabhini-vesatah*) has made us separate from Krsna. The common interest is solely in Him. Then only our service will be bhakti.

Without that, everything is lost. Saranagati must be present in order to have living devotion, otherwise hear-ing and chanting are only forms, not life. Therefore saranagati means exclusive connection and identification with the interest of Krsna. And Krsna is not directly seen by us, so we serve the Guru and the Vaisnava who are dear to Him. According to the degree of our self-abnegation in self-surrender we will be benefited, and the specific characteristics of santa-, dasya-, sakhya-, vatsalya-, or madhura-rasa will develop, and there are also subdivisions within these rasas. In this way, the devotee will be properly located. But without saranagati, all the formal practices will lose their life and will become something other than bhakti, either in the plane of exploitation or the plane of renunciation; but the plane of dedication is the land of devotion.

By His sweet will, sometimes the attention of the Lord is drawn towards the most needy, and sometimes a more qualified person may be ignored. We cannot interfere with His independence: "Why have You shown mercy in this case, and not in mine?" We cannot take Him under law. That is not saranagati or surrender. When we put such a question to Him, we deviate from the position of saranagati; we cannot expect to be enlisted, even in the primary class.

If You come to examine my case, I am hopeless; so, I have come only for Your mercy

So what is the spirit of saranagati? "If You come to consider my case, calculate my position, I have no hope. I am such a mean fellow; if You come to calculate right and wrong about me, I have no hope. So I have come to that school of Yours where only mercy will be my hope. I want only Your mercy, but if You come to examine me, I have no hope." This is the primary necessity in our saranagati, in our

surrendering. Surrender means this.

Surrender does not allow us to think, "Why have you shown grace to him and not to me?" This is anti-surrendering temperament. No calculation. "If You come to calculate, I have no hope; so if You can show me some grace - some causeless mercy - then I have that hope. I have come to this department of the Lord, by surrendering. Anyone may have His voluntary mercy, but I may not. If I hesitate and think about justice, then I am already canceled from the list. My name will be struck from the register."

This is one of the finest points in saranagati. What is surrender, and what should be the quality of surrender? *Marabi rakhabi yo iccha tohara* (Saranagati, 11): "According to Your sweet will, You can make or mar me." With such understanding we can go to surrender. Calculation is not allowed in that department of causeless mercy. Mercy may be extended to everyone except me, but I have nothing to complain about. What more can one give than this? This is the thunderbolt from the blue! To become saranagata, to surrender, means to leave all prospects - to be so emptied - "I have no prospect"; to be fully emptied, and then to surrender. There cannot be the least application in the petition: surrender means a clean slate. Complete dependence upon Him means He can make or mar. I must admit my Master's right to make or mar. I am a slave. Mahaprabhu says, *jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa*.

That is Your constitutional position. Have you enough boldness to admit it? Can you admit that your Master has full rights over you? "Yes! My Master has fullest rights over me. I am ready to go to eternal hell to supply His slightest pleasure." Such narrations - as for example, we have heard the story about when the Gopis were ready to supply their foot-dust as 'medicine' to alleviate Krsna's 'headache' - such narrations we may hear as very sweet to our ears, but to accept is horrible. *Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa*; no risk: no gain. Whole risk: whole gain. Such confidence is necessary. A free, clear, and bold choice. Are you ready for that? Krsna is not like a sweetmeat, that His price may be so cheap or so expensive. He is everywhere He is nowhere. He may say, "You all belong to Me," or,

"I don't care for any of you." We are inhabitants of that land now, and really, by constitution we have every right to serve Him. It is the truth, and we must be bold enough to 'call a spade a spade.'

Can you accept that you are the eternal servant - you are a slave of Krsna? And Krsna is so dignified that even His slave holds the highest position: Krsna's nature is such that He does not hesitate to serve even His slaves. He is so great and magnanimous. *Aham bhakta-paradhino, hy asvatantra iva dvija* (Bha: 9.4.63): "I feel My tendency to serve My devotee in such a way that I am not independent; I feel Myself to be under their direction."

This is the nature of devotion - bhakti. Bhakti is infinitely more wonderful than jnana, knowledge. To 'know everything' is a very charming temptation. That makes one think that he has become the master of almost everything. But seva, service, is far above this kind of consciousness. Real knowledge practically becomes your servant, if you follow the path of surrender, saranagati. The Infinite comes within the fist of the finite. Can you imagine it? Is it imaginable?

Sometimes we hear about a great general falling into the clutches of a loving girl - a great dictator who commands a whole country's forces may be in the clutches of a girl. *Sri-krsnakarsini ca sa:* and Lord Krsna, the Autocrat, is controlled by love, and nothing else. Divine love, prema, is such, that it can control the Absolute Autocrat. Even He can be controlled, and this is the clue. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to distribute this; the Master of masters came with this offer: "This path will lead you to a plane where you will be able to control the Master of masters."

*brahmadi ye prema-bhakti-yoga vancha kare
taha vilaimu sarva prati ghare ghare*
(Chaitanya Bhagavat, Adi 5. 152)

Mahaprabhu came as the most gracious Descent. He brought such nectar, even a drop of which is aspired after by the masters of the creation and dissolution of this visible world, Lord Brahma and Lord Siva.

Chapter Ten

Beyond Doubt

*martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma
niveditatma vicikirsito me
tad amrtatvam pratipadyamano
mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai*
(Bhagavatam, 11.29.34)

"When a mortal totally abandons all karma and offers himself to My direction, at that time he acts according to My sweet will and becomes one with Me - he attains the fitness to become My family member in his divine form of saccidananda nature."

This is a transformation that can be seen in the physical system also. The physical cells undergo trans-formation. Old cells vanish - new cells grow. And this also occurs when one accepts prasadam, food offered to the Lord. A revolutionary transformation occurs. Unconsciously, there is transformation in the physical system, by the gradual process of living a pious and divine life. Imperceptibly, the transformation takes place.

"*Martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma*: he has detached himself from all the activities of this so-called mundane world; *niveditatma* and he considers himself no longer a member of this material world. He has entered and enlisted in the family, in the entourage, of another plane. And gradually he more and more intensely identifies himself as one of that family, that plane. *Niveditatma vicikirsito me*: he is very busy to find out what can please Me. That is his errand always. He is always seeking how to please Me. That is the only principle in him; he automatically thinks over and over again, 'How can I please Him? How can I please Him?' *Tad amrtatvam pratipadyamano*: then, indispensibly, such a change cannot but come in him: the necessary transformation. A transformation from mortality to immortality gradually occurs. The progress is sure and substantial.

Mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai: and consequently, he comes to be reckoned as one of My family members." Also in Bhagavad-gita, *visate tad anantaram:* "My devotee enters into My family."

With our bhajana (divine service), such transformation is inevitable. It must happen. Material hankering will be diminished. Mostly in rajo- and tamo-guna (the modes of passion and ignorance) there is dissipation of vital energy, but in sattva-guna (truthfulness, realization) the energy lost is of much less quantity.

*bhaktih paresanubhavo viraktir
anyatra caisa trika eka-kalah
prapadyamanasya yathasnatah syus
tustih pustih ksudapayo 'nughasam
(Bhagavatam, 11.2.42)*

"As with every mouthful an eater feels the threefold effects of satisfaction, his stomach being filled, and his hunger being dispelled, in the same way when a surrendered soul serves the Lord he realizes devotion of three natures simultaneously: devotion in love, the personal appearance of the Lord who is the abode of love, and detachment from all other things."

Progress can be measured by detecting this kind of transformation within. *Paresanubhavo:* somehow, a conception of the Supreme must grow clearer and clearer in me. What is He? Who is He? *Viraktir anyatra:* and indifference to everything 'non-Krsna' grows in me also. I avoid what does not concern Krsna, and when it appears anyway, it produces some apathy or even irritation in me, "Oh, why has this thing come to me?" The measurement from the negative direction will be how much I am apathetic to 'non-Krsna' things. *Tustih pustih ksudapayo 'nughasam:* and also, the inner hunger should be felt to be fulfilled. "Yes, I am feeling fulfillment." I shall feel self-approval that I am walking in the right direction. I shall have inner sanction of my clear conscience. "Yes, yes, I am doing right." I will feel inner satisfaction.

bhidyate hrdaya-granthis, chidyante sarva-samsayah
ksiyante casya karmani, mayi drste 'khilatmani
(Bhagavatam 11.20.30)

"When the soul directly beholds Me as the Supreme Soul within all souls, his mundane ego is dissolved, all his doubts are slashed, and all his worldly deeds (karma) are annihilated."

This is a scientific measurement, and of course, science of the transcendental world is not to be applied in the nature of the mundane. By this standard of adjustment, we shall gradually make progress towards proper adjustment. If the center is clear, then, of course, the circumference is properly located. Krsna consciousness is the center, and in that consciousness every event can be found to be properly adjusted. In this way, by that inner satisfaction and realization one can measure his personal progress. But this does not mean that his thirst will be quenched; rather, it will increase. But the assurance will come that the direction is the right direction. "I am now making progress in the proper line, because many new things can be explained by that formula. They seemed to be unintelligible and meaningless. Now, what I am told to be the Absolute is harmonizing all these things hitherto unharmonized. These points are being solved. So, *chidyante sarva-samsayah*: the doubts are being cleared, and more satisfaction of a wide and spacious nature, the solution, will be felt in the heart of one who is a real student, a regular student of the Bhagavata school. *Chidyante sarva-samsayah* is a great thing. We cannot accommodate this within the narrow shell of our brain! "All doubts should be cleared? What is this?" It is inconceivable that all doubts will be cleared. But everything will be solved if we accept the harmonizing center in such a point as advised by Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu - Krsna-conception of the Absolute.

Absolute love and charm is all-accommodating. None can deny it. None can say, "I don't want love." It is so universal. One may say, "I do not want any grandeur, any power," but, "I do not want any love" - never. Sometimes one may even go as far to say, "I don't want justice." That may be possible. Of course, generally it may be the exception, but still it may be said, "I don't want justice. By justice that

man will suffer. Rather, I shall suffer, and that man be saved." Just as Jesus Christ told, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." By that prayer, Lord Christ set justice aside: "No, justice may go on this side, and let me be the sufferer." We can take the risk of dismissing justice, but we can't avoid love. We can give up everything but that love for love. If we have the eye to see, then we shall see that only to get love, prema, we can give up everything in the world. So how valuable is that thing? And Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam came with that.

Before the Srimad-Bhagavatam appeared in the world, Devarsi Narada came and gave a regular stricture to Srila Vyasadeva: "What have you done for so long? This is nothing! Rather, you did some downright wrong."

*jugupsitam dharma-krte 'nusasatah
svabhava-raktasya mahan vyatikramah
yad vakyato dharma idtarah sthito
na manyate tasya nivaranam janah*
(Bhagavatam, 1.5.15)

"You have committed a great wrong. In your injunctions of religious duty for the masses, you have sanctioned condemnable worldly works for fulfillment of mundane desires. The masses are already by nature attached to condemnable worldly works for fulfillment of mundane desires. It is a great wrong because the worldly masses will conclude that your messages alone are the central religious duty. Even if they are taught by other knowers of the truth to refrain from those worldly works, they will not accept those teachings, or, they will not be able to understand them for themselves."

"The people generally have natural affinity for these things - dharma, artha, kama, and then moksa (religion, wealth, sense-pleasure, and liberation). You have recommended these four things in a regular and polished way, but this is already their natural demand. When one is over-fed, he wants fasting as a reaction. So, moksa is only a reaction to exploitation. This is already a fact, and you have recommended the same thing. What new thing have you given them? You have done

wrong! Why? Because when a person of your status has recommended moksa, it will be difficult to give anything further. No one will be prepared to oppose your opinion, your standard. All will say that Vyasadeva is the highest authority, and that they don't care for the advice of anyone else. The highest authority is Vyasadeva. So it will be very difficult to get the people to accept through other sources anything beyond what you have given. So, you have done wrong! It may be considered your misdeed. Now, the only relief can be that you yourself will give the fifth end (beyond the aforementioned four common pursuits). You, personally, will have to take this work: 'So far what I have given is very limited, but now I shall give you something far superior.' You alone will have to take up this task, and only then you will have undergone the proper penance necessary for your chastisement. *Mahan vyatikramah* - it is a great wrong, because *jugupsitam* - what is very condemnable; *dharma-krte* - is given under the stamp of religion; the goods under the stamp are ultimately non-religious. What good is that? Only 'to do wrong and not to do wrong.' But to do good - is it not included there? Of bad and non-bad, non-bad does not mean positive good. So, you will have to take this duty with earnestness and clarify the position for the people: 'So far, what I have given you is more or less of a negative character. Now I have come to give you something positive.' In this way, you must create the atmosphere to give them something substantial.

"*Dharma-projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmat-saranam satam* (the religion of the Srimad-Bhagavatam is free from the deceptions of the four ends of humanity, and it is the religion of the true saints). *Nirmatsara* means 'an impartial mentality,' and *matsara* refers to the jealous. 'So far, I have given advices to that particular section which is not free from egoistic thinking. I have dealt with them. But now I shall deal with the normal-thinking - the good-hearted people. I shall now advise them.' Because it will be difficult to dissuade the people from the path taught by you, I have therefore come to you. Only through you can the higher, developed conception be given to them. This is the only way."

A new color given to everything delivered previously

So Sri Vyasadeva was chastised in this way by Devarsi Narada. Then, with an outline of ten basic principles (Bhagavatam, 2.20.1,2) he had to meditate, assimilate, and finally reproduce. Devarsi Narada left the asrama, and Sri Vyasadeva began to meditate and assimilate. "So far, this was my conception of religion and non-religion; now some new light has been given to me, and in perspective I have to think out the whole system; the whole system must be colored with a new color. A new color should be given to everything I delivered previously." So, he came to write Srimad-Bhagavatam.

And he also felt, "*Moksa*, the *Brahma-jnana* (liberation in the non-differentiated Absolute), has been given the highest position. Now, the higher conception that has been given to me by Devarsi Narada must be delivered to the world by a person whose *Brahma-jnana* is unquestionably admitted by all the scholars." So he searched for Sukadeva. "Sukadeva is the only person who is very widely respected by the so-called liberationists. This higher doctrine should be brought to light through him, and then the position of Bhagavatam will be automatically unchallengeable. So he hunted after Sukadeva.

He sent a woodsman whose business it was to cut down trees in the jungle and dense forest, and who made a trade from that. He told this sloka to that woodcutter:

*nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad
bhavausadhac chrotra-mano 'bhiramat
ka uttamah-sloka-gunanuvadat
puman virajyeta vina pasughnat*

"Wherever you will find a boy like my son, you will try to chant this sloka. You always wander in the dense forest, and my boy is there, roaming hither and thither in the jungle. It is very difficult to trace his whereabouts, because he does not stay in one location. Always roaming and wandering, he lives on only leaves and fruits, and he takes water from the river."

Suddenly one day, this sloka caught Sukadeva's attention. "What do these woodcutters say?"

*nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad
bhavausadhac chrotra-mano 'bhiramamat
ka uttamah-sloka-gunanutvadat
puman virajyeta vina pasughnat*

"This big sound, with high meaning „where did they get it from?" Then after hearing twice, thrice, he approached them. "What do you say?" They again repeated, "*Nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad*: who have had all their thirst quenched, satisfied - they come and sing this song; *bhavausadhat*: it is the medicine for the solution to birth and death; *srotra-mano 'bhiramamat*: and it is always pleasing to the senses. The senses should not be considered as one's eternal enemy, and eliminated from any utility. They can be utilized. This song is very sweet for all the senses. *Srotra-mano 'bhiramamat*: both the ear and mind are pleased by a high class of joy. *Ka uttamah-sloka-gunanutvadat puman virajyeta vina pasughnat*: who but a suicide will keep such a conception of life, such a model ideal of his life, at a distance? Only a self-killer can do so! Otherwise, one who is wakeful to his real interest can never avoid the *uttamah-sloka-gunanutvada* - the praise and prayer of the highest entity, the Lord Absolute. Who can keep himself aloof from this highest conception of life which is beyond even *moksa*?"

Then, after having a glimpse into the meaning of this sloka, this poem of Bhagavatam, Sukadeva inquired,

"Where did you obtain this sloka?"

"At Badarikasrama."

"Can you show me the place?"

"Yes, come."

And they took him to Vyasadeva. He could recognize, "Oh, this is my father's asrama. Vyasadeva, my father, requested me to stay with him, but I did not care for that. I ran away to the forest to avoid human society. To avoid being influenced by human society's designing

attitude, I left it. However, for the solution I find in this sloka, I cannot but inquire from him."

So he came, and asked his father the meaning of the sloka. Srila Vyasadeva then explained according to the angle of vision that Devarsi Narada had recently given him. And when Sukadeva later delivered the Srimad-Bhagavatam, he openly admitted in the assembly:

*parinisthito 'pi nairgunye, uttamahsloka-lilaya
grhita-ceta rajarse, akhyanam yad adhitavan
tad aham te 'bhidhasyami, mahapaurusiko bhavan
yasya sraddadhatam asu, syan mukunde matih sati*
(Bhagavatam, 2.1.9,10)

When Pariksit Maharaja inquired from Sri Sukadeva Goswami, Sukadeva first introduced himself in this way: "O sage among kings, despite being excellently merged in the transcendental Brahman, I have studied this Srimad-Bhagavatam because my heart was attracted by the pastimes of the Supreme Lord Uttamasloka.

"King, you are a devotee, and as such you are most qualified to come to Krsna, the Supreme Person; there-fore I shall explain this narrative scripture to you. Swiftly does divine love for the Supreme Lord Mukunda arise within the heart of one who has developed faith in this Srimad-Bhagavatam."

Sri Sukadeva Goswami told Maharaja Pariksit, "You seem to be a student of a high standard of learning (*maha-paurusiko bhavan*). There are many seekers of their future fortune, but you are a bona fide student; presently death is encroaching upon you, so no ordinary aspirations are in your mind. You are a genuine student and inquirer. *Dharma, artha, kama*, and *moksa* (religion, wealth, sense pleasure, and liberation) are known as the fourfold ends of human inquiry (*purusartha*), but because I consider you to be the most bona fide and sincere seeker of truth (*mahapaurusiko*), I think I can teach you what I have heard from my dear father very recently; I consider that to be the highest end of every life.

The highest standard of education

adhitavan dvaparadau, pitur dvaipayana aham
(Bhagavatam, 2.1.8)

tad aham te 'bhidhasyami, mahapaurusiko bhavan
(Bhagavatam, 2.1.10)

"At the end of Dvapara-yuga, I studied this Maha-purana Srimad-Bhagavatam from my father, Sri Krsna-dvaipayana Vyasa. I conceive that to be the highest standard of education and you are the fittest man to receive it. Therefore I shall deliver it to you."

Saying this, he began the talk of Bhagavatam. And there he gave the principle of Krsna consciousness, that harmonizes all classes.

To receive descending spiritual knowledge in this way is the method of the deductive school. And the nature of such fit recipients is described as *nirmatsara* - they are free from jealousy. Those who are suffering the disease of jealousy cannot tolerate anyone holding a higher position than themselves. They cannot tolerate the merit of others: "I am the best. None can be greater than me." This is their disease (*matsara*). But the Srimad-Bhagavatam is for those who are free from the disease of such a mean egoistic feeling. The students that come forward to read the Bhagavatam must be of such character that they have conquered that mean egoistic sentiment of considering oneself to be all-in-all. When that sort of mean, egoistic feeling is removed, one will be fit to study Bhagavatam, and he will successfully imbibe the teachings herein and make a great and inconceivably divine improvement in his life.

Vedyam vastavam atra vastu sivadam: "I am not dealing with an imaginary concoction. This is *vastava-vastu*, a realistic thought which death and mortality cannot challenge. I am dealing with such a thing here. The whole world you are living in is unreal, but what I am dealing with here is the only reality. The realistic thought is not unreal. You are suffering from the mania of unreality.

Tapatrayonmulanam: and your disease will be wholesale cured. The disease and its effect - your suffering - will be uprooted to the extreme."

Chapter Eleven

The Guardian-ruled Family

"The Vaisnava is all in all, and I am nothing." Such a feeling grows infinitely in the Vaisnava. "I am nothing, but he is everything - he is a Vaisnava; Guru and Vaisnava really hold Krsna-bhakti. They are the stockists. But I am empty-handed; I have nothing." This is the nature of the association of the finite with the infinite. As much as we shall have a real approach towards the infinite, we cannot but consider ourselves to be the meanest of the mean. The standard of Vaisnava qualification (*vaisnavata*) is measured in this way. And this is not lip-deep, but the sincere dealing of the innermost heart. When Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami says, *purisera kite haite muni sei laghistha* - "I am lower than the worm in stool" - this is not mere imitation, but his heartfelt truth. *Acarya-abhimana*, the assertion of the Guru over his disciple, is a different posture. That is assertion, but only for the service of the Vaisnava; the sincerity is maintained therein. The Guru's assertion is not selfish assertion. His assertion is only for the sake of saving the public and upholding the prestige of the Vaisnava. So that is proper adjustment with reality, in twofold senses: to establish the real position of a Vaisnava, and at the same time to save the ordinary persons from the danger and the reaction of false attempt or false thought. So that kind of assertion is not egoistic. Rather, we should know that as sacrifice in the dynamic sense.

In *Visva-vaisnava-raja-sabha*, our Guru Maharaja tactfully managed in this way: he asked one of his disciples to speak something in praise and appreciation of another disciple. And he especially asked this of disciples who were a little antagonistic to one another. He asked them, "Speak something in praise of your 'friend.' " Why? To try to mark the bright side, the *svarupa*, and to try to ignore the apparent side. He instructed, "You try to speak something in praise of your friend, your

apparent opponent." The Guru's order was given, and so the disciple had to speak something in praise. Necessity is the mother of invention; he had to dive deep into the bright side of the other person and try to bring that side out. Thereby, the Vaisnava atmosphere of giving and taking was aroused and the apparent, mayika side was gradually ignored, disregarded and dissipated. Something similar happens in kirtana as well. Why is kirtana so powerful? Because when we are requested to speak something, we cannot but utilize our best attention to speak. We have to assert our best ability in the attempt to gather the proper information to speak something about the Supreme Lord. So, also, in the case of the Vaisnava, as in the case of the Lord, we must approach the svarupa, the inner side, the inner aspect, the bright side - and ignore the apparent side; and thereby we will thrive. There, the real mutual relationship will be aroused. Once a year in the Holy Dhama of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, it was the practice of our Guru Maharaja to preside in a meeting under the banner of

Visva-vaisnava-raja-sabha (Universal Assembly of the Topmost Pure Devotees), and there his method was such: "Try to praise the Vaisnava."

So, to appreciate the nobility of a Vaisnava may be difficult, but if we can do so, we may have a chance to reach a standard of real devotion to a certain extent. It is said by the Lord in the *Adi Purana*, "One who 'loves Me' does not really love Me; but one who loves My servitors - his love for Me is more real; it is true and of absolute character." We must try to appreciate the character and conduct of the Vaisnava, and thereby we can raise the standard of our own life of dedication.

The infinitesimal and the infinite are very closely connected. The consciousness of the infinitesimal is in this line:

ye yata patita haya, tava daya tata taya,
tate ami supatra dayara
(Gitamala, Yamuna-bhavavali 19)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "Your grace is given in accordance with the necessity of those who really deserve it. In that consideration, I have some claim. I am fallen of the fallen, the most fallen, so I have

some claim to Your grace." That should be the attitude of the servitors. Increase the negative side. "I am the most deserving because I am meanest of the mean, poorest of the poor." We have to increase and develop our knowledge towards that side: "I am so low, so needy, so mean, in all respects." That consciousness will draw Him towards you; the mass energy collected (karma) or the attempt to know Him (jnana) cannot do so (*jnana-karmady-anavrtam*). To think, "I can know You, I can measure You" - that is impossible, wild goose-chasing, and this has been declared by Srimad-Bhagavatam. You can never know Him. The closer you come to the boundary of your knowledge, the more you will find Him transcending it. None can bind Him. That was shown in the attempt of Mother Yasoda. When she went to bind Damodara, Krsna, around the waist, the rope was always two fingers short.

*yad asit tad api nyunam, tenanyad api sandadhe
tad api dvy-angulam nyunam, yad yad adatta bandhanam*
(Bhagavatam, 10.9. 16)

"(After joining the original rope with another) that rope was also short by the measure of two fingers. Then she tied more rope; that also was short by the same measure. In this way, no matter how much rope she added, it was always short by two fingers."

It is a mathematically impossible margin, but it is such. Similarly, we must know that the Absolute is subjective not objective. Examples like this show us the failure of the objective calculation. Don't go to calculate the transcendental truth by the objective process. The factor of His will can never be eliminated, and that is the real factor. If you approach to calculate about Him, the most realistic thought you must keep in your mind is that it depends on His Supreme Will. He is abhijna, omniscient, and svarat, fully independent. Only He knows what is what and what should be what. It is His monopoly, within His fist. You may conjecture so many alternatives, but to no avail. He knows what He will do; and at the same time, He is not under any obligation to anyone. He cannot be compelled to give any explanation for His deeds. Only He knows what is what, and He is the Absolute Autocrat (*arthesv abhijnah svarat*, Bhagavatam, 1.1.1). He does not

care for the consideration of others. If we approach Him with this kind of understanding and impression, we must advance towards the divine realm.

I have no possibility of pressing any demand on Him. There is no possibility of placing any application, "Please consider this or that." But at the same time, we must not forget that He listens only to the words of the devotee who is actually of such a temperament (*aham bhakta-paradhinah*, Bha: 9.4.63). This, also, cannot be eliminated. But who is such a bhakta? One who knows the Lord's nature in this way - he's a devotee. So, to become submissive to him is in other words to keep one's own independence! To be submissive to the surrendered soul amounts to no submission, because it is to submit to a person who is fully His. When He says, "I am subservient - I work under the direction of My devotee," then who are the devotees? They are those who have surrendered cent-per-cent to His sweet will. Then, in other words, they are as independent as He is. They do not have their independent wishes, but nonetheless, for the sake of the Lord's pastimes, lila, such things are designed by Yogamaya.

Lila has no rhyme and reason; it is dynamic existence

In different rasas we may see that the devotee and the Lord sometimes take opposite sides. Just as Krsna wants to steal, and Yasoda won't allow Him to steal, and she is punishing Him. Apparently they seem to be opposing forces, but Yogamaya, the internal potency of the Lord, is acting. Somehow it is Krsna's will to play like that. A director of a drama may order his actors, "You must say like this; and I shall oppose." Lila also is a movement to one point, harmoniously without any disturbance. This is lila. Lila has no rhyme and reason. It is dynamic existence. It is just the opposite of the fossil. And lila is of the nature of rasa or ananda, beauty and charm. Beauty and charm are the very nature of the Lord.

To become disconnected from that original flow is the trouble caused by maya. The conditioned souls are under the potency of maya, as though suffering the disease of insanity. They have lost their own property and wealth. This is maya. Ma means 'what is not,' and ya

means 'that.' The word maya is also derived, *miyate anaya iti maya*: *maya* is 'that by which measurement is made.' The spiritual experts inform us that separate interest has been the root cause of all disturbance (*dvitiyabhinivesatah syat*). Really everything is all right, but the spirit of separatism is responsible for the whole anomaly.

*bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syad
isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih
tan-mayayato budha abhajat tam
bhaktyaikayesam gurudevataatma*
(Bha: 11.2.37)

"A person who turns away from the Lord forgets his own innate identity by dint of the maya potency of the Lord, and his perception becomes topsy-turvy whereby he thinks, 'I am the body.' From this, he becomes absorbed in separate interest, identifying himself with the body, senses, etc. This is the cause of all apprehension. Therefore, a judicious person should worship that Supreme Lord with exclusive devotion, casting aside all spurious desires, and with the knowledge that Gurudeva is one's worshipful lord and dearest friend."

The first stage of deviation is due to separate or self-interest

To think "I can thrive individually," is to ignore the collective line and try for one's separate interest. This fine point is said to be responsible for all the disturbance: "I wanted to seek my own pleasure, separating myself from the consideration of collectiveness." The next stage is *isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih*: deviation from consideration of my master. The first stage is self-interest, and then next is deviation from guardian- consciousness, or to lose the consciousness that "I have my master, my guardian." Separate interest means, "I am my own guardian." Then, *tan-mayayato*: why is it so? Because I am *tatastha*, marginal.

On the other side is maya, and somehow that influence has captured my weak decisive faculty. I am an infinitesimal particle of consciousness with minute independence. But without my cooperation, the mayika or mundane transaction is impossible. So my

consent was necessary. With the consent of a minor child, the guardian can do anything and everything. The minority or infinitesimal character is inherent in me, and that makes room for this error. *Tan-mayayato budha abhajet tam*: but because maya is not independent, she also has to work under the guidance of the Supreme Authority; so don't go to maya, but go to He who is the Master of maya. *Tan-mayayato budha, abhajet tam - na tu mayam*. Although maya is coming to capture the soul because of his weakness of cooperating with her, still, *budha*, which means *sumedha* - the pious souls - will go for relief to the Master of *maya*. This is the decision of Srimad-Bhagavatam. *Tan-maya* means *tasya maya* - His *maya*. *Maya* is not the highest entity; she also has her Master. So when the temptation comes in you to perform a bad deed you must file an appeal for help to the Supreme Authority, and not to *maya*.

In the Bhagavad-gita also the Lord says:

*daivi hy esa gunamayi, mama maya duratyaya
mam eva ye prapadyante, mayam etam taranti te*
(Bhagavad-gita.7.14)

"This trimodal supernatural or alluring deluding potency of Mine is practically insurmountable. However, those who exclusively surrender unto Me can certainly surpass this formidable fantasy."

Maya, misunderstanding, is troubling the fallen souls, but misunderstanding itself cannot give them relief. The Prime Cause of misunderstanding - He alone can give them relief. "So don't go to that side, come to Me. By My instruction that maya will leave you. She's more powerful than you; *daivi* - she has higher backing, so you must try to seek your relief from the higher office, and not approach directly to maya. That will not be helpful to you. If you have My slightest backing, you can easily escape from that *maya*."

Misunderstanding is there, but it is not very powerful inasmuch as it does not have its own support - it is not independent. It is also dependent on truth. Truth has the better position over misunderstanding. So your transaction should always be with the

truth, with the positive. And what is positive truth? *Sat-cit-anandam*: unassailable existence, self-consciousness, and fulfillment. It is fulfillment in itself. In Hegelian philosophy, unassailable existence is described as 'by itself and for itself.' The conscious element in the middle has been suppress-ed in that philosophy. The Absolute Truth feels His Self-consciousness. He feels that He exists. Stone exist-ence may not feel its existence, but soul perceives his existence; he is cit or *cetana* - conscious. But his consciousness is not perfect. It has some want, some demand, some hankering for a higher life. Anandam or rasa is beauty, harmony, love. That is the conception of the fullest integer: having existence, consciousness, and also fulfillment. Not only hankering or knowing is present, but that which is to be hankered for or known about is present there, and that is anandam. Anandam and sundaram are synonymous.

I saw that some of the European philosophers have translated this word anandam as 'beauty,' as in 'Reality the Beautiful.' We find that to be very near to the con-ception of Krsna. Probably it was the philosopher Martineau, a very good linguist and a poet of high style, who proposed that the ultimate element is 'Reality the Beautiful.' Wordsworth hinted at 'eye-beauty' and 'ear-beauty.' In one poem Wordsworth described a girl of his dreams. He wrote that she was a village girl, and there was a brook alongside that village. He says that the jingling sound of the brook contributed to her beauty. Many scholars tried to give some interpretation to this conception, but one Bengali scholar, Harinath De, who was a master of thirty-two languages, gave the interpretation: 'ear-beauty contributed to eye-beauty.' His explanation was very taking to me. The ear-beauty, the beautiful sound of the brook, added to the appearance of that girl; that means that ear-beauty, or sweet sound, contributed to eye-beauty. Eye beauty, nose-beauty, touch-beauty, etc., all are anandam, rasam, or beauty in the broadest sense.

In another Upanisadic word, it is stated, *satyam, sivam, sundaram*. *Siva* means *mangalam*. What is the criterion of *mangalam*? *Amangalam* means mortal: mortal is *amangalam* (inauspicious). And immortality is *sivam, mangalam* (auspicious). So *sivam* means immortal, and that means conscious, as found in the soul. Soul is

immortal. So, stone is mortal, but soul is immortal. Therefore, soul proper is *siva*; but we see that the soul is vulnerable. Supersoul is beauty, *sundaram*. That is concrete reality as the independent and fullest representation of existence. All other existences are but partial representations of the Absolute. *Sundaram* is satisfaction; the soul is dissatisfied, and for stone there is no question of satisfaction; it possesses only mere existence. But soul is dissatisfied, even though he is an eternal unit of self-consciousness. The words *Siva*, *Mrtyunjaya* and *Maha-deva* mean 'free from mortality or change; eternal.' But mere eternity is not sufficient. Only *rasam* or *sundaram* can fill the gap. So *sundaram* is the object of our quest. If wherever we go and whatever we do is examined minutely it will be detected that we are searching after beauty, after fulfillment, after *sundaram*, after *rasam*.

na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum
durasaya ye bahir artha-maninah
(Bhagavatam, 7.5 31)

"Those whose minds have been polluted by mundane sense-pleasure, and who hold respect for sense-enjoyers addicted to external mundane pleasures - they cannot know of the glories of Lord Visnu, the exclusive refuge of those desirous of attaining the supreme goal of human life."

Externally and ignorantly, it may be seen that we are in quest of this and that - duty, money, sense-pleasure (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*); but this is an external and partial examination of things. But with a deep examination it must be found that we are eagerly searching for only *rasam*, *sundaram*: the fullest satisfaction, and not for partial, temporary so-called pleasure. So *dharma*, *artha*, and *kama* cannot satisfy our inner hankering. Not to speak of them, even liberation (*moksa*) from the present flickering hankering is not the goal, and this is the finding of the scholars. Mere liberation from the negative side is an artificial life. Life must have its fulfillment. Everything has its fulfillment and necessary position. It is not meant for nothing! Zero cannot be the conclusion of the whole existence. Infinite is the conclusion, not zero. So mere liberation - to remain as in a long, deep slumber - that is destructive and inconclusive. That cannot be the

object of creation or the object of our existence. The other side must be searched out - the *cid-vilasa* (the transcendental dynamic plane). And where can we get that? Here in this world is exploitation, and there is just the opposite: dedication.

Bhakti is dedication, after surrender to the center. As I mentioned earlier, we have drifted into separate interest. Now we must give up that separate interest and enter into the undivided family; we must accept the guardian. We have been advised to enter the guardian-ruled family. We have to adjust ourselves to live in a family under guardianship. But we shall strive to understand that life under a guardian is the wholesome and healthy life. We need not search after our full independence, for that independence cannot solve the problem we are faced with. There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a problem. Apparently, it may be thought that by independence the problem may be solved. But it is wrong.

The scriptures and mahajananas come to our help: "No! At present you may think that independence will give you proper satisfaction of your inner heart, but really it is wrong. Your apparent thought is your enemy. You want to get out of any circumstantial infringement, and if you get freedom you'll be happy - this is wrong. Rather, the opposite is true. You should try to live in a joint family. You must be accommodative; you must correct your nature. Your independence is your enemy."

This must be understood. This independence that apparently seems to be your friend is really your enemy, and you must learn how to live together with others. You cannot separate yourself from the environment; it is not possible. That is death, samadhi, or the infinite slumber. That is no life, that is no answer, that is no solution. You must live with many. You must see that you are a part of the whole, and that only your spirit of independence is disturbing you. And you must try to save yourself from the hands of your 'friends.' "God, save me from my friends, my so-called friends."

Only surrender can give you relief, can give you the real, higher life. You will be able to understand that from your innermost heart. In

Bhagavad-gita, Krsna has repeatedly hammered this *raga-dvesa* - apathy and sympathy (*raga-dvesa-vi-muktais tu*, Bg. 2.64) Those two are your enemies. Apathy for something and sympathy for something - these are your enemies! Be independent of those two enemies, and concentrate yourself towards your guardian. Know that He is not partial. Your first consideration should be that the guardian is not partial. "I am guardian, but I am friendly to you all (*suhrdam sarva-bhutanam*, Bhagavad-gita, 5.29). Don't leave this thought! I am your guardian, but at the same time I am your friend. Don't forget this, otherwise there alone is the danger in your whole life."

Be optimistic, don't be pessimistic. You are good and all around you is bad, and withdrawal from everything and everyone will give you real bliss? Don't be so selfish-thinking. That is your environment; they should be relied upon - they also have goodness in them. So try to adjust yourself with them. *Tat te 'nukampam* (Bhagavatam, 10.14.8): all our situations in life occur by His grace. Especially try to adjust with the Guardian who is at the bottom of all movement and all creation. Have faith in Him, and through Him, approach your environment. Then everything will be properly adjusted.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam it is said:

*sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed, bhagavad-bhavam atmanah
bhutani bhagavaty atmany, esa bhagavatottamah*
(Bhagavatam, 11.2.45)

We can attain the highest position in this way. Whatever and whoever we come across, we must see it at the central interest and not from provincial or local interest. Go straight to the center: *bhagavad-bhavam*. Then, *atmanah*. Try to see the center in everything, and then in connection with or through the center, come to approach your environment. First go to the center, and from the center, knowing your relationship with the center, come to adjust with your surroundings and company. What is a person's relationship to the center, and what is my relationship to the center? Considering these two factors, I shall ascertain what shall be my relationship with that person. My connection with everything and everyone should be ascertained

through the center. My relationship with others must be calculated from the central interest, not the local or partial interest between them. That will be wrong, and that is the root of all evil. This separate relationship is not wholesome. Only go straight to see things through the eye of the interest of the center, and your relationship will descend (*sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed, bhagavad-bhavam - atmanah*). Next, *bhutani bhagavaty* and then *atmani* - vice versa: what is God's relationship with the thing, and what is the thing's relationship with God; and according to that calculation, you come into adjustment with them, with your environment. Then you are out of danger. But eliminating the central interest, if you want to mix together and get your local benefit satisfied in the meantime, you'll be in danger (*yo mam pasyati sarvatra . . . pranasyati*, Bhagavad-gita, 6.30; *sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed . . . esa bhagavatottamah*, Bhagavatam, 11.2.45).

So the environment is not bad. We are suffering from misunderstanding, *maya (na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum)*, and that misunderstanding should be cleared. We shall try to live anywhere and everywhere, and we shall see the environment as all-loving, if we have that deep vision to see who is at the basis of all of us, if we find Him. It is also mentioned in the Upanisads that in pure consciousness, one can see nectar everywhere in the wind, in the ocean, in the plants, in the stars every-where.

Try to recognize that your situation is full of honey - full of nectar. Don't try to see only the outer cover. Your vision must be deep enough to see the real position. Then you will find everything is like nectar to you. *Srnavantu visve amrtasya putrah*. This clarion-call is coming from the Veda: "O you sons of nectar! Attempt to listen to my words! You are really sons of the nectar lake. Why should you be like poison? Are you a poisonous unit? Are you now down-trodden to become units of poison? But your real, innate self - you are a drop of the nectar ocean!" *Srnavantu visve amrtasya putrah* - "Awake! Arise! Arise to your self-consciousness that you are a drop of the nectar ocean! Try to realize it!"

Dive deep and you will find nectar - no poison

"Your attachment to the outer cover - not only the covers outside but of yourself also - all are covers in reality. Don't be a 'cover-calculator.' Dive deep into your own self, in the existence of your environment. Dive deep, and you will find all nectar, no poison. Poison is a thing superficial to your real conception." To make much of the cover of things, ignoring the substance within, is nothing but cover transaction (*na te viduh svārtha-gatim hi viṣṇum, durasaya ye bahir artha-māninaḥ*). It is poisonous.

In this world, we may think we find something to be beautiful, but beauty in local interest is not real beauty. We have to be able to distinguish between the central interest and the local interest. Beauty for individual possession is poison. We are desirous of independence to enjoy that local beauty. This is the trap. But beauty is meant for the service of Kṛṣṇa. Everything is meant for Him - there we will find real beauty. The real nature of beauty is present in that which is attractive to Kṛṣṇa. Beauty should be measured from the central consideration. The danger lies in consideration of beauty from the separate interest viewpoint.

Get out of the waves of local interest

What is beauty? An object to be enjoyed. To be enjoyed by whom? If by me, then I am lost. Everything is meant for Him, and we have to enjoy beauty like that. If that is possible, we are all right. Whenever we see anything beautiful, it must come to our minds, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa will be able to enjoy this very much." Our mentality should be like this. Our mentality should be 'center-centered': "Whatever good I see will immediately remind me that Kṛṣṇa will enjoy it very much." The tasteful - "Kṛṣṇa has enjoyed this curry; I shall enjoy it subsidiarily. My position is dependent upon how Kṛṣṇa has enjoyed."

Everything should be seen through Him, and only after that - 'mine.' *Sarva-bhūtesu yāḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhavam ātmanāḥ*. 'Mine' should mean 'how Kṛṣṇa has enjoyed.' Everything may be fittingly enjoyed by Him. I must be Kṛṣṇa-centered. Then other centers such as beauty to be enjoyed by any other person, not to speak of oneself, will be recognized as risky and poisonous. Beauty - everything - is to be

enjoyed by Him. It is meant, it is created, it is sustained - for Him. We must reach this understanding, for this is to be situated in the deepest plane. This is *nirguna*, transcendental. Otherwise, all is *saguna*, or superficial. Get out of the *saguna*, the waves of local interest That may be centered in a family, a village, a country, a species, or human society to the exception of birds, beasts and insects - the circle may increase, but it is still limited. But properly adjusted, we want nothing less than Krsna, so everything must be connected with Him and seen through His interest. My interest should not entertain any independent friendship with anyone. Everything should be done on Krsna's account. Negotiation, transaction, and future prospect - everything is for the center, Krsna. In this way, everything will come to me through the Absolute Good. Then all the poison will be eliminated and whatever comes to me will be mixed with nectar.

So whatever we contact must come via Krsna or His bona fide servant - Gurudeva or Vaisnava, whose cause is inseparable from Krsna's. We can rely upon them. Somehow, everything must percolate through the Absolute Good - not vulnerable or limited goodness - but the Absolute Good. Via that, all transactions between the plurality must be checked and sent as prasadam (merciful remnants) from the center. That should be the proper attitude. And that is really sweet.

If we can come into that plane, we shall feel this. Otherwise, our actions will be performed as duty, by scriptural injunction and so on. But if we can reach the plane of the Absolute Good, our own soul or existence and practical life will bear testimony for us that this life is the topmost, and without it, we cannot live.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "*Esaba chodata parana harau*: Sri Vrndavana and its surroundings so intensely awaken my remembrance of Krsna; and if these things are taken away from me, I shall lose my very life. They are sustaining me, because they are encouraging me to take to Krsna consciousness. They are all encouraging and helping me towards Krsna consciousness in different aspects. Whatever I see there,

radha-kunda-tata-kunja-kutira, govardhana-parvata-yamuna-tira (the dwelling in the groves on the banks of Sri Radhakunda, the holy Govardhana mountain, the banks of the holy Yamuna river) - reminds

me in such a sweet way, taking me towards Krsna conception and Krsna-lila, spreading nectar in my heart. If I am to leave them, then I shall leave my existence. They are all around me; they are so encouraging and life-giving to me. They are so fulfilling to my life - indeed, they are more than my life! *Kusuma-sarovara, manasa-ganga, kalindanandini vipula-taranga* (the holy lake midway between Mathura, Govardhana, and Radha-kunda, the river at the edge of Govardhana, the rolling waves of the Yamuna); *kha-ga-mrga-kula, malaya-batasa* (the birds and animals, the breezes of spring) what a sweet contribution all these things offer me! Krsna is very near to me! I would die without them. Such beauty, the whole thing takes me with lightning speed directly towards Krsna consciousness, towards His Associates and His pastimes with Them. That is direct nectar, and that will come in me."

*radhakundatata-kunjakutira
govardhanaparvata yamunatira
kusumasarovara, manasaganga
kalindanandini vipula-taranga
vamsivata, gokula, dhirasamira
vrndavana-taru latika-vanira
khaga-mrgakula, malaya-batasa
mayura, bhramara, murali-vilasa
venu, srnga, padacihna, meghamala
vasanta, sasanka, sankha karatala
yugala vilase anukula jani
lilavilasa-uddipaka mani
esaba chodata kaha nahi yau
esaba chodata parana harau
bhaktivinoda kahe, suna kana
taya uddipaka hamara parana*

The grove-dwelling on the banks of Radha-kunda,
Govardhana mountain, the banks of river Yamuna;
Kusuma-sarovara lake, Manasa-ganga river,
The rolling waves of Yamuna, daughter of the sun;
Place of the Rasa dance, and Gokula, the gentle breezes,

The trees, vines, and Vetasa palms of Vraja;
The birds and animals, the sweet air of spring,
The peacocks, bumblebees, the flute's sweet song;
Flute, horn, His footsteps, range of clouds in the sky,
Season of spring, the moon, the conch, hand-cymbals;
I know all these things are nourishing the pastimes of the Divine
Couple,
I can feel they arouse the holy pastimes of the Lord;
I can never leave all these things so dear to me,
Without them I know I'll surely die;
Hear me, O Kan, says Sri Bhaktivinoda:
You are the only light of my life.

This is Vrndavana. Vrndavana is so friendly, so sweet, so near to us, and such a well-wisher of ours. We are quite at home there - sweet, sweet home. *Svarupe sabara haya, golokete sthiti*: in our innate and innermost existence, we are members of that plane. Now we have come out, and we have scattered our consciousness all over the surface. Cover, cover, cover - there are so many layers, and they are all dry things. And the substance, the spirit, is within. Eliminating this bodily cover, the mental cover, the liberation cover, the Vaikuntha cover - then I may enter into the land of Vraja. Vrndavana resides within me, if I can find my friends everywhere. They are my friends and relatives, and they will give me all-pleasing experience, ecstasy. Mahaprabhu came with this news for us. "Oh, you are a child of that soil; why do you suffer here, my children, my boys? Why do you suffer? *Amrtasya-putrah*: you are a child of that soil, and you are suffering so much, coming in the desert? Your home is so resourceful, so sweet, and you are running in the desert? What is this? Come! Leave this poisonous charm, this suicidal charm. This charm, *maya* charm, misunderstanding charm - this is suicidal. Leave this apparent charm! This is poisonous, like a witch. The witch has charmed you here and made you spellbound. Come along with Me! I shall take you to your home which is so very sweet!"

Mahaprabhu takes us to the East side

In general, this is the call of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri

Nityananda Prabhu. Don't try to think yourself a master of so *many siddhis like anima, laghima, vyapti* (becoming small as the atom, lighter than a feather all-pervading, etc.). The thought that you can play with miracles is all lower conception. With *mukti* (liberation), then *siddhi* (yogic super-natural mystic powers), you will have to encounter so many traps and obstacles that your very existence will be at stake. To the South there is the *Bhimarula-varuli*, the hornet's nest of unfulfilled desires (*karma-kanda*); to the West, there is the Yaksha, the deceitful ghost representing the death of merging into the Absolute by supernatural yoga-practice (*yoga- siddhi*); and to the North there is the *Ajagara*, the black python representing the death of merging into the Absolute Brahman by the liberationists on the path of knowledge (*jnana-marga*). They will all bewilder you. But most naturally and with the least effort on your part, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu will take you to the Eastern side, to the wealth that is within your heart. That is universal, spacious, sweet, and most intimate. There is your home, all are mutual well-wishers there. That is the gift of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Gaura Hari bol!

Chapter Twelve

Every Word is a Song

"Where every word is a song, every step is a dance, and the flute is the favorite attendant . . ."
(Sri Brahma-samhita)

Every word is a song . . . but this is not a sound of this plane. This is from some other world, some other world that is so soft, so sweet, so heart-capturing. It is a world where correct behavior occurs most sweetly and harmoniously. Every word is like a song (*katha ganam*). Every movement is sweet, like dancing (*natyam gamanam api*). It has been described in this way. Everything is replete with the highest degree of beauty. This is the land of beauty - there everything is beautiful. Everything has the touch of beauty divine. The prime cause is charming, attracting, and arresting heart and soul, "Stop!"

There is a land of such existence. Our aspiration is for such a life (*radhika-madhavasam*). We can sincerely foster the idea to feel attraction to a life of such a plane, where everything is of a musical character. The flute of Krsna guides everything. That can even draw out the life from the body.

The sound is so charming, it appears that one's very feeling wants to come out of bodily existence. What-ever part of our body is touched with any sort of such dealing, that part seems to disconnect from the other parts, and - if it is possible to imagine it - that part runs to join the subject. If there is color, the eye wants to feel it, as though separating himself from the other parts of the body. There is such a competition: "I don't want your connection, O body! I want to run towards that direction - a call has come from there." The hands, the eyes, the touch - all faculties will compete; whatever part is touched will want to run away from the other friendly companions.

Once, after conducting the parikrama (circumambulation) of the whole Vraja-mandala (the perimeter of Sri Vrndavana), Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada asked his disciples, "Which pastimes attracted you most? Which location in Vrndavana has attracted you most?" When he asked me this question, I replied that Kadamkhandi, the place of Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhu's bhajana, attracted me most of all. Midway between Nandagram and Yavat there was an asrama where Srila Rupa Goswami settled and used to write his book Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu. That place attracted me most. Again, after a year or two, when we were at Sri Radha-Kunda in the company of Srila Prabhupada, he very suddenly remarked, "Your place. That place of yours . . . I was astounded. "What, where is my place?" He said, "Your place is Kadamkhandi, the place of Srila Rupa Goswami." I thought, "Oh, he had some purpose when he inquired a year or two ago which location was attractive to who; he kept these things on his mind, and accordingly today he is saying, 'Your place.' "

So he was very particular about *ruci-pariksa*, or to examine the taste of a particular person for a particular lila and a particular group of service. It is necessary for the Acarya to examine his disciple and determine the place where he is to be located.

He must determine where his disciple stands and accordingly in harmony with that innate taste help him in his march towards that land of his aspiration.

The destination has been settled, but how shall I reach it? When shall I reach it? Those who come to my aid to take me there - they are my masters, my Gurus: Siksa-gurus and Diksa-guru. Whoever helps me to go there is my Guru. He is my guide who will help me to reach my located destination, the station of my innermost hankering (*radhika-madhavasam prapto yasya prathitah krpaya sri-gurum tam nato 'smi*). He has helped me to locate my destination; he has educated me how and what to aspire after, and how to reach that highest aspired shelter. I have attained all these things through him. He is my all-in-all in life, the master of my life. There is a boat, and he is the helmsman (*guru-karnadharam*). I have surrendered unto him, I have accepted him. I have boarded his boat and he is taking me towards the goal of my life.

The human body (*nr-deham*) has been compared to a boat. By utilizing my resources in this body and mind, my Gurudeva, as the helmsman, is guiding me towards the goal. One who does not take this opportunity after coming into the human species commits suicide. He commits suicide by failing to take advantage of cross-ing the ocean of life and death, birth and death, birth and death. The very nature of the ocean of mundane existence is waves - life and death, birth and death. The helmsman to take us across this ocean of life and death, birth and death, is Gurudeva. It is said in the Srimad-Bhagavatam that anyone who misses this chance is committing suicide:

*nr-deham adyam sulabham sudurllabham
plavam sukalpam guru-karnadharam
mayanukulena nabhasvateritam
puman bhavabdhim na tares sa atmaha
(Bhagavatam, 11.20.17)*

Here, the Lord is inferring, "So many boats are passing, and I am helping like a favorable wind. The helmsman is Guru, and I am the favorable wind. The boat is this human body, and you should all take this opportunity to cross the ocean of life, birth, and death. The world

is compared to the infinite. It resembles infinity; it is very difficult to cross the ocean of life and death, birth and death. If you want to escape these troubles (*janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi-duhkha-dosanudarsanam*), you must take the chance. Otherwise, you will lose so much that it amounts to suicide.

**Mahaprabhu's grace presupposes some selection, whereas
Nityananda's grace has no selection**

The grace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu presupposes some selection, but Sri Nityananda Prabhu's grace has no selection. He gives His grace to whoever He comes across. Nityananda Prabhu is so magnanimous that He saves whoever He comes across on His way. His mercy is so raw, indiscriminating, and broad. Nityananda Prabhu is most benevolent. Mahaprabhu has a sort of discrimination, but Nityananda Prabhu does not care for any discrimination whatsoever. Whether one is a fit or an unfit candidate, he is still counted as worthy. Such is His mercy.

Never dare to approach Sri Sri Radha and Krsna, neglecting the grace of Lord Nityananda (*hena nitai vine bhai, radha-krsna paite nai*). So, our revered Sripada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja laid stress on Nityananda Prabhu. Nityananda Prabhu is Lord Balarama. Nityananda Prabhu's grace is stressed for the fallen; His grace is real wealth for them because discrimination has hardly a place in it. Although not much, we nonetheless find some sort of discrimination in the magnanimity of Lord Gauranga. But Nityananda Prabhu is more generous. So first go to Nityananda Prabhu, and by His grace you will go to Mahaprabhu. And by the grace of Mahaprabhu you will easily reach Sri Sri Radha-Govinda in Vrndavana. This is the way shown to us.

*yatha yatha gaura-padaravinde
vindeta bhaktim krta-punya-rasih
tatha tathotsarpati hrady akasmad
radha-padambhoja-sudhambu-rasih*
(Sri Caitanya-candramrta 88)

"As devotion unto the lotus feet of Sri Gaurasundara is attained by a greatly pious person, unexpectedly the ocean of nectar which is the service of the lotus feet of Sri Radha is accordingly born within his heart."

Percolated by the mercy of Sri Gauranga, try to approach Srimati Radharani. Then there will be no possibility of any dirt entering you and disturbing you in that plane. That will be percolated by Sri Gauranga. If you have the shelter of Sri Gauranga you can be sure that you will very safely, smoothly, and intimately attain to the service of Srimati Radharani. Otherwise it is very dangerous, and sometimes suicidal. If you do not approach through Sri Gauranga the attempt will be reactionary. It is very dangerous to approach Sri Vrndavana and Srimati Radharani directly. You must approach commanded by Sri Gauranga. In other words, if you can appreciate the life of Sri Gauranga, the ideal of Sri Gauranga, then *kama* (mundane desire), etc., will be exhaustively eliminated. You will be really purified to be acceptable to that domain of the highest lila.

So here, in Koladvipa, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave His best to all (*kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya, hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya*). He gave the most desirable service, service of the sweetest type. Such service is found in Vrndavana, and Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanyadeva recommended Vrndavana life as the highest. Neither knowledge nor power can even approach this Vrndavana service. In Vrndavana, heart is every-thing. Sri Uddhava also said,

*asam aho carana-renu-jusam aham syat,
vrndavane kim api gulma-latausadhinam
ya dustyajam svajanam arya-pathan ca hitva
bhejur mukunda-padavim srutibhir vimrgyam*
(Bhagavatam, 10.47.61)

"Ignoring society and even scriptures, they (the Gopis) have given themselves up to the Absolute. They gave up their own relatives, and what is socially considered to be holy; they gave up everything for the cause of the service of the Lord." So Uddhava, the highest type of devotee, said, "I aspire after a birth as a blade of grass or some plant in

Vrndavana, so that the feet-dust of the Gopis easily falls on my head." So high is the position of the Gopis and Vrndavana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommended that very thing, with the added feature of distributing it to others. Giving it to others, one may have a wholesale dealing with a life so divine. All conceptions of *dharma* (duty), *adharma* (irreligion), *jnana* (knowledge, renunciation, liberation), etc. - they are very, very low in comparison to these affairs of Vrndavana. Here, the heart is everything. Whoever has tenacity to follow this line has the greatest hope of success in life.

And again, *distya yad asin mat sneho, bhavatinam mad apanah* (Bhagavatam, 10.42.44): "It is supposed that one who gets My connection is fortunate, but I consider it My fortune that I got your (the Gopis') connection. Others say that anyone who gets My connection is fortunate. But I consider Myself fortunate because I have your connection. I am the most fortunate. It is My fortune that I have your connection, so it is sure that I shall be yours - I shall always be yours." Such things were spoken by Krsna when He met the Gopis at Kuruksetra. Such things are unattainable - people cannot even think so high, that such a life is possible. *Bhaktia sanjataya bhaktia* (Bhagavatam, 11.3.31): *bhakti* will produce more *bhakti*, and that *bhakti* will also produce more *bhakti* - in this way. Nothing else comes as a fruit. *Bhakti* is such a thing, it is its own reward.

*yasyah kadapi vasanancala-khelanottha-
dhanyatidhanya-pavanena krtarthamani
yogindra-durgama-gatir madhusudano 'pi
tasyah namo 'stu vrsabhanubhuvodise 'pi*
(Sri Prabodhananda Saraswatipada)

Here it has been told that once the flow of the wind had touched some part of the cloth or dress of Srimati Radharani; that wind touched Krsna's body, and Krsna was besides Himself with cheer, with gladness, with pleasure. "Oh! I felt a touch of the wind that blew past the dress of Radharani - I am so fortunate!" And who is that Krsna? All the religious experts, scholars, yogis, etc., they are all hunting after Krsna's grace and that Krsna, He thinks Himself fortunate if He gets a little touch of the breeze that blew past the dress of Srimati Radharani.

So pure is Srimati Radharani. Her surrender, Her service, is so pure, that even a touch of that wind makes Krsna, Bhagavan, the Supreme Lord Himself, think that He has gained the highest fortune. He feels, "I am so fulfilled in My life."

Srimati Radharani's position is first and foremost. Sri Jayadeva Goswami has written that Krsna wants the feet-dust of Srimati Radharani (*dehi pada-pallavam udaram*, Gita Govinda). However, ordinary people cannot understand this. Only the followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by His grace, can understand anything of the substance of Radha-dasyam, the servitude of Srimati Radharani. So Radha-dasyam is the highest aspiration of the Gaudiya Vaisnava.

After Sri Caitanyadeva took sannyasa, He wandered throughout South India, and conquered the religious conceptions there. At Benares, Sri Svarupa Damodara also wanted to take sannyasa, but the function was half-done. When the Lord arrived at Puri, Sri Svarupa Damodara became as though mad, and with his sannyasa-function half-completed he ran to Puri. His name was Purusottama, and his brahmacari name was Svarupa Ananda. So, with this name still, he ran to Puri, like a madman, to see his guardian and friend, his everything. He greeted Sri Caitanyadeva with this sloka:

*helodhunita-khedaya visadaya pronmilad amodaya
samyac-chastra-vivadaya rasadaya cittarpitonmadaya
sasvad-bhaktivinodaya samadaya madhurya-maryadaya
sri-caitanya-dayanidhe tava daya bhuyad amandodaya
(Sri Caitanyacandrodaya-nataka)*

"O ocean of mercy, Sri Caitanya - that mercy which effortlessly dispels all lamentation; that mercy within which absolute purity resides; that mercy within which supreme ecstasy is revealed (overshadowing all else); that mercy which ends all scriptural debates by its appearance; that mercy which charms all directions by its pastimes of divine love - by its absolute sweetness may that all-expansive mercy of Yours, the bestower of all goodness, awaken in our hearts."

Sri Svarupa Damodara fell at the feet of Sri Caitanyadeva, with this sloka on his lips. "O great ocean of mercy, Sri Caitanyadeva, let Your grace be distributed to one and all. You are the ocean of grace let that grace be distributed to one and all. It is the grace which once begun never comes to end in any other wave; it will never produce any bad thing thereafter. Your *daya*, Your mercy, is of such quality that if anyone gets a particle of it, then in no time that mercy will eliminate any bad position. Mando means Ôbad position,' so *amandodaya* is such *daya* that won't bring inauspiciousness at any time." Like a mad friend fallen at his feet, Sri Svarupa Damodara sang this sloka to Sri Caitanyadeva. In the line of instruction from Sri Caitanyadeva, Sri Svarupa Damodara is first, then Sri Rupa-Sanatana (*visvambhara priyankara, sri-svarupa-damodara, sri-goswami rupa-sanatana*). Sri Svarupa Damodara's position is such. In Vrndavana, his position is Lalita-sakhi. *Bhuyad* means *asirvada*, blessings; "I bestow my blessings to one and all; one and all may get the blessings of Sri Caitanyadeva."

A hint of the particular standard of Srimati Lalita Devi's service has been given by Srila Rupa Goswami:

*radha-mukunda-pada-sambhava-gharmabindu--
nirmancanopakarane krta-deha-laksyam*

When Lalita Devi finds a drop of perspiration at the feet of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, she furiously engages herself to remove it. "How has it come there? We are circumambulating Them to see that not the least pain can enter this domain to trouble Them. But how without our notice has this perspiration appeared? Perspiration, perspiration!" So she is furiously chastising herself, and wants to immediately take birth one lakh (100,000) times - with that force she comes to remove that drop of perspiration from the lotus feet of either of the Divine Couple. If the least difficulty is seen in the serving area, the Lord's Associates can't tolerate it in any way, and such eagerness, self-abuse and earnestness is found in them. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said,

*sanatana, deha-tyage krsna yadi paiye
koti-deha ksaneke tabe chadite pariye*

(Chaitanya-charitamrita, Antya 4.56)

"O Sanatana, to attain the service of Krsna, I want to immediately die ten million times. I am ready to embrace ten million deaths if that will help me serve Him."

The *Hladini-sakti*, the feeling potency, is Srimati Radharani. Even She feels dissatisfaction within Herself; "I can't . . ." This holds the extreme position: "I can't do My service, My duty; I can't do it."

At the meeting in Syamanta-pancaka at Kuruksetra, Krsna Himself suddenly fell at Srimati Radharani's feet and begged forgiveness: "I am an offender, a criminal to your position. You are so self-giving, I cannot fulfill My real duty towards You. Your service to Me is so loving, I can't do My duty to You." But Srimati Radharani said, "It is I who am committing offenses, because I am still living despite Your separation. In Your separation I am still living - that proves that I am the offender. I am the offender, not You, because I am living. That is sufficient proof that I am not fit for You. Why did I not die with the separation? There is the proof."

Krsna fell at Her feet: "Your position is so high, so high. So long I was without You, increasing My different duties. Without trying to satisfy You, I engaged Myself in consideration of different duties." But Srimati Radharani said, "No, no, it is I who am the offender, that I did not die without Your company. We find in the scriptures that the male has such freedom, but not the female. So I should have died in the separation, and You have no offense that You left Me to do so many duties here and there. You have so many duties to discharge, but I am only for Your service. As such, I could not keep up the standard." Such was the meeting at Kuruksetra.

So in Krsna's pastimes, the potencies are *Sandhini*, *Samvit*, and *Hladini*. *Hladini* holds the highest position because of wholesale self-surrender. Next is *Samvit*, and then third is the position of the *Sandhini*. Thinking, feeling, and willing: willing is *Sandhini*, thinking is *Samvit*, and feeling is *Hladini*. Ordinarily we may think that feeling is the last of all, but no, it is the first. Feeling is first. Feeling, real

feeling, has been given such a high position. We are all under feeling. We are all searching, and feeling is commanding. We think feeling is the result. No. Feeling is commanding everything. First feeling, then thinking, then willing. Generally the *karmis* give the better hand to willing - willpower - all command; and the *jnanis* place everything in thinking - "We command the will, so we are holding the high position." But feeling is at the basis of everything. He, or It, or She - is commanding everything. It has been told like that; we have to understand the position of feeling. Hare Krsna.

All glory to Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga

Pranati - dasakam

Ten Prayers unto the Holy Lotus Feet of

**Om Astottara-sata-Sri- Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-
Goswami Maharaj**

Offered on His 94th Holy Day of Advent, 1988

composed by

The Present President-Acarya

Om Visnupada Tridandi Swami Srimad
Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj

Pranati-dasakam

*naumi sri-gurupadabjam, yatirajesvaresvaram
sri-bhaktiraksakam srila-, sridhara-svaminam sada [1]*

1. I eternally offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my Most Worshipful Divine Master, the Supreme Emperor of the

Sannyasi Kings - Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Swami.

*sudirghonnata-diptangam, supibya-vapusam param
tridanda-tulasimala-, gopicandana-bhusitam* [2]

*acintya-pratibha-snigdham, divyajnana-prabhakaram
vedadi-sarvasastranam, samanjasya-vidhayakam* [3]

*gaudiyacarya-ratnanam, ujvalam ratnakaustubham
sri-caitanya-mahapremon-, mattalinam siromaniam* [4]

2-4 He possesses a lofty, dignified, divinely effulgent, incomparable holy form, so charming to behold. Adorned with Gopicandana and a necklace of Tulasi beads, he holds the triple staff of the Vaisnava ascetics. Although he possesses the qualification of inconceivable potency, he is full of the utmost affection. All the ten directions are illuminated by the effulgence of his supramundane unalloyed perception. He is the dispenser of the genuine proper harmonious adjustment of all the scriptures - the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Upanisads, the Puranas, etc. headed by the Srimad-Bhagavata-Purana (Srimad-Bhagavatam) which holds equal importance with the Vedas. In the necklace of the jewels of Acaryas in the Sri Gaudiya Sampradaya he shines resplendently like the brilliant Kaustubha gem, and he is radiant in his glory as the Crown-jewel of the bumblebee-devotees who are mad in the Supreme Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's love supreme. I eternally offer my obeisances unto him, my Most Worshipful Divine Master.

*gayatry-artha-viniryasam, gita-gudhartha-gauravam
stotraratnadi-samrddham, prapannajivanamrtam* [5]
*apurvagrantha-sambharam, bhaktanam hrd-rasayanam
krpaya yena dattam tam, naumi karunya-sundaram* [6]

5-6 By his grace, he brought to full bloom the deepest underlying purport of Gayatri, the Mother of the Vedas; by his grace he opened the hidden treasure-house of the glorious internal purport of Srimad Bhaga-vad-gita - and he distributed these gifts to one and all, even the lowest of the low. He revealed the supreme holy book (Sri Prapanna-

jivanamrtam, which is a treasure of many types of precious gems of holy stanzas (the wealth of holy stanzas compiled from Stotra-ratna by Sri Yamunacarya and many other valuable sources) sung by the Lord and His devotees; he revealed an unprecedented collection of holy books (Search for Sri Krsna - Reality the Beautiful, Sri Guru and His Grace, The Golden Volcano of Divine Love, etc.) that are the very life-nectar for the devotee's hearts and spiritual senses - he gave these gifts to the world. I eternally offer my obeisances unto him, my Most Worshipful Divine Master, the beautiful Deity of mercy incarnate.

*sankirtana-maharasasabdhes candramanibham
sambhati vitaran visve gaura-krsnam ganaih saha* [7]

7 He revels in his full-blown splendor as along with and through his intimate servitors he distributes in the entire universe the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Gaura-Krsna, the moon risen from the nectar ocean of the Grand Dance of the congregational chanting of Sri Krsna's holy name.

*dhamani sri-navadvipe, guptagovardhane subhe
visvavisruta-caitanya-, sarasvata-mathottamam* [8]
*sthapayitva gurun gaura-, radha-govindavigrahan
prakasayati catmanam, seva-samsiddhi-vigrahan* [9]
*gaura-srirupa-siddhanta-, divya-dharadharam gurum
sri-bhakti-raksakam devam, sridharam pranamamy aham* [10]

8-10 In Sri Navadvipa Dhama, which is nondifferent from the holy abode of Sri Vrndavana, His Divine Grace established the world-renowned Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math at Sri Koladvipa, the selfsame 'Hidden Govardhana Hill' (Gupta-Govardhana), which is the sacred place where all offenses are absolved (*Aparadha-bhanjana-pata*). There, he revealed the beautiful devotional service of the Worshipful Deities Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga-Gandharva-Govindasundara, divinely manifesting his very self as the Deity of service in perfection. Eternally do I offer my obeisances unto the holy lotus feet of my Divine Master Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj who carries the divine current of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati coming in the line of Sri Rupa, the object of Sri Gauranga Maha-

prabhu's divine affection.

*sraddhaya yah pathen nityam, pranati-dasakam muda
visate ragamargesu, tasya bhakta-prasadatah
dinadhamasya tridandibhiksu-sri-bhakti-sundara-govindasya*

One who with pure faith happily sings this *Pranati-dasakam* every day, gains the qualification to serve the Supreme Lord on the path of spontaneous love (*Raga-marga*), by the grace of the associate-servitors of that Srila Gurudeva.

Epilogue

His Divine Grace Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj was born in 1894 in a highly respected Brahmana family of the Bhattacarya order, at Hapaniya, District Burdwan, West Bengal. He received his education at Baharampur University. Having taken his pious birth in Sri Gauda-mandala, the holy lands where Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu exhibited His divine pastimes on the earth, Srila Sridhar Maharaj from his very childhood, had natural affinity for the mission of Sri Caitanyadeva - Sankirtana, the Grand Congregational Chanting of the Holy Names of the Supreme Lord.

In 1926, Srila Sridhar Maharaj joined the Sri Gaudiya Math, and became an initiated disciple of its founder, the illustrious Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Goswami Prabhupada (1874-1937). He later accepted the holy order of sannyasa (monkhood) in 1930. Recognizing him as a faithful stalwart preacher of the perfect precepts of Gaudiya Vaisnavism, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada conferred upon him the name 'Sri Bhakti Raksaka', meaning, 'Guardian of Devotion'; and further, echoing the statement of the great Vaisnava Preceptor Srila Jiva Goswami (who referred in his Sanskrit writings to the renowned Srimad-Bhagavatam commentator, Sri Sridhara Swamipada, as *bhakti-eka-raksaka*, 'Supreme Guardian of Devotion'), Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada gave him the Tridanda-sannyasa title of Sridhara.' Thus, he became Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj. As a prominent preacher in the Sri Gaudiya

Math mission, he traveled extensively throughout India and preached fluently in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, and English, spreading the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu on mass levels in universities, public seminars and Sankirtana festivals.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada also expressed high appreciation for Srila Sridhar Maharaj's Sanskrit composition 'Sri Bhaktivinoda *Viraha-dasakam*,' considering it an omen of assurance that the grand ideals and dignity of the Sri Gaudiya Divine Succession (*Sampradaya*) would be perfectly upheld and preached by such a learned and sensitive devotee as Srila Sridhar Maharaj. And practically, as a testimony to this fact, just prior to Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada's departure from this mortal world, Srila Prabhupada had Srila Sridhar Maharaj sing in his presence the holy prayer most venerated by the entire Sri Gaudiya Vaisnava community - *Sri Rupa-manjari-pada, sei mora sampada*.

After the passing of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Goswami Prabhupada, Srila Sridhar Maharaj's Godbrothers, associates, and the public, naturally revered him as the seniormost representative of the Sri Gaudiya Sampradaya, although Srila Sridhar Maharaj himself was more inclined to anonymity as a humble Vaisnava. Nonetheless, by the call of divine duty and divine inspiration, he established the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math at Sri Nabadwip Dham, hinting in a short Sanskrit poem that the Math - as a sanctuary where the holy message of his Gurudeva, Sri Rupa, and Sri Caitanyadeva was preached - would inevitably become renowned throughout the world amongst the sincere and pious seekers of unalloyed truth and divinity.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj is the composer of numerous classical prayers and commentaries in Sanskrit and Bengali. His works are hailed as gems of pure Vaisnavism by scholars, philosophers, and devotees world-wide. He authored Sri Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam, a Sanskrit devotional treatise on the subject of divine surrender, which has become a standard text-book for devotees every-where.

Upon reaching his eighties, not only Indians but persons from

America, Europe, and the world over, became attracted by his teachings and personality. He was known as a pure saint of the most simple habits of living. He was respected and loved for his saintly simplicity, his affectionate nature and dealings; and he was revered by all, whether Godbrothers, disciples, other devotees, or the general public, being unanimously venerated for his formidable encyclopedic command of the revealed scriptures, and further for his unique and unprecedented style of casting newer and newer light upon the most internal philosophical and revelatory purports of pure Sri Gaudiya-Vaisnava-Siddhanta.

A vast library of his taped discourses has been compiled by his disciples, and from such recordings have been published the exquisite English books "Search for Sri Krsna - Reality the Beautiful," "Sri Guru and His Grace," "The Golden Volcano of Divine Love," "Loving Search for the Lost Servant," as well as his unique commentary and interpretation of Srimad Bhagavad-gita, "The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute," and many others. Many more publications are also anticipated.

On 12th August, 1988, His Divine Grace Sri Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj departed from this world, to enter into the eternal pastimes. His departure did not herald the departure of one of the great stars of the Sri Gaudiya firmament, but that of the moon itself. Even the earth herself trembled on two occasions, forecasting and punctuating the event. A divine temple, named "The Temple of Union in Separation," will be erected at his holy shrine at Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip, and worship will continue throughout the generations.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj selected his most intimate and senior Sannyasi disciple, Srimad Swami Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj, as his successor, blessing him with the position of Acarya-President of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math and all its affiliated branches. His Holiness Srimad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj penned the preceding *Pranati-dasakam* as an offering to his Gurudeva. All over the world it is sung with devotion by the devotees of Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar Dev -Goswami Maharaj. Srimad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj is a

distinguished and talented Sanskrit scholar and illustrious preacher of the Precepts of Sri Caitanya-deva, qualities that were prominent in his glorious Gurudeva, Om Visnupada Astottara-sata-Sri Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj.

Humbly,

Tridandi Swami B.A. Sagar
Editor

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume Two



Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj

All Glory to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa
Chaitanya

Foreword

The Holy Vibration of Divine Talks of the Supreme Lord and His Associates (*Hari-katha*) is an eternal benediction. Descending through the Divine Succession of the Great Divine Masters down to this plane of the mundane world, the Holy Talks of the Lord that emanate from the Lotus Mouth of the pure saint are a manifestation of the Lord Himself. No one can estimate the oceanic Grace of the Lord upon the fallen conditioned souls when He personally descends in this form of Holy Talks of Him.

My most worshipful and beloved Divine Master, Om Visnupad Paramahansa Astottara-sata-Sri Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, always loved to deliver such Holy Talks, especially in the Supreme Line of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Whoever was fortunate to hear those talks, whether hailing from East or West - their hearts would bloom with happiness and transcendental prospect. When Srila Guru Maharaj in his advanced age was barely able to muster up the physical strength to come and take his seat and speak to the devotees, I would still request him to try to speak for at least only five or ten minutes - and often, after he began, he would continue for one or even two hours or more, showing all the youthful exuberance of a young man or boy. How the great souls love to eternally sing the Infinite Glories of the Lord!

Today it is our great fortune that those Holy Words that came down to us in such a simple and charming way are being brought out in book form, for the benefit of Srila Guru Maharaj's world-wide mission and new sincere spiritual seekers as well. Srila Guru Maharaj's words are an eternal Divine ecstatic flow. They are food for the hearts of the true devotees of the Supreme Lord and His Associates; they are the real life of the sincere souls hankering for the Godly life of Divine Dedication.

So we are very satisfied and pleased with the efforts of Tridandi Swami Sripad Bhakti Ananda Sagar Maharaj and the sincere devotees, especially - Sri Jaya Krsna Prabhu, Sri Dayanidhi Prabhu, Sri Nabadwip Chandra Prabhu, Sri Jagamohan Prabhu, Sri Rsabhadev Prabhu, Sri Sri Govinda Prabhu, Sri Jagadananda Prabhu, and many other good souls who have assisted him by providing the necessary funds required for bringing out this second volume in the series of *Sri-Bhakti-raksaka-divya-vani* - Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion. Also, Sri Devasis Prabhu, Srimati Gurbanuga and Srimati Bhakti Sima Devi Dasis assisted with the proofreading. May Srila Guru Maharaj shower his blessings upon them all. With this prayer I beg to offer my humble obeisances unto His Lotus Feet and unto all the Vaisnavas.

Humbly,

Swami Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Sri Gaura-purnima, 28th February, 1991

All Glory to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna
Chaitanya

Chapter One

Invite Vasudeva to the Throne of Your Heart

Devotee: What should a devotee do when he is continually being attacked by lust, anger and greed?

Srila Guru Maharaj: One should cry for the help of the *sadhu*; the *sadhus* are posted from above. There are many who are progressing from the mundane world to the spiritual world, and special *sadhus* are given charge to protect those travelers. So the devotee will cry aloud: "I am going to be plundered! Give me protection!" With fervor, he will move all his nerve to the extreme: "I must not allow myself to be plundered by you! All my previous tendencies have shaped my fate, and now they have appeared; I am prey to all those nasty plunderers - please protect me! *Kama*, *krodha* and *lobha* (lust, anger and greed) are jumping at me!"

There are also so many artificial methods:

yamadibhir yogapathaih kama-lobha-hato muhuh
mukunda-sevaya yadvat tathaddhatma na samyati
(Bhagavatam, 1.6.35)

The practices of sitting postures (*asanas*) , breath control (*pranayama*) ,

etc., may help us to a slight degree, but only superficially. The deep seed can be eliminated only by taking Mukunda on the throne of our heart. (*Mukunda sevaya yadvat tathaddhatma na samyati*) . If one goes on with the artificial means of *pranayama* and so on, lust and anger may seem to be a little reduced in power for the time being, but this is not a permanent cure. When the practices are slackened, they arise again. The relief from lust, anger and greed is only temporary.

The meditators and renouncers (*yogis, jnanis*) think these practices will quench their inner thirst, and they go on with constant deep meditation (*nidhidhyasanam*) while keeping guard outwardly with some external practices. But the devotees do not have any faith in this method. They consider the whole thing artificial. They only want to invite Vasudeva in all phases of their lives, and in this way they permanently do away with those enemies.

Devotee: Maharaj, in the beginning we're taught to follow. But it seems there is a point where we imitate, and then follow later. Because we have no qualification, when we try to follow we are actually imitating somehow. So what's the difference between the two? When does imitation or *anukarana* become following or *anuserana*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In *anuserana* , following, there is sincerity; and *anukarana*, imitation, is only for name and fame, or *pratistha* . To only imitate devotion outwardly without inner purity is more or less done to get the glory of a *sadhu* . And *anuserana* means to attain from the heart, sincerely. So true following is sincere progress, and imitation is artificiality.

It has been practically experienced that responsible services can help us from falling prey to lust, anger, etc. Foremost is faith (*sraddha*) , next is the association of pure devotees (*sadhu-sanga*) and deep engagement with the duties prescribed by the Divine Master (*bhajana-kriya*) . Deep engagement is necessary, especially for the mind, not merely the body. And mental engagement can be attained only by responsibility. Some

responsible service is given to the disciple. He feels weight and it occupies his brain; he cannot but think about it - the mind is engaged there, surely. So the mind gets no chance to dwell on lower things. This is the beauty of deep engagement in responsible Service. In the practical sense, that helps us a great deal. Then association and Scriptures will really be of substantial help to us: as Service (*pariprasna, sevaya*) . As much as we are able to engage ourselves in deep, responsible services, the enemies' effect on us will be minimized. They will come and peep, and will step back saying, "No - no time. He is deeply engaged. He has no time to give attention to us. He may not be enticed." In this way, they will have to retreat. Then if they return once, twice, thrice or more - "Oh, no time. He has no attention to spare for us. He is very deeply engaged - for *Seva* ."

Seva, Service, should not be merely physical; there is mental *Seva* , and only responsibility can capture the mind. In responsibility, the mind is compelled to think on the matter; otherwise, the mind may be free to wander hither and thither even while the body is apparently engaged. So engage the mind in deep Service, responsible Service.

Chapter Two

The Eye to See the Dhama - The Eye of Faith

In an ordinary country there is a capital. The capital is where the existence and position of the king is more intense than in the general section of the country. Similarly, the Lord is everywhere, and His concentrated existence is found in the *Dhama* or the Holy Abode. With fully developed vision, we can feel the special characteristic of the *Dhama*. We shall find His presence everywhere, but with particular intensity in the *Dhama*. With the awakening of our real eye, we should be able to feel and appreciate according to this criterion. There is no question of a *Dhama* for those who have no eye to see. There is also a hierarchy in the *Dhama*. All are in serving attitude whether birds, beasts,

worms, insects - everything - all are contributing to the Reality. Their feeling of heart, their gesture, posture or movement - everything contributes exclusively to the Pastimes of the Lord.

Dhamera svarupa ,sphuribe nayane : in one song, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura aspires for that pure vision of the *Dhama*. Otherwise, it may appear quite ordinary to us, like a jungle. The purity of Ganges water is only perceived by those who have proper faith or *sraddha* . Otherwise to others eyes it is ordinary water. The same applies to the Deity, or *Sri Murti*. One may think that the *Sri Murti* of Lord Jagannatha in Puri appears to be a somewhat awkward figure. His arms seem incomplete, His feet are not visible, His eyes are enormous. Yet Mahaprabhu stood before Him for hours, shedding tears. No one could move Him from that place. What did Mahaprabhu see in that Figure, and what is He to our eyes? So according to the depth of vision of our inner eye we can come to that plane of the *Dhama*, the Deity, and the purifying Ganges water. *Sraddhamayo 'yam purusah* (Bhagavad-gita, 17.3): "The nature of a person is modeled on faith." Of what value is a mirror without an eye? In a looking-glass we should find the reflection, but if the eye is absent, what will the subject see in the glass? So the eye to see - faith - is necessary. According to the *sraddha*, the specific character of the *Dhama* as distinct from all other places will come into view, disclosing its real form. Everything depends on *sraddha*, faith.

Faith is the only effective link. If we wish to have any link with the sun or the moon, ordinary instruments won't do, but some plenary medium like electricity, etc., can help to connect us. We must approach via a plane similar to the object. Similarly, we can approach the infinite only with the help of *sraddha*. We cannot hope to have any connection with that finest plane of fundamental existence of this world with the help of the eye, nose or ear, or even by intelligence or reason. If we want to have any connection with the finest plane that is underlying this creation, it is possible only through faith (*sraddhamayo 'yam purusah*).

Then, the question of credibility arises: faith may be blind. But as long as

the qualification of 'blind' faith exists, 'seeing' faith must also be possible! Blind faith is diseased faith, but we must connect by real or healthy faith. Then again, our experience must be confined to our own limitations; so how much faith can we accumulate?

Infinite faith in the Infinite

When we try to establish a connection with the infinite, there are infinite possibilities. But how much faith can finite things like us have? How much can we imagine? Imagination must also have a limit, yet the infinite exists, beyond even the limit of any imagination. The infinite is so spacious and broad that even our imagination fails. How much can we imagine? We are born and bred in a cell; our experience is limited and our imagination is also limited. So imagination cannot be extended to take on an infinite character. We must be conscious that we are going to establish our relationship with the infinite, where the greatest imagination is only a point. Imagination cannot devour the infinite, so imagination must not be allowed to obstruct us. How much can we imagine? Something very meager in comparison with the infinite. We must not allow ourselves to be slaves to our imagination. The infinite is so broad, we cannot have any conception of it, we cannot imagine it. It is beyond. So we must not cower under blind faith - there may exist infinitely more than we can imagine. Only genuine faith can help us in that direction, toward the infinite. And even when we have some conception, it is said that the key to make Himself known to us is in His hand. When He opens the door, we can enter. The key is not within our hand. We can see only as much as He likes us to. He is *Adhoksaja* - Transcendental. We first have to accept this before we can approach Him or even expect to know Him. We must prepare ourselves with this attitude of accepting Him as *Adhoksaja* .

If He does not allow us to enter into His Domain, should we deny His existence? He is free to do as He pleases; what can He lose? It is we who are the losers. So we should submissively acknowledge the *Adhoksaja* Realm above us. Superseding Sankaracarya's philosophy, Sri Ramanuja

introduced this *Adhoksaja* principle.

The Supersubjective Realm

Because we cannot enter that realm as a subject or making it an object of our investigation, we deny the existence of such a thing. What does this mean? Fools may be satisfied with such an imaginary tendency, but really there is such a Domain, and when He wants to take us within His jurisdiction we can have some experience of it. This is *Adhoksaja*. Srimad-Bhagavatam warns us with this expression, *Adhoksaja*. He is *Adhoksaja* - Transcendental, Supramental. We cannot enter that domain as a subject. Even if we approach Him as investigators, we can know Him only as much as He allows us to. Still, we have to admit that there is such a realm, the Supersubjective Realm. We are subject, and that is Supersubject. The *jiva-caitanya*, the soul, is not the final existence. Socrates said that the soul is immortal, and can live independent of matter. He realized that the soul is a unit independent of matter - it is not a product of matter. Yet, the soul is not the final substance. Compared to matter, the soul is spiritual, but at the same time he may be considered like matter in comparison to his Knower, the Supersoul, *Paramatman*, and so on. The subjective realm progresses onward, more and more. There, all are our masters. We cannot be master there, we can only be servants. If we want to enter into the highest position, we shall accept the position of the slave of the slave. Only then can we get the chance of entering into that Domain. It is not unreasonable.

Some may think that matter, gas, sky, and finally ether is the limit of existence; or, beyond ether, electricity is the limit. But beyond that is the soul, as Socrates said. There, soul is existence, transcending matter in all its phases. So, also, that soul is only a particle on the gross side of the Absolute. There is finer existence as Supersoul, and onwards. Just as in the material creation there are so many stages such as earth or stone, wood, gold, etc., there is similarly a gradation in spiritual substance. Generally, two - in the lower part Vaikuntha, and the highest sphere is Goloka or the Land of Love.

The Play of the Sweet Absolute

The spiritual existence may also be divided into three basic classes: *sat*, *cit*, *anandam* . Above the subjective existence of *cetana* or *cit*, the *jiva* - soul, there is a higher fundamental, categorically different element of *anandam*, or happiness, ecstasy. That is not only *cit*, not only subjective, but fulfillment of the subject as *anandam*, full in itself, or more specifically in Himself. And this is the main element to be found in Goloka. Knowledge is rather subservient there. Knowledge - *jnana*, *anubhuti* - perception, experience, even of the transcendental, is subservient, subdued, and the automatic flow of *anandam* - beauty and harmony - is the real characteristic of the Goloka section. *Jnana* does not play any part there (*jnana-sunya-bhakti*). It is something like intuition.

The movement there is intuitive, and full of ecstasy. There is no movement by calculation; it is all by intuition (*sambandha-jnana*). How and wherefrom the direction comes, they do not care to know. They are but instruments in the hands of that *Anandamaya-vilasa* or Ecstatic Play. This is Goloka, and we are told that if we have faith, we shall take the trouble of making a journey toward that plane. Faith should be the guide, impelled by our intense desire (*lobha*, *laulyam*). Our attraction and feeling of necessity for it takes precedence: "Yes, I want that." Then, we begin. Just as Hegel said, 'the idea precedes the action.' So, in *sraddha*, we feel, "Yes, I want that thing." Then we shall take the trouble of approaching it. So we are told that the highest position is such, that is, intuitive labor of Love in the Divine Pastimes (*Vilasa*). And that is the conception of the highest quarter, where one can find the best happiness, or ecstasy. One who has attraction for that will take the trouble of accepting it and going to that place; that is given by *Bhagavatam* and Mahaprabhu.

The Land of Beauty

Satyam is the land of the conception of existence; *sivam* is the land of

good; and *sundaram* is the land of beauty. *Jivam* means *mangalam*, that is, that which is safe from mortality - unassailable existence. There is existence in mortality - the material energy also exists. But there is a land where there is no death, and that is considered to be *sivam* or *mangalam*. And *sundaram* is the positive life of attraction. One aspires to live such a life. *Sundaram* is a life worth living. There is such a land in the highest quarter. Mahaprabhu and *Bhagavatam* called us for that: "Here is a soil, and you are a child of that soil. If you analyze yourself deeply, you will find that you are a child of that soil. You are not created for this land where you are always suffering from uncertainty and apprehension. Apprehension and uncertainty are always troubling you; you must cross beyond them, go up, and you will find *sivam* - no apprehension, but the positive life. If you really like to have it, you will have to enter into the area of Goloka, the land of beauty and love. No consideration of calculation, no necessity of calculation or anything else. There, no fraud or deception can ever be dreamed of, so calculation and reasoning have no place at all. Automatically, all is good, all is fulfillment. It is the general conception.

Then, for satisfaction's sake, *Yogamaya* has designed things in such a way that Krsna's Associates are afraid of losing Him, and Krsna also misses Srimati Radharani, or Mother Yasoda, etc. This is designed to maintain the Pastimes there, and not out of necessity. It is not out of necessity, but it is the way of life: as a fashion it is maintained, and not for want.

*aher iva gatih premnah svabhava-kutilla bhavet
ato hetor ahetos ca, yunor mana udancati*
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 8.110)

"The nature of Love is curved like a snake; therefore two kinds of quarrelsome pride arise between Lover and Beloved: justified and groundless."

Srila Rupa Goswami gives this example. By nature, the serpent goes by a

zigzag or curved movement. So, in the land of *Prema* (Divine Love), *mana*, *abhimana* (lover's quarrel, ego) and so on, are all in the nature of dealings there, but not out of necessity or want. That is the way of *Vilasa*, or Pastimes.

Devotee: On Srimati Lalita Devi's Appearance Day, you were saying how Lalita Devi goes out to the streets of Vrndavana, with a pen and paper -

Srila Guru Maharaj: - canvassing right and left, "Come and join my camp! I shall give you Engagement in the Service of Radha and Govinda." And that is infinite.

Devotee: So Maharaj, can one who is aspiring for Devotional Service identify himself with the thought of becoming enrolled in that particular camp?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course, otherwise why does that exist? That is the Infinite. There's no rule of limitation that says all the vacancies are filled. It is not finite.

Devotee: But whether it is audacity -

Srila Guru Maharaj: Audacity, impertinence -

Devotee: Yes - to go and ask to be engaged in *Madhura-lila*, Divine Pastimes in Consorhood?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It will be unavoidable. Necessity does not care for anything. There is no loss in necessity. When anyone finds the aspiration in himself, he will helplessly or unconsciously appeal, "Please enlist my name." He can't resist.

Devotee: This question was troubling me very much. It is inconceivable how the great Associates of the Lord actually want to take others to such

Engagement.

Srila Guru Maharaj: There's no dearth of facility on that side. Mahaprabhu says,

*tuya daya aichena parama udara
atisaya manda natha bhaga hamara*

"Whatever may be lacking is on my part. There is no defect on Your side." The *Acarya* Thakura Bhaktivinoda has given us this interpretation.

*namnam-akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis
tatrapita niyamitah smarane na kalah
etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah*

"O Lord, Your Holy Name bestows all good fortune unto the soul, and thus you have extended into the world Your many Names - Krsna, Govinda, etc. You have offered all Your Transcendental Potency in Your Holy Name, without enjoining any (scriptural or philosophical) hard and fast rules and regulations concerning time, place or circumstance to be observed in chanting it. Dear Lord, You have so graciously made Your Holy Name available to the ordinary souls, and yet my misfortune, my offensiveness, does not allow Love for that gracious Name to be born in my heart."

Therefore Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "I don't find any taste for You in my heart - it is hard like rock. There is unlimited grace on Your side, but I am so mean, so low, and You are so High."

Overwhelming Grace - the birth of fortune

But this feeling cannot arise without being in the relativity of that Superior World. Without that, such thoughts cannot arise. When really in the relativity of that world, the thought of overwhelming grace also

arises. One feels that grace, although he feels unqualified in himself. And that is the beginning. Fortune begins there. Necessity is the mother of invention. *Sraddha* has come, showing such a great prospect to the devotee, and he is very eager to attain that prospect - but he fails. That failure is also in one sense participating in a particular position. He's already in the relativity of the Infinite, otherwise he could not have made such a statement. It is infinite! Whatever degree of attainment he may reach, he'll still be unsatisfied - because that is infinite. *Na prema-gandho 'sti darapi me harau*: "Is there such an attainment in me? No. I do not possess it, because it is impossible to possess Him." Yet, possession is there in the negative sense: "I am so negative."

This is the nature of the Negative's possession of the Positive, and so, She can attract the Positive. The more the negative characteristic is found in a particular place, the more the positive is attracted there. That is the underlying truth.

Srimati Radharani says, "I am in the highest need of Krsna." So much feeling of necessity in Krsna's absence is not to be found anywhere as in Her heart. And that satisfies Krsna. Setting aside all other demands, He wants to come and satisfy the demand of that heart where want for Him is of the highest degree. Is it not natural? Dedication. We are units or aspects of the Moiety of Dedication, and not of fulfillment. Fulfillment is a stagnant thing. It is a qualification in the limited world. But in the unlimited, such an attitude can't stand. This is the nature there. *Ksudha* .

Devotee: *Ksudha* means unquenchable thirst?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes; unquenchable thirst, so the tiniest drop of nectar will be tasted as very, very sweet. Inundating.

Once in Madras, one gentleman put a question to me: "Your highest ideal is Chaitanyadev? Isn't His conception dangerous? Always mad with want of something, crying and rubbing His face against the wall, such intense madness for want of Krsna - that is a dangerous thing to us! We

would be rather afraid to make that the ideal for our life."

bahye visa-jvala haya, bhitare anandamaya
krsna-premera adbhuta carita
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 2.50)

"The amazing characteristic of Love for Krsna is found in the symptoms of burning anguish without, and ecstasy within."

The Joy of hankering for the Truth

Extreme hankering for the truth is in itself *anandam*. "I want only the truth, nothing else" - that is *anandam*. It is unpossessed by any unessential thing. And by nature, the highest fulfillment is found in the negative aspect; the intense feeling of negativity is the highest attainment in its fullest position. Fulfillment of life is in the necessity of the Negative Potency.

Devotee: Maharaj, does that negativity mean humility?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, it begins from humility. As Sri Chaitanyadev has taught us, one should consider himself lower than a straw and be more tolerant than a tree, and never expect honor for oneself, but always offer it to others.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has explained that we are actually lower than a straw because in our present existence we are *vikrta*, or deranged. But a straw is at least passive and maintaining its natural position. We have lost our proper function and become of negative value; we are lacking the positive value of a straw because we are adverse.

We are going against our own interest with our intelligence. We have intelligence, but it is misguided, opposed to the proper order of things. The straw is poised, it cannot move, but we can move in a wrong way. So we are actually in a more heinous position than a straw. We use our

assets willingly to misguide ourselves, but the straw maintains its fixed position without deviation.

In the worldly sense we may hold a position superior to that of grass or a tree, but what of that? All our credits are being misused for our selfishness. So we are lower than straw. We are armed, but armed for suicide. A madman should not possess a dagger. He is dangerous. He could stab himself at any moment - he's mad.

The tolerance of the tree may also be seen in the same light. The tree must forbear his former actions, but we must be alert not only to the former but also to the present actions. In the present time also we may commit some wrong, so our position is more dangerous than a tree's. The tree is only reaping the result of its previous action, but our need is to guard ourselves against our present malactivity, so we require more forbearance than that of a tree. We should think, "I must be more cautious than the tree in my attitude of forbearance. My position is more dangerous because my special attainment is going against me."

Chapter Three

Bhajana Real and Apparent

Devotee: I have heard that some *Acaryas* hold that *smarana* , internal remembrance, is of prime importance as a devotional service to the Lord, above even *kirtana* or chanting; or is it subservient to *kirtana*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There are some who are of that opinion because *smarana* is exclusively connected with consciousness, or more concerned with the subtle part of our existence; so that should be the most effective form of *sadhana* , or means to the end. But our Guru Maharaj, and Srila Jiva Goswami, and also Kaviraja Goswami Prabhu, laid stress on *kirtana* - especially for the beginners. Guru Maharaj says in

his song *Vaisnava ke?* ('Who is a Vaisnava?'):

*kirtana prabhava, smarana haibe,
se kale bhajana nirjjana sambhava*

"Internal remembrance can occur by the power of *kirtana*, and only then is solitary Service possible." *Nirjjana-bhajana* or *smarana*, exclusive solitary Devotion unconscious of the environment is not at all possible for beginners. And Srila Jiva Goswami says (*Bhakti-sandarbha, sankhya* 273):

*yadyapy anya bhaktih kalau karttavya,
tada kirtanakhya-bhakti-samyogenaiva.*

"In this Kali-yuga, of the nine basic forms of Devotional Practices, the forms other than *kirtana* certainly should be practiced, but they must be conducted subserviently to *kirtana* ." And this is the principle of Mahaprabhu's preaching. *Kirtana* has its own special characteristic, particularly in Kali-yuga.

*kaler dosa-nidhe rajann asti hy eko mahan gunah
kirtanad eva krsnasya mukta-sangah param vrajet*

(Bhagavatam, 12.3.51)

(Sri Sukadeva Goswami said) "O King, the age of Kali, the repository of all evils, has but one glorious characteristic: in this age, those who simply chant the Holy Name of Krsna are liberated and reach the Supreme Lord."

Also, Srila Madhvacarya has written in his commentary on *Mundakopanisad*:

*dvapariyair janair visnuh pancaratraais ca kevalam
kalau tu nama-matrena pujiyate bhagavan harih*

"In Dvapara-yuga, Lord Visnu is exclusively worshiped by the people according to the principles of Deity worship delineated in the *Pancaratra* Scripture, but in Kali-yuga, the Supreme Lord Hari is worshiped only by the chanting of His Holy Name."

In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* , when the incarnation of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is mentioned (Bhagavatam, 11.5.32), the method by which the people will worship Him is also given:

yajnaih sankirtana-prayair yajanti hi sumedhasah

Here, *yajnah* means sacrifice, dedication, which is *sankirtana-praya* , or *sankirtana-pradhana* , which means 'predominated by *sankirtana* , the congregational chanting of the Holy Name'; and this is performed by those endowed with sufficient piety. So, in this age of Iron, *kirtana* has its own special privilege, granted by the Supreme Lord - Mahaprabhu's speciality is preaching, *kirtana* . He inaugurated and conducted *Hari-kirtana*.

So *kirtana* has been accepted by our Guru Maharaj, Srila Jiva Goswami, and others. To write about the Lord is also within the jurisdiction of *kirtana* To preach is assertion - to take the message to others.

So also, to be engaged in answering the questions of the environment automatically demands concentration, which is very rare in this age. When one is doing *kirtana*, he automatically cannot but give all concentration and attention. He cannot speak independently; intuitively, he must be all-attentive. For this reason, *kirtana* has been recommended to be the highest form of *bhajana* , especially in the age of Kali.

*bhajanera madhye srestha nava-vidha bhakti
'krsna-prema,'krsna' dite dhare maha-sakti
tara madhye sarva-srestha nama-sankitana
niraparadhe nama laile paya prema-dhana*

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Antya 4.70,71)

"Of all forms of Divine Service, nine forms are superior, which with great potency bestow upon the devotees Love for Krsna, and their personal relationship with Him; and of the nine, the best is *Nama-sankirtana* . By offenselessly taking the Holy Name, the treasure of Love for the Lord is attained."

Mahaprabhu also accepted five principal limbs from the nine that are mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* as *sravanam* , *kirtanam* , etc.:

sadhu-sanga, nama-kirtana, bhagavat-sravana
mathura-vasa, sri-murtira sraddhaya sevana
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 22.124)

"Association with the pure devotee, chanting the Holy Name, hearing the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* , residing in Mathura Dhama, and faithfully worshiping the Deity."

So of these five, Mahaprabhu has given *Nama-sankirtana* the highest position. *Nama-sankirtana* has been considered best of all. It has been delineated by the *Acaryas*. That was especially given by our Guru Maharaj, and the basis is supported by the *sastra*, Scriptures. But if other *Acaryas* have shown preference for *smarana* in any instance, that will be in the sense that *kirtana* may be in the relativity of the material environment, whereas *smarana* is independent of the material consideration. From that point of view, *smarana* may be recommended as the highest, but that is not accepted in a general way. It may be a special opinion.

In *Caitanya-siksamrta* , Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has clarified that there are two types of devotees in the stage just prior to attaining the highest plane of *Paramahansa* or *uttamadhikara* . The devotees who cross the middle stage (*madhyamadhikara*) and reach towards occupying the highest position are called devotees in the stage of *premaruruksu* .

They are classified in two sections - *gosthyanandi* and *viviktanandi* (or *bhajanandi*). The first are always engaged in preaching, and the second take to *smarana* or *nirjjana-bhajana* - a solitary life of worship, without mixing with the environment. It does not prove that one is superior to the other. The *viviktanandis* generally like secluded life and go on with *smarana* ; and those who are of the *gosthyanandi* type go on with *kirtana* , preaching, and also attain the highest position without coming to the school of exclusive *smarana* . Those who have attained the highest plane are known as *premarudha*.

Imaginary perfection - self-deception

Guru Maharaj clearly said that when we are in a lower position, *smarana* is injurious. Rather, we should take to *kirtana* .*Kirtana prabhava, smarana haibe, se kale bhajana nirjjana sambhava* . The Sahajiya school (imitationists) are more fond of *smarana* than *kirtana*. They are 'followers' of *smarana*. They lead a secluded life, and mentally they go on identifying themselves with a particular *sakhi* of their own age, her duty, her place of attendance in a particular place of Vrndavana, in a particular *lila* , under the guidance of a particular *sakhi* , and so on. They are required to go on meditating on all these things by their so-called *guru*. That is the process amongst the Sahajiya school, but we do not admit that. We consider it all false and imaginary. They are not fit for the plane. They do not have real *sambandha-jnana*, knowledge of what is what. They only go on with the habitual repetition of a particular mental speculation, but *anartha-nivrtti* (purging of evils) or any other process based on it cannot be effected thereby. Their imagined achievement is sheer concoction. They are not aware of the facts - the ontological gradation from Viraja to Brahmaloaka, Vaikuntha and Goloka. They are *pukura-curiwale* - 'pond thieves.' To think one can steal a pond is self-deception. We think that kind of ' *smarana* ' to be something like self-deception.

For example, Srila Gaura Kisora Babaji Maharaj went on with *smarana*. Once, there was another Babaji who constructed a *kutir* nearby, a small

hut, and he went on imitating Gaura Kisora Babaji, doing *madhukari* (subsisting on alms), sitting and meditating, and wearing similar cloth. Then once Babaji remarked, "If a lady enters into a maternity ward, she cannot produce a child only by imitating the sounds and symptoms of labor. Many things are necessary before that!" So only by imitating the *Paramahansa Babaji*, *bhajana* cannot be effected. One must have connection with *suddha-sattva* , the real plane, and then all the higher symptoms may appear. Otherwise, all those speculative antics will manifest.

na uthiya vrksopari, tanatani phala dhari'
dusta-phala karile arjjana
(Kalyana-kalpataru, Upadesa 18)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that if one wants fruits without taking the trouble to climb the tree, what sort of fruits can he expect? The fruits will be ruined, or rotten. Without proper progression, it is all imagination - a madman's feat. One must gradually reach the plane of truth, *suddha-sattva*. There are so many planes to cross - Bhur-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, Satya-loka, Viraja, Brahmaloka. Mahaprabhu says that the creeper of Bhakti grows and rises up to Goloka, and she has to cross all these planes.

upajiya bade late 'brahmanda' bhedi' yaya
'viraja,' 'brahmaloka,' bhedi"paravyoma' paya
tabe yaya tad upari 'goloka-vrndavana'
'krsna-carana'-kalpavrkse kare arohana
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 19.153,4)

"The creeper of Devotion is born, and grows to pierce the wall of the universe. It crosses the Viraja river and the *Brahman* plane, and reaches to the Vaikuntha plane. Then it grows further up to Goloka Vrndavana, finally reaching to embrace the wish-yielding tree of Krsna's Lotus Feet."

But the pseudo-devotees do not care to know what is Paravyoma, what is

Brahmaloka, what is Viraja, what is the *Brahmanda*. Without caring to know about these things, they approach any *guru*, receive some *mantram*, and go on meditating. But in such a stage, if one goes on meditating upon *Radha-Govinda-lila*, instead of entering *Radha-Govinda-lila*, he will rather entangle with the ladies and gents of this world. He will become entangled in the domain of lust and he will have to go to hell instead of going up to Goloka.

Carmma-mamsamaya - kama, prema - cidanandadhama. The carnal appetite is lust, whereas Love is the Abode of Divine Ecstasy. So imitation is not success. It rather degrades. Imitation degrades. Imagination is only a mental exercise.

Devotee: What if that mental exercise is done with faith?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Mind is separate. *Sraddha* is connected with soul, *atma*, and mind is matter. Mind is material: a part of material potency. This is also clarified in *Gita*:

*bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahankara itiyam me bhinna prakrtir astadha*
(Bhagavad-gita, 7.4)

Mind is a product of the material potency, and the *jiva* is a product of *parasakti*, the principal potency; and *Svarupa-sakti*, the Lord's Personal Potency, is higher than the *jiva*. The nature of the mind is mental speculation (*manodharma*). That has nothing to do with truth. That is drawn from the material world, the world of misconception. The mind is full of misconception (*avan-manaso gocarah*). Mind cannot reach the stage of feeling or perceiving truth proper. It is only related to mundane things or exploitation.

Devotee: But isn't pure mind a product of *sraddha*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Mind cannot be pure, just as a fossil cannot

produce life. Similarly, mind cannot produce *sraddha*. *Sraddha* is original and fundamental. When the Supreme Lord appears in the heart, mind vanishes. Reality is just the opposite. Darkness cannot produce light: light comes, darkness vanishes. So truth appears when real pure consciousness appears, and mental speculation vanishes. The mind is concerned with misconception. It is an element of the *aparasakti*, the inferior potency. That potency is both subtle and gross. Earth, water, fire, air and ether are gross; mind, intelligence and ego are subtle; but they're all material. Soul is transcendental. And *Svarupa-sakti* or the Lord's Personal Potency, *bhajana* or Divine Service, and Goloka-Vaikuntha are all Supra-mundane and Transcendental - on the other side of the soul, not on the lower side where the mind is located. Mind emerges from the ego, that is, the false ego, and it is made of the exploiting tendency. But Mahaprabhu says, *mora mana - vrndavana*: "My speculation is on the other side - Vrindavana." That is not an element of this mundane plane.

Devotee: So there is a pure mind?

Srila Guru Maharaj : Properly speaking, the word 'mind' does not deserve to be used in this context at all, otherwise everything will be wrongly equated. The residents of Goloka also possess senses, etc., but the affairs of the mundane world are never one with that. The mundane mentality is a product of exploitation, sense-exploitation.

We need relief from this mind. We are surrounded by poisonous thought. In the narration of the *Tridandi-sannyasin* in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, all the disciplines are common in that the mind should be checked.

*danam svadharmo niyamo yamas ca
srutan ca karmani ca sad-vratani
sarve mano-nigraha-laksanantah
paro hi yoga manasah samadhih
(Bhagavatam, 11.23.45)*

"Charity, constant and conditional prescribed duties, mental and sensual

control, hearing the Scriptures, holy vows and duties - all these are observed to gain subjugation of the mind. Mental control is known as the supreme *yoga* ."

Devotee: You were talking about *kirtana* ; I have read that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that *japa* (private chanting) is also related to *kirtana* (congregational chanting, or preaching), and also that Srila Rupa Goswami says there are three types of *japa* , namely *manasika* or mental, *vacika* or vocal, and *upamsu* or whispered. Which is proper for us, and which is the most effective?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In *upamsu* there is no sound, only movement of the lips; and in *manasika* there is no lip movement. You ask which is superior of the three types?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Whatever is internally real will be superior. *Japa* must be genuine, not imitative. Our attention should always be towards the negative side. If we can practice that in a real way, our promotion cannot be checked. But without qualification, if we are very eager to go upward, there will be a tendency to fall down. *Dasyaya te mama raso 'stu raso 'stu satyam*: "May I have the aspiration for servitude." For *bhajana* or internal Service, such a temperament should always be followed. *Tad dasa-dasa-dasanam dasatvam dehi me prabho* .

Promotion is inevitable if we always try to adhere to the lower duty. Eagerness for promotion is the enemy. That is for *pratistha* (renown), and that will undermine everything. Srila Prabhupada said that imitation arises from the attraction for *pratistha* or desire to hold the superior position and acquire a name for oneself. That is the great enemy. Don't fall prey to that *pratistha*, eagerness to hold the higher position. Rather, *dainyam* - humility, is the healthy sign of a devotee.

Devotee: Maharaj, we see in the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* that sometimes the

glories of silent chanting are mentioned, and then in other places we see that the glories of chanting very loudly, as in the case of Haridasa Thakura, are extolled. So, what is the adjustment?

Tangible Depth in Divinity

Srila Guru Maharaj: Only a theoretical understanding won't help you much. Try to catch the spirit of the thing. When backed by the *sadhu*, the *Guru* of very high type, you can do anything. By the grace of his support, whatever *kirtana*, etc., you may do, will be effective. Meditating may have been praised as more efficient in a particular context, but if you venture to superficially try and chant in that way, the opposition will be so great you'll be nowhere - you will turn to be an atheist. It can happen if you don't have sufficient support to fight against the odds. Don't venture to attack the enemy when your position is weak. But when backed by the great generals and many munitions, you must march on. That will help us to engage in real *kirtana*.

The real factor is *sadhu-sanga*. It has association with the higher power. Otherwise, nothing has any value. The stand must be taken on the real plane - *sadhu* and *sastra*. We must cultivate the real thing. That is the all-important factor always to keep up the reality of the *bhajana*. For the weaker devotee, the *sadhaka* or aspirant, the greatest necessity is *sadhu-sanga*, and the Scriptures are necessary for knowledge. *Sadhu-sastra-kṛpa*. Then *kirtana* will be best.

Vrndavana Dasa Thakura says that one feeds himself, another feeds thousands and feeds himself. Who's the greater? *Kirtana* is to cultivate oneself and help many others to cultivate at the same time. But when you have no capital of your own, if you go to preach you will meet such opposition, *asat-sanga*, that the *ankura*, the bud, will be nipped. In that case, if you are *kanistha-adhikari*, neophyte, don't go to attack others without vigorous backing. *Kirtana* means to preach, or to attack others in a sense. Don't venture, as *kanistha-adhikari*. You'll be turned into an atheist. Only after passing through the proper stages - *sravana-dasa*,

varana-dasa, *sadhana-dasa* and *prapana-dasa* (the phases of hearing, acceptance, practice, and attainment) - then you can preach independently (*apana-dasa*). Otherwise, only with the help of someone in *prapana-dasa* can you go to preach.

We should have an immovable connection with reality, an absolute conception of reality. Such a stable position is necessary. Invulnerable. A sure position, what is what - *sambandha jnana*. Then we shall be able to understand and harmonize the differences that we find in the writings of the *Acaryas*; what applies where - under what circumstances a particular line has been advised to be taken up, and under what circumstances another has been advised. Practical knowledge.

Humility

Devotee: Maharaj, this morning we were talking about humility. What is the perfection of humility for the *kanistha-adhikari*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It may vary for different persons. So one has to think out his own way. Humility means 'to not encroach on the rights of others.' And also, it should not be such as to kill one's own self. It must be natural.

At the time of entering the present Bagh Bazaar Math (of Sri Gaudiya Math in Calcutta), there was a festival. From a rented house, the Deities were brought on a chariot in procession. There was chanting and dancing, and the Deities were installed in the new Temple. *Mahaprasadam* was distributed. At twelve or one o'clock that night we went to bed. My bed was just nearby the bed of one of my Godbrothers, a learned professor. He was very humble. In the morning, the professor said to me, speaking very slowly, "Last night, I felt so much weakness that I thought I was dying. I thought that I would arouse you, but then again I thought, 'No, why should I disturb the Vaisnava? He's so tired tonight, and having his rest, so let me wait'; and after waiting a little I gained some strength, so I did not have to disturb you. But I'm still very

weak now." Very slowly, and soberly, he told these things. He was dying, and he did not arouse me, only for fear of disturbing my rest.

When I heard these things from his lips that morning, although of course he put it very gently, it struck me like thunder! I at once went to Prabhupada and informed him that such was the case: "A gentleman was almost dying last night - but he was too meek to disturb me." Prabhupada and the devotees also knew of our professor Godbrother's nature. They took the matter seriously and immediately called for a doctor.

Sometimes I think such humility to be dangerous. The disciple's life is a valuable property of his Guru Maharaj's, not merely his own. He's not to be concerned with only his interest, but he should live in the interest of his Gurudeva. I could not appreciate such humility.

Everything must be of a real characteristic - connected with reality. I am thirsty - perhaps I won't request any Vaisnava, "Please help me with a glass of water." Then my disease may continue, for the sake of penny-wise pound-foolishness. Common sense should be utilized always.

Devotee: Just before Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj left the world, he was in Vrndavana. He was lying on the bed, unable to eat anything; his condition was so bad he could barely take even a glass of water. But I marked that when anyone visited him, he would, even in that condition, always say to the devotees, "Give them *Prasadam* ." He himself could not eat anything -

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, he wanted to travel through the whole of Vrndavana and circumambulate Govardhana by bullock-cart. But Krsnadasa Babaji Maharaj's help was sought, and he came and was somehow able to dissuade him from that plan. Despite his serious condition of health, Swami Maharaj wanted to go to all the places of *Lila* like Radha-kunda and Govardhana, offer obeisances, and return.

So the fact is that anything in connection with God - all types of *bhajana* - all are good. We are not against anything of that type. But we must

consider what will be most effective according to our capacity. At the same time we must not commit any offense by omission. If we say that *smarana* is superior and that the other types of *bhajana* like *pada-sevana*, etc., are of a lower order, how can we be so audacious as to condemn them in such a way? Still, we may distinguish very cautiously, but not merely to satisfy our curiosity. Only when the necessity arises shall we venture to establish the superiority of Laksmi over Sukadeva, or Ambarisa, and so on. But we must not venture to make light of such matters. These are all serious points.

To consider one Vaisnava over another is not a game: the points are very subtle. They are devotees, and we must not venture to place one above the other according to our crude necessity. It is not an academic exercise that as a professor we shall amass some theoretical knowledge to quote to the students. It should not be accepted in that line. We shall always be conscious of the practical side: "They are so great, and where am I? Who am I passing judgment over?" There should be some limit to our adventurous audacity.

Devotee: My friend was relating last night that you once said 'humility is accepting no position.'

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. 'No position' because a servant has no independent position - his position is always on the command of the master. He's always situated within infinite possibility. But he's humble to his master, not to the *goondas* (rogues). His humility must be chiefly towards whom? "I am humble, the lowest of the low, to whom? Towards my master. I am humble towards the Lord's own, the Vaisnava. I am humble there." When it is necessary for Hanumanji to burn the golden city of Lanka, his humility is not disturbed. He is as humble as anyone can be in carrying out the order of Lord Ramacandra. He is fully given, wholly surrendered.

Humility, in other words, is surrendering. Humility means no opposition to the command of the master who is related to Vaikuntha, the upper

section; not to the ordinary street zone, or tiger, or serpent. Humility does not drag them into the relativity of the serpent, tiger or jackal. Their real relationship is with the Vaisnava. That is the plane where the devotee takes his stand. He's concerned with the Vaisnava. And 'humble' means that he does not resist his master's instruction. Without opposition, he carries out whatever order comes to him. He is humble. He possesses humility, *sunicata*. He is not sitting on a seat of prejudice. Generally we think of humility as pertaining to the outside world, but this is not the meaning. To the standard-thinking person, the members of the outside world are deluded they are mad. Humility is not in the standard of madness, or catering to the mad people. A madman has no standard of his own. So humility means to have a standard from the standard world. Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Prabhupada has defined humility as 'that which is absent where there is a spirit of enjoyment.' Enjoying spirit, or exploitation, means aggression. There, there cannot be humility. Humility is only cent-per-cent Service. There is no humility in exploitation, or renunciation either. These two are opposed to the normal nature of the world. They are totally misconceived. They are enemies. They are the challenging element to the normal reality. Do you understand?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: The spirit of exploitation and the spirit of renunciation - both are a revolt against the proper smooth working of the truth. So they are totally misconceived. And real humility must be in the relativity of the full aspect of the truth, not with the misconceived world. The standard is not of the misconceived, the madman.

Devotee: Yes. What about spiritual aggression? Like competition. There's a competitive spirit between two persons who are doing the same

thing. Then where's the place for humility there?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There will be humility if it is really Service, because its object is the Center. The devotee feels his inspiration and direction from there, and cooperates accordingly. He is connected with the Absolute Center, so competition may be arranged by *Yogamaya*. He is not responsible because his necessity is only for the Center. As we discussed, the Absolute is designed that way, but not out of necessity. *Aher iva gatih premnah, svabhava-kutila bhavet*. It seems to be crooked, but it is not; it is the very nature of absolute dealings. It is necessary only for the variegatedness of the Service of Krsna. It is designed from the upper quarter. The devotees are not responsible for that.

Devotee: So we must not infringe on the property of others. There may be competition, but we should not infringe on the property of others?

Our Duty

Srila Guru Maharaj: Our duty will always be to dedicate ourselves more and more intensely - and we shall do that according to how we may be interfered with by the higher agency. We must always keep ourselves ready for that. Cent-per-cent we shall obey the handling from the upper house, without any hesitation. That is our duty. Whatever will be asked of us, we shall do. On the battlefield, if the general asks a particular battalion to fight in the first battle, and they say, "Why shouldn't the second battalion be commanded to go? Why should we go first? We shall die, and they will rejoice the victory in the last battle? Why should we go first?" What do you say?

Devotee: That is not dedication.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course. The military will shoot you then and there! "That is our consideration from above; it is not left to you whether Battalion 1, 2, 3 or 4 will go." Only the highest brains have command. Complaint against that high command means to die - to be done away

with immediately.

Devotee: So, Maharaj, Arjuna followed the instructions of Krsna without question - whenever Krsna ordered him to shoot, he did so. He faithfully followed whatever instructions he received. In one incident, Yudhisthira did not follow the instructions of Lord Krsna; but when the five Pandavas were on the *mahaprasthan*a or voluntary journey to court death, Arjuna fell prior to Yudhisthira. Why did Arjuna have to fall?

Devotion - relative and Absolute

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is not the criterion of the highest devotion. Yudhisthira's achievement was a separate thing. Devotion proper is not connected there. That is some worldly affair of *sattva-guna*. Yamaraja, in the form of a dog, went on - but Arjuna had to fall, Bhima had to fall. The test was something else, connected with the mundane world. And they went to Svarga, Heaven. That is not the highest attainment, but only a show of the outer case of the Pandavas. Really, the Pandavas are *sakhas* or friends of Krsna, but their going to Svarga is a separate outward affair. When the Pandavas reached Svarga, they saw that Duryodhana and others had already arrived there. Although the position of Duryodhana and company was much lower - they were the enemy camp - nonetheless, after death they all achieved their good and honored position in Svarga.

Yudhisthira went with his old body of *sattva-guna*, worldly goodness. A *ksatriya* who dies on the battlefield is rewarded with life in Heaven. Yudhisthira went there, keeping his mortal body, although the others had to die first in order to take appropriate forms for that plane. But the plane was only that of *sattva-guna* , Svarga, and not the *aprakṛta* or Transcendental Planes of Vaikuntha, Dvaraka, Mathura or Goloka.

Similarly, it is also mentioned in the story of the Kesavatara (Incarnations from hair) that Lord Visnu gave a boon that a black and a white hair from his head would go and save the Earth from the horrors of

the burden of sins she was suffering from. Those hairs are said to have taken the forms of Krsna and Balarama. They took up those two robes, but in that instance They are only *Bhu-bhara-haranakari Avataras*, or Descents appearing to relieve the Earth of its burden, and not *Svayam Bhagavan* or the Supreme Lord in Person. The Lord as He is in Vrndavana is entirely distinct.

So also it has been seen in many instances that the outer case is one thing, the inner man is another. The lower personality is absorbed. Just as when the prime minister comes to the city, the state governor's function is absorbed in him, if he wishes. When the king comes to visit the colony, all the officers' powers really vanish in him. Whatever he does must automatically be done by them, their own respective personalities dead. So when the higher descends into the lower case, the lower case loses its value. Then, when it retires, the lower case remains and the higher case ascends.

Nitai-Gaurahari bol! We pray to Nityananda Prabhu. We want to come to an adjusted, former position: "If I have committed any offense, *aparadha*, when dealing with so many subtle things about the great personages, please, Nityananda Prabhu, absolve me of that offense and restore me to my normal humble position."

*sarva-vaisnavera pa'ye kari namaskara,
ithe aparadha kichu nahuka amara*

Vrndavana Dasa Thakura says, "I bow at the feet of the Vaisnavas; may there be no offense in my attempt to serve them."

When we deal with so many great things, such as trying to speak about great personalities of the highest order, we should beg Nityananda Prabhu to pardon us for our audacity. He is *patita-pavana*, savior of the fallen souls. He is *adosa-darsi* - He generally does not take any offense.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread - where angels fear to tread,

fools rush in. Like fools, we rush into the subtlest realm of sentiments of the high order; so we must beg to be excused by the High Personalities. *Apasiddhanta* or philosophical adulteration strikes very harshly. It was Svarupa Damodara's Service to first examine any poems or writings for purity before they were taken to Mahaprabhu. If writings with *apasiddhduta* were offered to Mahaprabhu, He would be disturbed in a very cruel way. *Apasiddhanta* cruelly attacks the ideal of the higher-thinking persons.

There is a narration by Kalidasa about a king who required a palanquin carrier. At random he selected a man from the crowd, not knowing that the man was a learned man, a *pandit*. When bearing a corner of the palanquin, the man did not carry it steadily, due to his avoiding the ants on the road.

The king inquired,

"*Skandam kim badhati ?*" (Literally, "Do you shoulder [sic] hurt?").

The pandit replied,

"*Na tatha badhate skandam yatha badhati badhate* " - "My shoulder doesn't pain me as much as your 'pain' (your grammatical misuse of *badhati* for *badhate*)!"

So, subtle beating is there in the higher sphere, in the higher sentiment. They may be offended. We shall, not with curiosity but with all humility and all respects to Them, try to enter into that garden without disturbing any plant or person roaming in that sphere. Otherwise our talks will be pure intellectualism, and not *Harikatha*.

Chapter Four

Heralding the Twilight

A Pioneer of Exclusive Devotion

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura appeared (in 1838) in a very famous Kayastha family, bearing the title Dutta. In Calcutta there is a place called Hat-khola Dutta which was named after the family. Near Birnagar there was a big village named Ula, and the family of the title Mustauphi were landowners there. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's mother came from this line. Bhaktivinoda Thakura was born and brought up at Ula, and he studied at Krishnanagar College. Of course, he had exceptional talent. He came into contact with the then educated society. Especially, there was a Mr. Duff, a Christian missionary who established the Scottish Church College. Duff was encouraging and attracting many of the young Bengalis of the time to take up Christianity. Gradually, Bhaktivinoda Thakura had close association with the Brahmo Society, the so-called culturally advanced followers of Ram Mohan Ray. Maharsi Devendranath Thakura's elder brother, Dvijendranath, was his very intimate friend.

For his livelihood he accepted government service. He was posted at Orissa in the position of subdivisional officer. He was also posted as inspector of the Jagannatha Puri Temple, where his duty was to guard against corruption. At that time he came into contact with the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and he tried to read it. He was gradually charmed by *Bhagavatam*, *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* and the life of Sri Chaitanyadev. The Brahmo Association had expected much of him because of his scholarly nature; he could write and debate well. But after coming into contact with the *Bhagavatam*, he dissociated himself from them. When he was serving in Dinajpur he gave his speech on *Bhagavatam*, and it was then that he completely separated himself from the Brahmo school, and he was seen to side with the Vaisnava school of thought in the line of Mahaprabhu. And gradually he also read the *sastras* and wrote many books on Vaisnavism.

After his retirement, he wanted to go to Vrndavana and pass the rest of

his life there. But he repeatedly had a dream that he must discover the actual Birthplace of Sri Chaitanyadev. He could not neglect that dream. He again entered into service at Krishnanagar, and there, he consulted the records of the locality. With the help of those records, and by his divine inspiration, he discovered the Birthplace at Yogapitha, Mayapur. Then, with deepened interest, he visited the entire Nabadwip-mandal; and with reference to the Scriptures he gave a description of both the ancient and contemporary holy places in the *Dhama* of Mahaprabhu. He established a committee to ensure that the Service of Mahaprabhu's place of Advent continue. Lastly, he handed it over to our Prabhupada.

From the beginning, the fourth son of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Sri Bimala Prasad (the family name of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami) was naturally inclined to the Service of Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura finally entrusted him with the Direct Service of Mayapur. He accepted that, a little hesitantly at first, but to his last moment he conducted the Service faithfully. In that matter, from the practical standpoint Kunjabihari Vidyabhusana, later Srimad Tirtha Maharaj, assisted Prabhupada a great deal. Gradually many scholars also gathered around him. With their help, he started the movement of Sri Gaudiya Math. He was inspired to preach, and he did so up to the last moment of his life.

When Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura passed away, Srila Prabhupada arranged a condolence meeting in a public hall and invited many respectable gentlemen. Amongst them were the leading scholars of the time, including Bipin Pal, the then principal of the Metropolitan School; and Satish Sarkar, Panchkari Bandopadhyay, and others.

New Thought to the world

They all spoke very highly about Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, recognizing that he gave new thought to the society at large; his writings were of original character, not stereotyped. His investigations into Vaisnavism excelled that of all the modern *Acaryas*. Shishir Ghosh also

once said, "We have heard of the Six Goswamis of the time of Mahaprabhu, but Bhaktivinoda Thakura's writings prove that he holds the seventh position amongst the Goswamis. He has left us such extensive and original writing about the teachings of Sri Chaitanyadev." In this way, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura left the world his literature - he is in his literature, present forever. He has delivered his writings about the Teachings of Mahaprabhu and Bhagavatam in a systematic and scientific way, suitable to the modern age. Our debt unto his Holy Feet has no end.

The Predominant Guru of Srila Prabhupada

Although Prabhupada, as suggested by Bhaktivinoda Thakura, took initiation from Gaura Kisora Babaji Maharaj, he still held Bhaktivinoda Thakura as his *Guru*, substantially. Formally, by the order of Bhaktivinoda Thakura, he took Gaura Kisora Babaji Maharaj as Gurudeva. Bhaktivinoda Thakura selected Srila Gaura Kisora for him, but from what we have found in him, he knew Bhaktivinoda Thakura as his *Guru* from the internal consideration. We find his outside and inside was filled with Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Bhaktivinoda Thakura not in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense. Prabhupada inaugurated many Maths (Ashrams and Temples), and we find that he named the Deities "Vinoda-Vilasa," "Vinoda-Rama," "Vinodananda," "Vinoda-Prana," and so on.

He saw everything through his Gurudeva, Bhaktivinoda Thakura. His attempt to approach Sri Sri Radha Govinda or Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is inconceivable without Bhaktivinoda Thakura's intervention in him. I attempted to write something about Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and I thought that this was the key to Prabhupada's affection towards me. His attention was drawn to me because I tried to give the greatness of Bhaktivinoda Thakura's character to the public in a systematic way. It is my own feeling. He can give everything to one who is a little attached to Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

That was his spirit. He thought himself indebted to Bhaktivinoda Thakura's holy life, so much so, that he saw Srimati Radharani and Gadadhara Pandit in him. This is the highest ideal of *Guru-tattva*: Gadadhara Pandit in *Gaura-lila*, and Srimati Radharani in *Krsna-lila*, in *Madhura-rasa*. He also once said, "If we raise our vision and observe, we shall find Srimati Radharani in *Gurudeva*." If we raise our head a little and search, then we shall find that it is Srimati Radharani Herself who is behind the function of *Gurudeva*; all others are channels or instrumentals, but the real source of Grace as *Guru* springs from the Original Source of Service, of Love. He saw Bhaktivinoda Thakura in that light.

*sakadd-haritvena samasta-sastrair
uktas tatha bhavyata eva sadbhih
kim tu prabhor yah priya eva tasya
vande guroh sri-caranaravindam*

"According to all the Scriptures, *Gurudeva* is directly the Lord Himself, and the pure devotees also realize the same. He is actually a simultaneously one and different Manifestation of the Lord, different in the sense that he is the Lord's dearmost servitor. I offer my obeisances unto the Lotus Feet of that Divine Master, *Sri Gurudeva*."

We are asked to see *Gurudeva* not opaque, but transparent - transparent to such a degree that through him the highest end, the highest conception of Service, can be seen and attained. We can attain it there. If we are earnest, we shall find the highest link, from the very Source. So we are requested not to see *Guru* as limited in his ordinary personification, but as the Transparent Mediator of the highest function in his line. We can see this only if our vision is deep. According to the disciple's depth of *sraddha*, he will see the Lord present in his *Gurudeva*. The *Guru* Principle, *Guru-tattva*, is very special, very noble, very broad and very deep.

So we are warned against thinking that our *Gurudeva* is in mortal

relativity. Prabhupada showed us by his ideal conduct how much earnestness one may have for *Gurudeva* . We have witnessed this in his practices and teachings. *Gurvaika-nistha* - exclusive adherence to the Service of *Sri Guru*. Bhaktivinoda Thakura was his very being. Everything was Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

**Indomitable Loyalty to Mahaprabhu:
Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada**

Devotee: Is it true that Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami would openly criticize Isvarachandra Vidyasagar (a famous Sanskrit scholar of the time)?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Once Vidyasagar wrote in a book '*isvara-nirakara-caitanya-svarupa*' ('The Lord is without any figure, and He is a mass of consciousness'). As but a young boy, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada went to him and challenged, "What have you written here? You say *Isvara*, Lord, and then you say *nirakara*, formless! Where have you found this? *Isvara*, the Creator, the Master - He is *nirakara*, formless?! Where have you found that *Isvara* is *nirakara*? He has a type of *akara*, form, and that is *Cidakara*, a Transcendental Form. But you say He is only a mass of consciousness and without any figure, and He is the Creator? Where have you found this?" In this way he challenged Vidyasagar. But he was very young, and Vidyasagar may not have cared for the challenge. Nonetheless, he did his duty. That was his temperament - he would always challenge. He had to challenge whatever was against the line of Mahaprabhu, otherwise he could have the satisfaction of having done his duty.

Devotee: No compromise.

Srila Guru Maharaj: No compromise. Protest. Once Rabindranath Tagore wrote articles in some book under a pen-name, and Prabhupada also wrote protesting against those writings, also under a pen-name.

Devotee: Maharaj, did you personally spend some time with Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. In my later years with the mission I got chances to live with him quite often. Many persons used to come and visit him, and perhaps he liked to keep me with him to talk with them in a respectable way and to authoritatively explain his teachings to them. In his later years his memory faded, so when he spoke, some appropriate slokas from the Scriptures were required to be supplied, to indicate and support his line of thought. Very few of us could do that. When he was trying to recollect a certain *sloka* in support of his speech, I could generally supply it immediately, and sometimes in advance as well. Of course, we originally heard all those *slokas* and their proper representation from him only.

Infinite courage of the Pioneer

When Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura began the Service of the *Dhama* and Mahaprabhu, he had to do many things to attract the public to accept his discovery of the *Dhama* as authentic. At that time, the place was uninhabited. Gradually a brick building was made, and the worship of the Deity of Mahaprabhu was begun.

The Temple came later. Generally the *Brahmana* cooks he required would not stay there very long because it was an isolated place and there were violent elements nearby. To ensure that the Service continued, he had to undergo many undesirable things. For example, sometimes he had to prepare *ganjika* (hemp) by his own hand, for the cook! Otherwise, the cook would have left. At times, when 'respectable' persons came, he had to make arrangements for tobacco. There were many other trials.

Our Guru Maharaj, Prabhupada, also did similar things, to the extreme. When Anderson, the Governor, was invited to Mayapur, at that time it was arranged with a Calcutta hotel to bring appropriate food for the function, including even meats. The hotelier was arranged to cater for the

Governor and his entourage. And when Prabhupada suggested some similar approach in foreign preaching also, I modestly protested that if the meat dishes, non-vegetarian dishes, were served in the Math area it would bring criticism to the mission; to which he replied, "No, no! I decided all these things thousands of births ago. We have to do anything and everything for the Service of Mahaprabhu." That was his answer. *Vaikuntha-vrtti* - no *kuntha* , no limitation: 'I am prepared to do anything for the Service of Mahaprabhu, for the propagation of His Mission. The Grace of Mahaprabhu should be distributed throughout the length and breadth of the whole world. And for that, anything should be done. No stone unturned. Physical connection is no connection. We shall try to save our internal purity, that is all.' And to save so many souls from impure habits and diet, Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj also took the risk of external contamination by filthy things. He had to go to the place of that anti-atmosphere to save them. If the house is on fire, one must run the risk of burns to his body if he really wants to save the inhabitants.

The Thakura's Divine Vision and Foresight

Devotee: Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda also had a great vision for the world.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. He saw in his divine eye that *Prema-dharma* , the Religion based on Divine Love, is so self-evident in character that the intelligent could never avoid embracing such a conception of Pure Religion Is the highest. Love - *Prema* - the fine intellect cannot but detect the purity in the Love in religion, in its highest conception. His idea was: 'With an unbiased mind, the Western thinkers cannot but appreciate the doctrine of Divine Love, as given out by Sri Chaitanyadev. So I am sure that in the future many of the Western scholars will come under the flag of Sri Chaitanyadev.' This was his conviction, and he mentioned this in lectures that he delivered throughout Bengal.

When Sripad Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaj returned from preaching in England, he brought one Mr. Burchett back with him. A meeting was held at the Bagh Bazaar Math. That meeting was presided over by a gentleman of the name Hiran Dutta, a good scholar and a Theosophist. In his talk he said, "When we were students at City College, Bhaktivinoda Thakura delivered a lecture there to the effect that in the near future Western scholars would come and join the *Sankirtana* under the banner of Mahaprabhu. Now, clearly, I can bear witness to the fact that his prediction is beginning to come true. I heard the lecture in my young days, and now in my old age I see the evidence - it is going to be true. I am very glad for that."

Devotee: Did Your Grace ever have the darsana of Thakura Bhaktivinoda?

Srila Guru Maharaj: No. He left the world in 1914, and I joined the mission in 1926, twelve years later.

Devotee: Perhaps you met other persons who had his contact?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There was one Parvat Maharaj who lived next door to Bhaktivinoda Thakura when he passed his old age in Godruma.

"To spread the Holy Name around..."

Parvat Maharaj said that there was only a partition wall between his house and Bhaktivinoda Thakura's. That was at Surabhi Kunja. From about three o'clock in the morning, Bhaktivinoda Thakura would rise and take the Name of Krsna, the *Mahamantra*, at the top of his voice. Parvat Maharaj described it like this. As though calling someone from afar - with this spirit Bhaktivinoda Thakura would chant the Holy Name. That Maharaj was astonished to see such behavior. There was a cement chair, and when Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura felt tired he took his seat and rested there awhile. And then after some time he would again wander in

the garden, chanting at the top of his voice, " *Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna !*" With such animation in his voice he was calling - calling a person; with this spirit, and not in a formal way, but with a material hankering, he was calling for the Lord.

There was another thing I also heard about him from another source, Ram Gopal Vidyabhusana, an M.A. and Barrister-at-law. Ram Gopal Vidyabhusana told me, "Once we went to visit him. We had heard that a Government officer, an educated man, had become a Vaisnava Babaji. So we went to see him, and someone amongst us asked him, 'Please speak something about Krsna and *Krsna-nama* (the Holy Name of Krsna).'

"After a moment, Bhaktivinoda Thakura then said, 'Oh, you want to hear something about Krsna, you want? You want *Krsna-nama* ?' In this way he continued for some time: 'Krsna? You are so fortunate? You have come to hear *Krsna-nama*?'

"Then the consequence of that inquiry had such an influence on his body and mind, that as it is written by him personally in his own poem, *Sri-Nama-Mahatmya* :

*krsna-nama dhare kata bala
visaya-vasananale, mora citta sada jvale,
ravi-tapta marubhumi sama;
karna-randhra patha diya, hrdi majhe pravesiya
varisaya sudha anupama [1]*

*hrdaya haite bale, jihvara agrete cale,
sabda-rupe nace anuksana;
kanthe more bhangе svara, anga kape thara thara,
sthira haite na pare carana [2]*

*cakse dhara, dehe gharmma, pulakita saba carmma,
vivarna haila kalevara;*

*murcchita haila mana, pralayera agamana,
bhave sarva-deha jara jara [3]*

*kari' eta upadrava, citte varse sudhadrava,
more dare premera sagare;
kichu na bujhite dila, more ta' batula kaila,
mora citta-vitta saba hare [4]*

*lainu asraya ya'ra, hena vyavahara ta'ra
balite na pari e sakala;
krsna-nama icchamaya, yahe yahe sukhi haya,
sei mora sukhera sambala [5]*

*premera kalika nama, adbhuta rasera dhama,
hena bala karaye prakasa;
isat vikasi' punah, dekhaya nija-rupa-guna,
citta hari' laya krsna-pasa [6]*

*purna vikasita hanya, vraje more yaya lanyu,
dekhaya more svarupa - vilasa;
more siddha deha diya, krsna-pase rakhe giya,
e dehera kare sarva-nasa [7]*

*krsna-nama cintamani, akhila-rasera khani,
nitya-mukta suddha-rasamaya;
namera balai yata, saba lay 'e hai hata,
tabe mora sukhera udaya [8]*

Cakse dhara - From my eyes tears flowed; *dehe gharmma* - my body perspired; *murcchita haila mana* - I fell into a faint; *kari' eta upadrava* - the Holy Name created a great turmoil in me; *citte varse sudha-drava* - causing a rain of nectarine current in my heart; *more dare premera sagare* - and casting me into the ocean of ecstasy, of Love; *kichu na bujhite dila, more ta' batula kaila* - I could not feel the environment around me, and became as though mad; *mora citta-vitta saba hare* - I

lost myself in that thought. For an illuminating full translation extracted from Srila Guru Maharaj's informal talks, see p.126-129, Search for Sri Krsna: Reality the Beautiful, published by Guardian of Devotion Press. - Ed. (search for Saranagati)

That gentleman, Ram Gopal Vidyabhusana said, "I saw with my own eyes that all these symptoms were displayed in his body and mind, simply upon hearing our inquiry. Bhaktivinoda Thakura said, 'You are so fortunate, you have come to hear *Krsna-nama* from me? Krsna - ! Krsna - !' In this way, he entered into another domain, and so many symptoms and expressions appeared in his body and mind - convulsions, tears, all these things." I heard this from an eye-witness.

Devotee: Is it true that prior to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's appearance the Vaisnava tradition had become very much neglected?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Very few *suddha* Vaisnavas were to be found, just before the appearance of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. But he adjusted religion in a modern garb, and so it was easy for many regardful students to come forward and accept *suddha* Vaisnavism. It had been much molested by pseudo-followers. The real ideal had become eclipsed, and so for the inquisitive it was difficult to have real entrance and real attachment for Gaudiya Vaisnavism.

The so-called *Babajis* were especially responsible for disturbing the ideal. They hailed from any caste, they could marry, and they simply went on taking the name with no proper practice or feeling of real earnestness for the truth. They dragged on their lives with no pure practices or pure habits, and worst of all, in the name of religion they freely mixed with women. That brought in return a hatred for them in society. Similarly, those '*Goswamis*' who took up initiating disciples as their trade also lost their honor in the general respectful society, because they had some low association. The *Babajis* and *Goswamis* lost their prestige in society because of their imitative character. But *Gaudiya Math* came out with the real spirit of religion, and pure practices

subsequently followed. So the attention of the educated inquirers after truth was drawn to Gaudiya Math and they flocked together.

Devotee: After hearing about great personalities like Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, we feel ourselves to be very insignificant.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. We can but do our might, contribute our might as much as possible for the Service of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Chapter Five

The Krsna Sun

If we want our shelter, it must come from overhead. *Asraya* or shelter is not under our feet - shelter should be over the head. The principal Vedic mantra says,

*tad visnoh paramam padam sada pasyanti surayah
diviva caksur atatam*

The Holy Feet of Visnu who is pervading everywhere (*yah idam vyapnotiti visnuh*) - His feet, His lowest portion, is towards us. *Paramam* means 'very highly qualified, from all standpoints.' That is not to be neglected. From the standpoint of fine existence - knowledge as well as sweetness, the Absolute is *paramam padam*. *Sada pasyanti surayah* - the scholars are always conscious of the fact; this is the real basis of their life.

Man is not an animal, wandering over the earth, mountain or jungle, but the real man is in his consciousness, and he is always conscious of a higher entity. He is always seeing or conscious of that ideal. *Diviva caksur atatam* - vaguely or in a mystic way? No. As conspicuous, as clear and as real as the sun we see in the sky. *Tad visnoh paramam*

padam . So we should really live and move in that consciousness. We are children of that conscious world.

Animal consciousness - the world of death

Tvam tu rajan marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi (Bha: 12.5.2). At the conclusion of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* , Sri Sukadeva Goswami gives a warning to Pariksit Maharaj to be conscious of the firm basis of his teachings. Deception is like a serpent that stealthily comes to bite and kill. Ignorance comes stealthily and takes the soul down to the world of animal consciousness, and we are all moving under the deception of this heavy flesh and blood; therefore heavier 'earth' is necessary to lift us above, up onto its lap.

Diviva caksur atatam. . marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi : "So do away with your animal consciousness that you are flesh and blood. No! You are not limited to flesh and blood, but you are a conscious unit, and you won't die. You are not a member of this dying world, where everything is sure to die on account of its malidentification. This is forced upon you - 'you must die, you must become infirm, you must be born, you must suffer from disease' - but all these are misidentification of your self with your body. This is animal consciousness: consciousness that you are an animal. But you are not so. You are a conscious unit, you are spirit, you are soul."

Not only is the soul immortal, not only does God exist, not only is He the Absolute Dispenser of good and bad - but we, ourselves, are units of the conscious world. So *pasu-buddhim imam jahi* - separate yourself eternally from that mania, from that misconception and false identification with this material aspect which is the result of your degraded life. Be reinstated in your glorious position as soul. And how is this possible? You are *tatastha* (marginal) by constitution, so you cannot stand on your own two feet. You must have some shelter - either mundane within your mundane identification, or above that, you must have some shelter above your head. O *tatastha-jiva* , you must have

shelter in the *Svarupa-sakti* land, the final land.

The light of light

Paramam padam, the Divine Feet of Visnu, of Narayana, of Krsna, are like the sun to you, in the material comparison. That is, *caksuh* , or 'seer,' or that which makes feeling or seeing possible. If He is withdrawn, everything is dark. If Visnu's Supreme Plane is withdrawn, everything will be dark. That is the light of light, and you must be eternally conscious that above you is another soil, and your shelter is there, and you are a soul unit. You must bring about this radical change in you. That plane is your shelter. This world is not your shelter. It is a prison-house to you. This broad and graphic comprehensive consideration must be the basis of spiritual understanding, otherwise there is danger of Sahajiyaism or imitationism. *Tad visnoh paramam padam* . We have to cross this 'Hindenburg Line.'*

*According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* , Paul von Hindenburg, 1847-1934, was a German field marshal during World War I. Noted for its immense strength, the 'Hindenburg Line,' also known as 'Siegfriedstellung,' was a defensive barrier improvised by the German Army on the Western Front, extending between Soissons and Laon.

The Land of Service

Basically, this is the advice of' *Rg-veda* , the first *Veda* that descends from the upper world to this world: "The primary requirement for you all is to conceive that there is a world above, and 'above' means in the line of consciousness. Your highest identity is that of consciousness, and you must adopt that conscious world above you as your shelter. You will live and move there. This is the radical change. Here, you are in the atmosphere of exploitation, but that is the land of service. There, you have to think in terms of service. That is on your head. That region is superior to the stuff you are made of. So do you want that connection? Or do you prefer to reign in hell than to serve in heaven? What do you

like? Consider, and then come forward. You can have a prospect of attaining everything up to Krsna, the Absolute. Otherwise you will have to revolve here in this world of 8,400,000 species":

*jvlaja navalaksani sthavara laksa-vimsatih
krmayo rudra-sankhyakah paksinam dasa-laksakam
trimsal-laksani pasavah catur laksani manusah
(Visnu-purana)*

"There are 900,000 aquatic, 2,000,000 immobile, 1,100,000 worm-cum-insect, 1,000,000 bird, 3,000,000 animal and 400,000 human species."

"These are the 8,400,000 classifications of species throughout which you will have to wander, in the world of action and reaction. You need to select your path. Do you want to be a member of the land of immortality? Do you want *janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi* (birth, death, old age and infirmity) - or immortality? If you want immortality, you will have to pay for the ticket. You will have to take the visa. You will have to prepare for such a categorical beginning. And the bond you have to sign is slavery - to Krsna. *Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa* . If you want to go to that mystic land, the land of infinite hope, prosperity and prospect, you will have to go as a slave - because that plane is made of a higher stuff than you yourselves are."

*vaikunthera prthivy adi sakala cinmaya
mayika bhutera tathi janma nahi haya
(C.c. Adi 5.53)*

There, earth, water, etc. - everything is made of consciousness, spirit. And above that, there is *anandam* or ecstasy, not only a matter of consciousness. Although medicine seems bitter in the beginning, in a healthy state one may taste its sweetness. Our approach to the Divine Realm may also be experienced in this way. So, in *Raga-marga* , the path of Divine Love, and in Krsnaloka, there is not only consciousness, but beauty is the prevailing element there.

Ideal

A ship without a rudder drifts aimlessly in the ocean. But if I have taken to heart the particular ideal of Krsna, Mahaprabhu and *Bhagavatam* , then I am captured. My tuft of hair (*sikha*) is tied with the feet of Guru Maharaj and the Divine Grace. The tuft of hair is captured. The head is captured there, and everything will be done through the head, the part of the body which is most revered in this material world.

One who has a good ideal is in possession of the most valuable wealth. On the other hand, one will only hanker for *kanaka-kamini-pratistha* - popularity, materials of sense pleasure, and money - all these things; but they are all animal consciousness. They are all properties in the land of animal consciousness. A radical change must be effected in us if we really want a life worth living. Such is the importance of our ideal.

A man should be judged by his ideal. The greatness of the ideal he is trying to realize is to be marked. The man of the future, the man of tomorrow, should be judged by his ideal. If his ideal is great, he is great, because if he is sincere, tomorrow or very soon he will reach it. So our ideal is the all-important factor. We may not attain our high ideal very easily. It is not inferior 'merchandise' to be disposed of cheaply in the market; it is most valuable. But whatever the cost, no matter.

We should feel within, "I want no less than that highest thing, that *Advaya-jnana* , that Autocrat. That Goodness Autocrat, the Supermost Commander of everything. I want Him, and nothing less, and I should live and move, and feel in myself that whatever I shall do, at every second, I am meant for that. I am meant for my ideal. I have no time to waste, or to hesitate for anything.

If every moment I move in every way with the ideal in my heart, I shall always make some progress towards it. If I can just stay in touch with my ideal, that will guide and inspire me. In any and every action,

whatever I shall do or undo, eat, rest, etc., my ideal will be overhead. And that will gradually take me out of all these entanglements and enticements, and one day or other I shall be able to reach it."

Divine attraction reveals the ideal

*jata-sraddho mat-katha-su nirvinnah sarva-karmasu
veda duhkhatmakan kaman parityage 'py anisvarah*
(Bhagavatam, 11.20.27)

"For one who has had the chance to acquire a taste and become attracted to talks of Me, My activity and My movement, no other temptation can any longer hold him under its power. He becomes indifferent to all other activity. The outcome is that he can understand within that all other things bear some unpleasant reaction. Yet, although he can conceive that they are all pain-producing, he is helpless to immediately free himself from their clutches. The debt is already incurred, and his debtors won't allow him to escape: 'I am in the midst of so many acquisitions. It is not very easy to leave them at once by my sweet will. Previously, I consciously incurred some obligations, and I cannot abruptly cut off their connection; they won't let me free.'"

*tato bhajeta mam pritah sraddhalur drdha-niscayah
jusamanas ca tan kaman dukhodarkams ca garhayan*
(Bhagavatam, 11.20.28)

"But the *sraddha* or pure attraction he has acquired for Me is of eternal nature. It cannot be subdued or cut off by any mundane or ordinary attempt. Despite undergoing so many sufferings, he goes on remembering Me. His thinking, aspiration and earnestness is for Me, and the more he is compelled to suffer from the pressure of the environment, a firmness in Me becomes more and more sure, and finally, invulnerable. And by standing the test of all these trials, he will stand - stand and grow beyond the jurisdiction of these mundane forces. The more pressure comes from outside, the more firmness he feels in the necessity of My

help to him.

"At that time, he turns his back to all the pains of the world, and he keeps Me in front. He begins to move onward: 'Whatever happens to me, I can't complain. It is in my Master's jurisdiction whether He sees fit for me to undergo these trials or not. But I won't leave my new ideal - I can't. Whatever may come, it may happen, never mind.'

"Still, he abuses himself: 'What have I done? What have I done? It is rather justice that I should be tormented and troubled in such a way! It is not wrong! Really, just dealings have come to be exercised over me. Why should I have committed this wrong? I entered this wrong alliance, entered into the tribe of the *goondas* for exploitation. The reaction that is coming to me is well and good.' He blames himself. He does not blame the environment for troubling him, but he sees a concentration camp within. He blames his own self, his own free will and fate. That becomes the nature of his temperament at that time. He does not look to place the fault on the shoulders of others, but he takes the whole burden: 'Yes, the environment is doing justice to me, the traitor, the ambitious, the oppressor of the environment.' When he's in such consciousness, his *Bhakti-yoga* or Devotional Engagement becomes more and more intense. The intensity of his progress accelerates."

*proktena bhaktiyogena bhajato ma 'sakrn muneh
kama hrdaya nasyanti sarve mayi hrdis thite*
(Bhagavatam, 11.20.29)

"With accelerated motion, his intensity towards Me grows. Then, by My appearance, all his internal and external discrepancies are gradually destroyed and evaporated. When by such an approach he reaches My Domain, or rather, I come down, extending My existence to his heart - then everything else disappears."

*bhidyate hrdaya-granthis chidyante sarva-samsayah
ksiyante casya karmani mayi drste 'khilatmani*

(Bhagavatam, 11.20.30)

Then *bhidyate hrdaya-granthih*: all the ties and entanglements, corners and angles, vanish. Crookedness vanishes. He finds himself in the midst of a straight, plain, graphic, spacious and all-embracing temperament. His atmosphere changes. All the ties of so many attractions to various achievements are at once dissolved. They have no necessity in this land.

Hrdayenabhyhanujnato (Manu 2.1): internal approval comes to assure you that you have arrived in your own land. *Chidyante sarva-samsayah*: there is no room for any doubt. You find that all your hankerings are more than fulfilled here: "I was searching; my whole body was searching."

In *Vaisnava-padavali* (Anthology of Vaisnava Songs) there is an expression: *prati anga lage kande prati anga mora* . In the acme of Divinity, *Madhura-rasa* , where Srimati Radharani is *Sakti* (the Divine Potency of the Lord), She says, "My every limb is crying for the respective limb of My Lord; not only My Self, but every part of My Body earnestly aspires for the corresponding part of My Master's."

Chidyante sarva-samsayah - Every part bears witness: "Yes, we have reached the destination we were striving for, this is our full-fledged satisfaction. This is my soil, this is my home!" Every atom of the body will say it. No trace of any doubt will be found, for there is no longer any room for that. But every atom will find its fulfillment: "This is my home, this is my home! I am in home comfort, I find."

Our Cherished Goal

Ksiyante casya karmani : (The Lord says about His devotee) "And the force of reaction won't come to trouble him, to drag him down or attract him backwards. That, too, is severed." *Mayi drste 'khilatmani*: "I am the fullest of the full perfection. He will be able to trace My friendship."

This should be the course of our life, our cherished goal. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* tells us this. Home, sweet, sweet home. You are a child of that soil. In one word, that is the goal.

Why is that the highest goal? Because that is your home. *Svarupe sabara haya, golokete sthiti* . This one word 'home' is sufficient to attract you. You are wandering in a foreign land, but here is your home. You'll get home comfort here, and you won't be able to deny that. So, back to God, back to home, back to Godhead.

God and Godhead

To avoid the Christian conception of 'God' our Guru Maharaj, Prabhupada, used the word 'Godhead.' 'God' is a particular conception of the Absolute, but 'Godhead' represents *Bhagavata* or the background of the conception of God, which is *Svayam Bhagavan* - the Supreme Lord Himself: This is the highest conception of God. This is the meaning. So more than 'back to God' is 'back to Godhead.' Srimad Swami Maharaj named his spiritual magazine from this consideration.

Back to Godhead - there is home. Unsettled, we are running hither and thither with no principle of life, so our position is very sad. But this is a troublesome life. To think, 'I can't put my faith anywhere,' means that I can't find a friend anywhere. I am friendless, moving amongst foreigners or maybe enemies. But I must have a friend or some friendly atmosphere. I must come into such company in which I can put full faith, in which I can believe and trust, otherwise my life will be miserable. If wherever I cast my glance I think, "I can't trust, I can't trust, all are enemies" - to live in such an atmosphere is to live in a particular prison-house; all uncertainty, all untrustworthiness; that is a very deplorable position. So, by God's grace *Sraddha* should come to us: "I can not only trust and believe, but I cannot but show my regard to a personality of the higher position." *Gurum evabhigacchet* .

Guru - the reliable source

When we suffer from uncertainty to the extreme, we shall hanker for connection with *Guru*, the reliable source. I can not only put an inquiry to him with faith and trust, but *Guru* is a guardian who is my well-wisher more than I am to my own self. 'Guardian' means a friend who thinks more of me than I think of myself. He knows more about my welfare than I do. Such is the position to have a guardian, a friend, a *Guru*.

Narottama Thakura says, *asraya laiya bhaje tanre krsna nahi tyaje*: "If one can get a bona fide guardian, his future is ensured." Krsna cannot very easily dismiss the guardian, because the guardian has a solid position in the Lord's relationship; so if I enter into the domain of my guardian's care, my position will be ensured.

Ara saba mare akarana . Others, who have not yet been able to tie themselves with the Holy Feet of their guardian or *Guru* are in an uncertain position, and they may be deviated by any agent. Their future is deplorable.

If through our *sraddha* we can have a real ideal in life and acquire a real guardian, then certainly our future is ensured practically. Our only duty will be towards our guardian, our *Gurudeva* , and all other duties will be automatically accomplished.

So, to run throughout the length and breadth of this wide world, this land where nothing but various types of exploitation of various planes are existing, is to run as a ship without a rudder that can be swept away by sea-storm this side and that, endlessly, without purpose. It is through *sraddha* that we can connect with our highest goal of achievement and fulfillment. This matter must be solved. Then, real life begins. Any questions?

Devotee: Maharaj, you mentioned that the material world is like a prison-house. Are the demigods such as Brahma and Indra also

prisoners?

Srila Guru Maharaj: They are also prisoners, but as officers. Even prisoners may become officers on the sanction of the jail government. In the prison government, senior and qualified prisoners are also given a chance for a post. Is it not a fact?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: So their position is like that. They are also imprisoned, but their position is a little higher. A duty is deputed to them, but they are nonetheless prisoners.

Devotee: The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* says that there are fourteen planetary systems, and yet when we see the sky at night we see so many stars and planets, it seems that the number is unlimited.

Planes beyond planets

Srila Guru Maharaj: Those fourteen worlds are not only of this physical type, but range from physical to subtle. Creation stems from consciousness, towards matter. The gradation from matter up to consciousness is progressively finer and finer - the gap between matter and soul.

To fill the gap from gross to subtle, there is a progression of more and more subtle planes that finally vanish in the conscious area. The gradation from *jada* to *cetana* , from matter to spirit, or from unconsciousness to consciousness, occurs in so many steps, fine, finer, finest. It is to be conceived of in this way. Bhur-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, Satya-loka, then Viraja, then Brahmaloka or Brahman. In Brahman, we find the real existence of the soul. From Viraja downwards is the area of this material consciousness. In *Bhagavad-gita* we find:

*indriyani parany ahur indriyebhyah param manah
manasas tu pare buddhir buddher yah paratas tu sah (3.42)*

In brief, four stages of mundane elements in the middle are given here. First is matter, second is the senses, third is mind and fourth is judiciousness or reason. Finally, there is the soul. But in more elaborate detail, there are also seven subdivisions of Bhur, etc., up to Satya-loka. In this line, the soul is found in Brahman. *Paratas tu sah* . The word *sah* refers to *Brahman* . Matter may also be subdivided as stone, water, heat, gas, ether, etc. In one word it is matter, but one will also find subdivision of matter from gross to subtle. In stone one will find earth, coal, wood, maybe gold or silver. But all these elements are felt by the senses, and thus the senses are superior to all the gradations of matter.

Then there is the faculty of thinking or impulse: 'I want this, I don't want that.' But further, the faculty of judiciousness, reason or intelligence is superior: 'No, don't want that, it will produce a certain bad effect in you'; and so on. Even more subtle than the intelligence is *citta* (consciousness), which is not mentioned in *Gita*; further is *ahankara* (ego), and finally the realm of soul.

Chapter Six

Perspectives on the Absolute

Devotee: The conditioned soul has some attraction to Lord Siva in *Mahesa Dhama*. What is Lord Siva's position?

Srila Guru Maharaj: His position is as a master of this *Maya*, Illusory Potency. He is not a slave of misunderstanding, although he remains in the relativity of misunderstanding. He remains in a masterly position. In his *Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam*, Srila Sanatana Goswami has explained that when one becomes liberated, Mayadevi comes to him, saying, "Why do you leave me? I would like to serve you, don't forsake me!" In this way,

she again comes to offer her service to Siva, that is, the liberated soul. If he is enticed by that charm, he may again enter the mundane world, but if he has the attitude and *sraddha* within himself to deal indifferently, he neglects it and goes upwards: "No, I have my engagement, my duty. I have no time to satisfy anyone by accepting their service. I have my Lord, I must serve Him."

*svadharmma-nisthah sata-janmabhih puman
virincatam eti tatah param hi mam
avyakrtam bhagavato 'tha vaisnavam
padam yathaham vibudhah kalatyaye
(Bhagavatam, 4.24.29)*

Here, Mahadeva (Lord Siva) says that if one can perform his duty in *Varnasrama-dharma* (Godly socio-religious function) for one hundred consecutive births, he attains to the position of Lord Brahma. *Svadharmma* means prescribed duties according to the *Varnasrama-dharma* as sanctioned in the *Vedas* .

*yatah pravrttir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam
svakarmana tam abhyarccya siddhim vindati manavah
(Bhagavad-gita, 18.46)*

Also, in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* :

*etavan sankhya-yogabhyam svadharmma-parinisthaya
janma-labhah parah pumsam ante narayana-smrtih
(2.1.6)*

Sankhya means *jnana* (enlightenment by knowledge and renunciation, up to *Brahman*); *yoga* means *astangadi yoga* (yoga meditation on *Paramatman* ,headed by the eight-fold system); and *svadharmma-nistha* means *nikama-karma-yoga* (unselfish duty) in *Varnasrama* .*Etavan* means, 'they can lead us so far,' that is, up to liberation. Then, *janma-labhah parah pumsam ante narayana-smrtih* :we must attain the

fulfillment of our life in the Service of Narayana, through *sraddha*, from a *Guru*. This is the positive attainment, like a visa; and the first three classes are comparable to a passport: the *yoga* system, progressing towards the conception of *Paramatman* ; *Varnasrama-dharma*, or executing our duties in this world because the *Vedas* have recommended this for our good, but at the same time we must not want anything in return (*niskama*); and also, *sankhya - jnana*, the process of *neti ,neti ,neti* ,or 'this is not, this is not, this is not,' (*na iti*) - this is all gross, this is all gross, this is all gross. I am soul, I am consciousness, I am spirit - the process of elimination. Perfection in one of these three methods may be compared to gaining a passport. But *janma-labhah* , the real fulfillment of life, is *ante-narayana-smrtih* - the memory or consciousness of Narayana, after death. Narayana consciousness, Krsna consciousness, can give us proper fulfillment, and that is the visa to the *Svarupa-sakti* Realm (the Plane of Krsna's Divine Potency). Is this clear?

Devotee: Yes. But sometimes it is said that Mahesa Dhama is spiritual; it seems to be more like a marginal plane.

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is spiritual. Mahesa Dhama is of two kinds: first in the relativity of *Maya* , and secondly, Siva exists as Sadasiva, the devotee Siva. He may be entangled as a *grhastha* , but he can conceive that he has his superior position in a superior realm, and he holds the lowest position in that sphere. So, as I quoted, one who can successfully discharge his duty in the Varnasrama system for a hundred lifetimes attains to the position of Lord Brahma, who is the leader of the whole Varnasrama system in this world. Then, Mahadeva says *tatah param hi mam* : "After this, if he can continue in this way, he progresses even further: he comes to my position."

In the relativity of this universe, Lord Brahma is the creator and manager. His position is somewhat like a prime minister, but Lord Siva's position is like that of a king. He can even dismiss the prime minister and dissolve the parliament. His position is higher, but he describes himself as *avyakrtam*: "I have some limitation; I am a little indifferent."

A-vi-akrtam means 'not well-specified,' or 'sometimes non-differentiated, with *tyaga* or *vairagya* .' Thus, he says, "Renunciation and abnegation are found to be predominant in me."

"Then, above me there is another realm which is inhabited by the *Bhagavata* , the followers of Bhagavan: it is they who attain to *Vaisnava-pada* or the Plane of Vaikuntha." *Yathaham vibudhah kalatyaye*: "And when the universal dissolution is ordered, at that time I and other ruling demigods can also get release and join them. Everyone may have that chance if they move properly. O gods, this is the situation." Mahadeva said this, as mentioned in the Bhagavatam.

A clear perspective of reality

We must reach an ontological conception of what is what. The measure of exploitation, renunciation and devotion. Devotion is divided into Scriptural Devotion and Loving Devotion. In this world, exploitation may be regulated work, karma, and uncivilized or non-regulated work, *vikarma*. Then there is *jnana*, *yoga*, *sankhya*, *vedanta*, and so on. Brahma has his peculiar position, then there is Siva as the master of Maya, and Siva as the servant of Visnu, Narayana. Above that is Vaikuntha, and then Goloka.

One should have some conception, as with consulting a map. 'Here is America, here is Australia, here is Japan, east, west, etc.' If traveling by ship, a map and so many references show the path. Also, practical knowledge is more reliable than theoretical emblems: 'Yes, this beacon and landmark verify that we have reached the Indian Ocean.' Practical application is superior to mere theory. *Sabde pare ca nisnatam*: a *Guru* of theoretical knowledge cannot help us. One who has practical experience of the way is reliable, and able to save us and give us the real position.

Devotee: Does a *jiva* attain the position of Siva?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, he can be 'Siva,' when he is out of the clutches of Maya; and the Vaikuntha devotee is more than Siva. When a spiritual molecule is free from the clutches of the exploitation tendency, he is known as 'Siva.' *Pasa-baddho bhaved jivah pasa-muktah sadasivah:* When he is entangled, he is 'jiva,' and when he is free, he is 'Siva' (*Sivo 'ham*) . But Krsna said, when giving His blessings to Uddhava (Bhagavatam, 11.14.15):

*na tatha me priyatama atmayonir na sankarah
na ca sankarsano na srir naivatma ca yatha bhavan*

"Neither Brahma nor Siva are as dear to Me as you; My elder brother Sankarsana is not as dear to Me as you, nor even Laksmi Devi. Even My own Self is not as dear to Me as you."

Such is the position of a devotee, a bhakta. He's above Brahma, he's above Siva, he's above Sankarsana, he's above Laksmi - he's above Krsna Himself, by the free, sweet will of Krsna. *Aham bhakta-paradhinah* . This is running in the current of love, not of justice: through affection.

As in India, in the physical sense or in the sense of law, we find that the husband is master of the wife. But it may be that through affection the wife is the guide of the husband. Through affection, it is possible. This is another line of love, and no matter of right. So when the Lord says, "You are more than My own life", it is not a false statement. "My devotee is dearer to Me than Myself. If any danger comes to him, I must stand in front. First finish Me, and then try to touch My son,

My devotee!" This is the attitude of the Lord. If any danger comes to the son, the father will come forth. "Oh no, first finish me, then try to harm my son!" It is the way of affection, and that is our solace.

Take the Road of Divine Aspiration

So Mahaprabhu says, "O jiva, take that direction. Try to purchase a ticket

to that department. Go through *sraddha*, faith and devotion, and you will be a real gainer.

Further, Uddhava says about the Gopis, "I aspire to be a creeper or a shrub in Vrndavana, so that I can have the feet-dust of these Divine Damsels on my head." In His magnanimity, Mahaprabhu offered such great things to us. He is none other than Krsna, because no one can give such a right to anyone and everyone without being Krsna Himself. Therefore the devotees say that He is none other than Krsna Himself, and more - Radha and Krsna combined, because He gives the highest wealth of both. Only both combined as Dayal Gauranga are entitled to give this chance to the ordinary soul.

This is inconceivable. *Anarpita-carim cirat karuna-yavatirnah kalau*: Sri Gaurangadev descended in this Kali-yuga to give what had never been given before. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "What a great loss I am incurring, neglecting this chance! To whom should I tell it, and who will believe that I am consciously missing such a great chance? Who should I tell about my disastrous misfortune?"

*durllabha manava janma labhiya samsare
krsna na bhajinu duhkha kahiba kahare?*

To whom should I divulge my heart? Who will care to give me audience? Such a great chance I am trampling under my feet - I have attained this human birth, and I have just come into the vicinity of the greatest fortune, and I neglect it?"

Nine petals of the Lotus

Devotee: We have heard that the nine islands of Nabadwip represent the nine fundamental processes of Devotional Service.

Srila Guru Maharaj: The Holy Sri Nabadwip Dhama (lit. Navadvipa) is envisaged as a lotus flower. The center of the lotus is the Birthplace of

Mahaprabhu and it represents *atma-nivedanam* or self-surrender. One has to first surrender, and then all the practices of Devotion follow. The petals of the lotus represent *sravanam* ,*kirtanam* ,*smaranam* ,*padasevanam* ,*arcanam* ,*vandanam* , and *dasyam* (hearing, chanting, remembering, serving the Lord's Feet, worship, prayer, and servitorship). *Sakhyam* (friendship) is situated half on one side of the Ganges and half on the other. In this way, the nine islands of Nabadwip are represented as a lotus flower embodying the Nine Standard Practices of Devotion.

Devotee: It is said that Krsna appears once in a day of Brahma. How often does Mahaprabhu appear?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Although every Kali-yuga He appears to spread *Nama-sankirtana* , and every *Dvapara-yuga* Krsna also comes, those are partial representations and not *Svayam Bhagavan* (the Supreme Lord in Person). The *Yugavataras* or Descents for certain ages, are not *Svayam Bhagavan* .*Svayam Bhagavan* comes only once in the day of Brahma, and so Mahaprabhu as Radha and Govinda combined (*Radha-Govinda-milita-tanu*) also appears only once in a day of Brahma, in Nabadwip. In all other *Dvapara* and *Kali-yugas* ordinary *Krsnavataras* and *Gauravataras* appear, only to preach general worship (*paricarya*) and general *Nama-sankirtana* , as mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* (*dvapare paricaryayam kalau tad hari-kirtanat*) .

Devotee: Maharaj, I have a question: in the *Navadvipa-bhava-taranga* by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, he seems to be having actual visions of Pastimes of the Lord on the various islands of Nabadwip; yet he writes in such a way that he also seems to be aspiring for those visions. Is he actually having those visions?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, of course. His vision is inspired. The *Dhama* has inspired these two perspectives in him. The *Dhama* allows us to see it, according to the degree of our devotion. A doctor sees a patient according to his capacity. Higher intelligence can see deeper. Such is the case always. A higher politician can see a higher strategy, and so on.

*ya nisa sarva-bhutanam tasyam jagartti samyami
yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh
(Bhagavad-gita, 2.69)*

"The detached, self-realized soul remains awake in the night of all beings, and the world of exploitation that all beings awaken in is similarly his night."

A detector can see the depth afforded by its capacity. The X-ray can detect to a certain depth, the microscope has another dimension of utility. There is revelation according to one's capacity. Deserve - and have.

*mallanam asanir nram naravarah
strinam smaro murttiman
gopanam svajano 'satam ksitibhujam
sasta svapitro sisuh
mrtyur bhojapater virad avidusam
tattvam param yoginam
vrsninam paradevateti
vidito rangam gatah sagrajah
(Bhagavatam, 10.43.17)*

"O King, Sri Krsna then appeared as a thunderbolt to the wrestlers, as the supreme male to the men; as Cupid incarnate to the ladies, as a friend to the cowherdsmen; as an emperor to the wicked kings, as a child to His father and mother; as death to Kamsa, as the universal form of the world to the ignorant; as the Supreme Truth to the yogis, as the Supreme Worshipful Lord to the Vrsnis - and along with Baladev He entered the arena."

When Krsna entered the arena, all the different categories of persons had different perspectives of Him, according to their inner eye. Experience of the truth must vary according to different attitudes or degrees of consciousness, and this is applicable everywhere.

Divine Sound

Devotee: Sometimes when traveling, we keep *japa-mala* beads with us and chant quietly. Is this proper?

Srila Guru Maharaj: You may do so, there's no fault. Others may inquire, "Why are you doing this? What makes you chant this Name?" But if you are afraid that you won't be able to give them a proper explanation [laughter], you may chant within. Still, of course, you may say, "I have such faith, and so I am doing this. Through the medium of sound I can go to the truth. Sound is the medium utilized every where for every case, and here also, why shouldn't sound be the medium? Through the medium of sound, my mind wants to reach the place of origin of the sound vibration.

"The one who must reach the origin is more subtle than sound. Sound in the ordinary sense is a very gross thing compared to the *atma*, the soul. But this sound is *Vaikuntha-sabda*, which is far more subtle than ordinary sound. It possesses more efficacy, and my sound is a gross thing in comparison to it. When it touches my ear, I can find that it is very subtle, and I am gross, considering myself a bundle of material things around the spiritual existence.

"When this body will no longer exist, that sound will continue. It is undying. Its origin is Goloka, Vrndavana, the finest plane ever known to the world. The finest of the finest planes ever known.

"We know of an electrical plane, an ethereal plane, but there is finer and finer. So the finest element ever known to the world is the layer of beauty and sweetness and love. That is the most original conception of existence ever known to any consciousness. That is universal."

The perspective of Love

Love means sacrifice. If they know the real meaning of love, none can say, 'I don't want love.' Anyone may say, 'I don't want power; I may misuse it.' To be in possession of power is a great responsibility. Love is also a responsibility, but it is unavoidable. We want love, from the higher - shelter in the loving lap, in the loving consideration. We want to enter a domain where everyone will love us. A home. Home is sweet. Why? Because everyone there has some attraction and love, some blessing over us. Home is so sweet. All-favorable, all-loving, all-trustworthy. So we want to go back to home; home, sweet, sweet home.

Svarupe sabara haya, golokete sthiti. Muktir hitvanyatha-rupam svarupena vyavasthitih. Mukti is self-determination; the stage of self-determination, as much as our self can determine; our utmost interest. That is home, that is Goloka, that is the Plane of Krsna.

The most attractive sound is the sound of His flute. Srila Rupa Goswami has given a description:

*rundhann ambubhrtas camatkrti-param
kurvan muhus tumburum
dhyana antarayan sanandana-mukhan
vismapayan vedhasam
autsukyavalibhir balim catulayan
bhogindram aghurnayan
bhindann anda-kataha-bhittim abhito
babhrama vamsi-dhvanih*

"Arresting the movement of the clouds, astonishing the Gandharvas headed by Tumburu and breaking the meditation of the sages headed by Sanandana; astonishing the heart of Lord Brahma, distracting the mind of the indomitable Baliraja with intense ecstasies, reeling the head of Ananta, the Serpent King who supports the earth planet, and piercing the covering of the universe - the vibration of Krsna's flute wandered all around."

The sound of Krsna's flute began to reverberate. When that sound entered the ear of Brahma, he became bewildered: "Oh, what can this mean, and from where is it coming? What is this? It's puzzling me!" Then the Infinite Anantadev who keeps unlimited universes on His lap - His head began to reel. The Total Force who supports all these Brahmandas, so many lustrous masses - the intense vibration causes even His head to reel. It attacks the heart of Radharani and the *sakhas* (friends); and the cows are also with their ears perked up, inquiring, "In which direction are we wanted to go?"

Chapter Seven

A Holy Day

1. The Appearance of Srimati Visnupriya Devi

Today is the Holy Day of *Vasanta-pancami* (the fifth day of the light fortnight of the moon, month of Magh, when Krsna is worshiped with the new flowers of spring. On this day, the holy advent of Srimati Visnupriya Devi occurred. Her father was Sri Sanatana Misra of Nabadwip, who was a *Brahmana* and great devotee of Lord Visnu. Srimati Visnupriya Devi is the Eternal Consort of Sri Gaurasundar in His feature of Gaura-Narayana, and according to *Sri-Gauraganoddesa-dipika* she is directly Satyabhama in Krsna's *Dvaraka-lila*.

She was the second wife of Sriman Mahaprabhu in the householder period of His Pastimes. From childhood, she was devout in the Divine Service of the Supreme Lord. Kasinatha Pandit was the intermediary in Her marriage to Mahaprabhu. She was the ideal of Divine Self-surrender at the Lotus Feet of Mahaprabhu. When she was only fourteen, Mahaprabhu took *sannyasa*, and after that she lived the rest of Her life in penance. From early morning she would take the Holy Name the whole day, and for every *Mahamantra* that she chanted, she would put one

grain of rice into a clay pot. After chanting her quota, she would take that rice and cook it and offer it to the Lord. That was all she would take for her subsistence, so gradually she became emaciated. She passed her days in this way.

Her brother was her guardian after Saci-devi departed, and ultimately she had a *Sri-Murti* (Deity) of Mahaprabhu, and she would worship Him in that Form. And since the time of Visnupriya, that worship is being continued up to the present in the Temple here in Nabadwip known as 'Mahaprabhura Badi' (the Home of Mahaprabhu). So this day of the year is connected with her holy memory, and we may achieve her Grace if we honor this time in her name, discussing her Pastimes. She will be propitiated and Sri Chaitanyadev will also be pleased with us, giving us a step forward in our transcendental march towards Him.

2. The Appearance of Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi

Today is also the appearance day of Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi. He is considered to be Vrsabhanuraja of Varsana, Vrndavana, the father of Srimati Radharani. Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi was born in a Brahmana family at Chattagram, and he bore the title 'Vidyanidhi' on account of his scholarship. Apparently he was a man of luxurious habits. In those days, people who could afford it would have a house in Nabadwip on the banks of the holy Ganges river; they would from time to time visit Nabadwip to regularly bathe in the Ganges and remain for some time in this Holy Place, and then return to their homes to continue their livelihood. So, Pundarika Vidyanidhi also had a house in Nabadwip.

Here, in *Gaura-lila*, Gadadhara Pandit was the Representation of Srimati Radharani Herself. At that time, Gadadhara Pandit was a young boy. He was younger than Mahaprabhu. Mukunda Datta was a follower and admirer of Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanyadev, and he also came from Chattagram, the village of Pundarika Vidyanidhi. He knew Pundarika Vidyanidhi to be a man of higher religious type, that is, a *Bhagavata* type or Krsna-bhakta. But outwardly Pundarika Vidyanidhi lived a life of

luxury. He was a well-to-do man, a general *zamindar* (state landowner). Mukunda Datta naturally knew him when he came to Nabadwip, since he hailed from the same place. Mukunda Datta went to Gadadhara Pandit and asked him, "Would you like to have the *darsana* of a Vaisnava?"

From childhood Gadadhara Pandit was very fond of Vaisnavas and *Krsna-nama*. He had much fondness for Nimai Pandit, when the Lord returned from Gaya. Previously he was very much afraid of Nimai Pandit, because whenever They met, Nimai Pandit would always tackle him with some apparent quarrel about etymology or something of that nature. So, after returning from Gaya, when Sri Chaitanyadev expressed His Devotional Aspect, He said one day, "Gadadhara, from your very childhood you are a devotee of Krsna, and My days have been wasted discussing grammar and mundane literature. But you, Gadadhara, My friend - your life is very successful. You have fulfillment of life. From the beginning you are fond of *Krsna-nama*." So, from the beginning Gadadhara Pandit's heart was towards Krsna. Therefore when Mukunda Datta asked him, "Would you like to see a Vaisnava who has come from afar?" the reply came, "Yes, yes, I shall go; take me there."

So Mukunda Datta took Gadadhara Pandit to Pundarika Vidyanidhi. And what kind of Vaisnava was Pundarika Vidyanidhi? He was sitting on a luxurious bedstead, smoking a very ornate and valuable pipe. His head was adorned with beautiful oiled curly locks, and many valuable pastes were anointed on his body. Two attendants fanned him on either side. Gadadhara Pandit thought, "Mukunda has brought me to this luxury-loving man sitting on the bedstead and smoking? What type of Vaisnava has he brought me to see?" He was disappointed at heart, and Mukunda could guess it. Mukunda Datta was a very good singer, and in a very sweet tone he sang this *sloka* of *Bhagavatam* :

*aho baki yam stana-kala-kutam
jighamsayapayayad apy asadhvi
lebhe gatim dhatry ucitam tato 'nyam
kam va dayalum saranam vrajema*

This sloka was chanted by Mukunda in a very sweet tone, and this created a wonderful effect in Pundarika Vidyanidhi. The *Bhagavatam* says, "Who else but Krsna should we approach? Who can be so kind, so gracious? There is limitless Grace in Him. Why? Baki - Putana, came to kill Him in a treacherous way, taking the garb of *dhatrī* , a motherly garb. In this way she came to try and kill Him; yet Krsna gave her a position as a nursemaid in His group of assisting mothers. So gracious is the Lord. Who else can we approach for our good?"

This is the meaning of the verse. "She painted deadly poison on her breast, and came to suckle the boy Krsna. So treacherous was her action. In the garb of motherly affection she tried to murder the boy, and she was given such a high position as an attendant of His mother. She was elevated to the motherly group. Such Grace, such Mercy He showed, without considering or passing judgment on the worth of that action. So other than that kind-hearted and gracious Krsna, where else should we go for shelter?"

This entered the heart of Pundarika Vidyanidhi and began to vibrate, and produced such force that he was stunned; then shivering began, and madly gesticulating, he began to pull his hair and tear his silken dress, kicking over the tobacco and pipe. His rich bedding and dress were ruined, and he began to roll on the ground and cry, *kam va dayalum saranam vrajema* - "In whom shall we take shelter other than Him?" Then Gadadhara Pandit thought, "Oh, I have committed a great offense in my mind, thinking that he was not a Vaisnava, because of his fashionable dress and style. Really, how great a Vaisnava he is - what a wonderful effect the memory of Krsna caused in him!"

Then Gadadhara Pandit revealed his mind.

"Mukunda, I have committed offense against this great Vaisnava. What will be my fate? When I first saw him, I shunned him; I committed offense. I think that if I take *mantra* from him - become his disciple then

he may forgive all my offenses. There is no other way to be absolved from this *Vaisnava-aparadha*. I shall have to inform my Lord Gauracandra, Nimai Pandit, about this." So they left the place of Pundarika Vidyanidhi, and Gadadhara went to take Nimai Pandit's permission to become the disciple of Pundarika Vidyanidhi.

Before anyone knew that Pundarika had come from Chattagram to Nabadwip, and even before Mahaprabhu had met him, Mahaprabhu was seen to suddenly cry, " *Bap Pundarik! Bap Pundarik!* " In the mood of Srimati Radharani, Nimai was taking his name. *Bap* means 'father.' So He was calling, "Father, Pundarika! Father, Pundarika!" Nimai Pandit was chanting like this, in the mood of Radharani.

When Gadadhara made his proposal to Mahaprabhu, the Lord immediately replied, "Yes, very good proposal. Go and accept him at once." Gadadhara Pandit represents Radharani in *Gaura-lila*, and Pundarika is Radharani's father in *Krsna-lila* : the *Guru* is like the father, and the disciple is like the child. So Mahaprabhu at once approved and Gadadhara took initiation from Pundarika Vidyanidhi. He was none other than Vrsabhanuraja, and Gadadhara was the incarnation of Radharani in *Gaura-lila*.

Pundarika Vidyanidhi would not take bath in the Ganges because he could not tolerate that his feet would touch the holy Ganges river. Before daybreak, he would go to the Ganges and take some of the water on his head. He did not go to the Ganges by day, because he could not tolerate to see persons who would dive into the water or spit there and contaminate the pure, holy water by misusing it. Before worship, prayer, etc., the general *pandit* section may bathe in the Ganges and fast to purify their bodies of sin. But Pundarika Vidyanidhi would rather drink some Ganges water prior to his daily worship and duties, thereby teaching us the proper worshipful respect due to the Ganga.

In Puri, his dearest friend and associate was Sri Svarupa Damodara. When he went to Puri, he felt some pain in his heart that the priestly

servants of Lord Jagannatha dressed the Lord in starched cloth, which is generally considered impure. When cloth is manufactured by hand loom, the thread is soaked in boiled rice water which acts as a paste to hold it firm in the loom. That cloth is considered impure, and must first be rinsed in water before offering it to the Deity. But in Puri, that was not the practice. They directly used starched cloth for dressing Lord Jagannatha, and Pundarika Vidyanidhi could not accommodate this.

That night, he dreamt that both Jagannatha and Balarama came to him and dealt slaps to his cheeks, saying, "You have come here to point out the defects in My servitors? What is this!"

They both began to slap him, and the dream was so intense that when he rose in the morning he found that both his cheeks were inflamed. He expressed to his most intimate friend, Svarupa Damodara: "My dear friend, Svarupa Damodara, such is my position. I had this objectionable feeling my heart towards these servitors, so Jagannatha and Balarama have punished me in this way. See the swelling on both cheeks!"

Such was the nature of Pundarika Vidyanidhi. In essence, we are told that he is the father of Srimati Radharani, incarnated here as Pundarika Vidyanidhi. A slight holy association of this day, his appearance day, will help us a great deal in our advancement of spiritual life.

3. The Appearance of Sri Raghunandana Thakura

Thirdly, this is also the birthday of Raghunandana Thakura. He was born in a place named Srikhandra, near Katwa, in a Kaviraj family, a lineage of Ayurvedic doctors. Raghunandana was the son of Mukunda Kaviraja, who was such a notable doctor that even kings called for him for treatment. Raghunandana was a bachelor his whole life. His figure was extraordinarily beautiful, and he was very fond of dancing. From the beginning he was, of course, a natural devotee.

The family of Mukunda Thakura worshiped their ancestral Deity at

home. Once, when Raghunandana was a growing boy, who had perhaps only recently received the sacred thread and admission to worship, his father asked him, "I'm going out and won't return in time. You please worship the Deity and feed Him - offer *bhogam* for His food." His expression was, "Please try to feed my Deity."

When he was away, Raghunandana's mother cooked many items and brought them to the temple, and asked Raghunandana to offer them to the Deity. Generally the doors are kept closed during worship, so behind the closed doors Raghunandana offered and prayed to the Lord,

"Please take these dishes I am offering You - please eat."

But the *Sri Murti* did not answer or come forward to eat. Raghunandana began to cry.

"My father will rebuke me! He has requested me to feed You, and You are not eating. I'll be punished. You have to take this food!"

The sincere boy began to cry in such a way that Krsna had to eat. Raghunandana was satisfied, and came out from the Deity room.

His mother came to remove the Prasadam.

"What is this? All the plates are empty!"

Raghunandana replied,

"You asked me to feed the Deity. He has taken."

His mother said angrily,

"You, boy, you have eaten it! The Deity doesn't eat. We offer, everything remains, and afterwards we take the *Prasadam* . You wicked boy, you have turned out to be such a rogue - you have eaten everything."

"No, no, I did not eat, the Deity ate everything."

"This is impossible, you foolish boy! Do you want to make a fool of me? This can never happen!"

He began to cry.

"No, I'm speaking the truth."

"All right, let your father come, and I shall ask him to punish you.

Mukunda returned, and Raghunandana's mother complained,

"Your boy has grown to be such a rogue! He says the Deity has eaten."

Raghunandana also petitioned his father,

"Yes, the Deity has eaten. He would not take in the beginning, but I began to cry, and then He ate."

"Is this true?"

"Yes, it is true my father, I am not lying."

"Can you show me?"

"I shall try."

So he was given another chance to worship, and from a hidden place his father could see that the Deity had actually taken the food.

Such a devotee was Raghunandana Thakura. When he danced in *Sankirtana*, it was such a charming scene that even Mahaprabhu was attracted. During the Jagannatha *Rathayatra* seven special groups would

chant and dance, and in the party from Srikhanda we find that Raghunandana was the dancer.

So today is the day connected with the memory of Sri Raghunandana Thakura, who is considered to be Pradyumna *Avatara* . Many more incidents occur in his pastimes - I have only touched on them. It is also said that near the banks of the lake Madhu-puskarini there is a Jambu tree, and according to his wish two Kadamba flowers bloom on that tree every day for the worship of his Deity. Many miracles are found in his pastimes.

4The Appearance of Sri Raghunatha Dasa Goswami

Then, the fourth personality is Sri Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. He was born nearly five hundred years ago in Krsnapur village, Hooghly District. He came in the Kayastha caste. His father, Hiranya Majumdar, was a very rich man. His father had one brother, Govardhana, but Raghunatha was the only child. His father and uncle were state landowners. At that time, they collected 20 lakhs (2,000,000) rupees in taxes. 12 lakhs was to be paid to the king, and their net income was 8 lakhs.

Raghunatha heard about Mahaprabhu after His *sannyasa*. Hiranya and Govardhana had association with Advaita Acarya, and they used to make an annual contribution to all the superior Sanskrit scholars and their schools, in Bengal, of the time.

When Mahaprabhu went back to Sri Advaita Acarya's house (Advaita-bhavan) after His *sannyasa* , Raghunatha Dasa came and saw Him, and became mad with Love of Krsna. His heart was completely melted by Mahaprabhu's beauty and charming Personality, His Devotion and His Teachings of Devotion for Krsna. Mahaprabhu Himself was also aware of this. Raghunatha would not leave Mahaprabhu, but the Lord told him, "Go home. Don't be over-enthusiastic; control yourself. Keep your Divine Love for Krsna within your heart, and don't express it outwardly.

Don't advertise it. Very soon the time will come when Krsna will guide you. He will make a way for you. Don't allow any external show but keep it within your heart."

*sthira hanya ghare yao, na hao batula
krame krame paya loka bhava-sindhu-kula*
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 16.237)

"Compose yourself and go home - don't be a madman. One reaches the shore of the material ocean gradually."

Then, he later came into the association of Nityananda Prabhu in Panihati. Nityananda Prabhu said to him, "Give a feast here for My followers. You are the son of a rich man, so manage to give a feast here for My followers."

Raghunatha did so, and Nityananda Prabhu was very satisfied. He also blessed him, saying, "Very soon your bright day will come." And He addressed His devotees, "See this young boy - he has immense wealth; in abundance he has everything required for a young man's enjoyment, but he does not care for it. Krsna's Grace has come down into his heart, so he does not care for anything of this world; but he's mad to leave his home of material grandeur and become a street beggar. He has become mad for Krsna. Just see this high ideal - devotion, attraction. Love of Krsna has made him mad. He is very, very fortunate. This royal dignity and prosperity cannot please him."

Anyway, he returned home. But one day Hiranya and the others noticed that he no longer entered the inner section of the house. He began to stay in the outer section only. His father and other guardians thought that his condition had become very grave, so ten men were engaged to keep guard that he may not leave.

One day in the early morning before sunrise, the family *Guru*, Yadunandana Acarya, suddenly entered the house. Finding Raghunatha

in the outer section of the house, he met him and requested him, "I am going out for some important business, but there is no one to worship my Deity. So please ask one Brahmana disciple in my name to serve the Deity for a day or two during my absence." As Yadunandana Acarya left, Raghunatha went with him. The guards saw him going with the family *Guru*, so they did not interfere. On the way, Raghunatha requested the *Guru*, "You may go ahead with your business, and I shall request the gentleman to do the worship in your absence."

The *Guru* left. Raghunatha took advantage of the situation. Perhaps he requested that man to do the service, but he started off in the direction away from Puri. He knew that as soon as they realized at home that he wasn't returning, they would send men to search for him on the way to Puri. So for the whole day he walked in the opposite direction. In the evening he stopped at a cowherdsman's house, took a little milk from him and passed the night in the cowshed. Then in the morning he started for Puri.

When his guardians found that Raghunatha had not returned home, they heard from the guards that he had gone with the family *Guru*. They went to the *Guru's* house, but Raghunatha was not to be found. Then they thought that he must have left for Puri, and they sent ten men to that side. They returned without finding him. In this way, Raghunatha cleverly managed to escape. For twelve days he walked to Puri, taking food here and there for only three of those days. On the other days no food was necessary. He was helped by Divine Love, surcharged.

He had already heard that Mahaprabhu was at the Gambhira, the Kasi Misra Bhavan. He went there, and in the courtyard fell flat in obeisance unto Mahaprabhu.

Mukunda Datta announced to the Lord,

"Raghunatha has come."

Mahaprabhu said,

"Yes, look after him. He has come with great difficulty, walking and walking without food. Take care of him for a few days. Then, he will manage for himself."

That was the direction of Mahaprabhu. For a few days Raghunatha took Prasadam there. After that he began to beg at the gate of the Jagannatha Temple.

The parents now thought it was impossible to bring him back, and they did not make any further attempt. But they sent some money with one *Brahmana* and two servants, instructing them to hire a house and offer Raghunatha a place to stay, and see that their son may not die without food. They tried their best, but Raghunatha continued to subsist on alms. Over a period of two years, Raghunatha invited Mahaprabhu to take *Prasadam* at that house, and the Lord did so for his satisfaction. After that, Raghunatha left that idea, thinking, "This is only to produce some name and fame for me. Mahaprabhu is not pleased with such *Prasadam*."

Svarupa Damodara was the dearest Attendant of Mahaprabhu, and a very good scholar as well. Raghunatha was also a scholar - we find that later he left the world beautiful poetry in Sanskrit. Mahaprabhu gave Raghunatha over to the charge of Svarupa Damodara, saying, "I request Svarupa Damodara to take your charge, and he will advise you what will be necessary for your devotional life."

But suddenly one day, Raghunatha approached Mahaprabhu:

"Why have You managed to take me out of my house, and what is my best benefit? If You please tell me in Your own words, my heart will be satisfied."

Mahaprabhu said,

"I have given you over to the charge of Svarupa Damodara. He is more qualified than even Myself. Still, if you want to hear something directly from Me, then I say in brief:

*gramya-katha na sunibe, gramya-varta na kahibe
bhala na khaibe ara bhala na paribe
amani manada hanya krsna-nama sada la'be
vraje radha-krsna seva manase karibe*

"Don't indulge in worldly talk, don't hear worldly talk. Try your best to avoid mundane matters. Don't eat delicious dishes, but take whatever ordinary food may come of its own accord; and don't dress luxuriously. Always try to take the Name of Krsna with the attitude of giving respect to others, without expecting respect from anyone. Be humble, but never aspire after respectful dealings from others. In this way, try to take the Name of Krsna constantly. And within, try to serve Sri Sri Radha-Krsna in Vrndavana. Mentally, be in Vrndavana rendering Service to *Sri Sri Radha-Krsna-lila*."

Mahaprabhu told Raghunatha that this was the essence of His advice to him. Then, He again took Raghunatha's hand and offered it to the hand of Svarupa Damodara. He said, "I am giving you to the charge of Svarupa Damodara. He is the best Spiritual Teacher. He will take care of you."

After Raghunatha's arrival in Puri, Mahaprabhu stayed there continuously for sixteen years. After that, Mahaprabhu departed from the world. Raghunatha left Puri and went to Vrndavana, thinking, "I have what is to be had; now I only want to see Vrndavana Dhama once, and then I shall leave this body by jumping from the highest peak of Govardhana." With this idea he went to Vrndavana, but there he came into contact with Sanatana Goswami and Rupa Goswami - he found the beginning of a new life. He thought, "What is this? Mahaprabhu has not departed - He is living in them."

Mahaprabhu delegated Rupa and Sanatana with the power to preserve the Devotional Current they had received from Him, and to present it in a new light. They were asked to prove by drawing upon different Scriptures that Mahaprabhu's Teachings are the very gist and purpose of all the Scriptures. As in *Bhagavad-gita*, *vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: "The attempt of every Revealed Scripture is to show Me as the Highest Center - I am the Absolute." So Mahaprabhu said, "Krsna is the Absolute. With the help of the different Scriptures and historical reference - by all means possible - try to prove that Krsna is Svayam Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that *Vraja-lila*, Vrndavana-lila, is the highest achievement."

The two brothers had already begun that work when Raghunatha came into their association, and he found, "Oh! Mahaprabhu is here." He abandoned the idea of leaving this world, and joined Rupa and Sanatana as their disciple. Mahaprabhu had already ordered Sanatana Goswami, "My followers are very poor and helpless. You'll have to look after them whenever they come to Vrndavana. You'll have to be the caretaker of all my disciples that come to Vrndavana." So Raghunatha came to Sanatana Goswami, and Sanatana took care of him.

Raghunatha was so self-forgetful that one day as he was sitting on the banks of Radha-kunda and taking the Name, a tiger came just beside him to drink water, but Raghunatha paid no attention. Suddenly, Sanatana Goswami came upon the scene. He was astonished. Up until then Raghunatha had lived under the shade of a tree, but Sanatana said, "Please construct a hut to live in. Don't disregard my request - I entreat you to do this." Then from that time he managed to construct a small dwelling and stay there. His abnegation, *vairagya*, was incomparable. Sanatana, Rupa, and all the Goswamis' indifference to worldly enjoyment was extreme, but Raghunatha's abnegation surpassed all.

When he was in Puri, sometimes he would beg *Prasadam* at the gate of the Jagannatha Temple, and sometimes he would take *Prasadam* at a *chatram* or free kitchen where rich men distribute *Prasadam* for beggars.

But then he thought, "I am taking what is due to others' *karma*."

The unsold Jagannatha *Prasadam* is given to the cows of Jagannatha Puri. But when it becomes so stale that it emits a bad odor, even the cows cannot eat it. So now Raghunatha would wash that *Prasadam* with sufficient water, and adding a little salt he would eat that. Mahaprabhu heard about this, and one day when Raghunatha was taking that *Prasadam* Mahaprabhu approached and suddenly took some and ate it. He said, "Oh! I have tasted many times the *Prasadam* of Jagannatha, but such sweet *Prasadam* I have never taken anywhere!"

So, what is the taste in *Prasadam*? It is not mundane. Raghunatha had such intense faith in *Prasadam* that he lived on apparently rotten things with a little salt - and he was the son of a family of kingly opulence. So much indifference was in him. And in his last days in Vrndavana, he would pass each day taking only a pot of *ghol* , buttermilk. This is not possible for a man of flesh and blood. Great souls like the Goswamis are really personalities come down from the other world, and so it was possible for them to show the ideal of abnegation. It is not possible for ordinary humans of flesh and blood to observe such a degree of abnegation without dying. But the Goswamis created the standard and ideal by such *vairagya*. At the same time, Raghunatha studied Rupa Goswami's presentation of the highest type of *Rasa* or Devotional Sentiment - *Madhura-rasa*.

The Acme of Divine Service

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami appreciated the acme of Divine Service, the culminating point of Divine Service, *Radha-dasya* , which is Servitude unto Srimati Radharani. Therefore he is called the *Prayojanacarya*. Srila Sanatana Goswami is generally conceived of by his successors as the *Acarya* of *Sambandha-jnana* .*Sambandha* refers to 'what is what' - 'what is my position in the spiritual hierarchy.' That was explained most clearly by Srila Sanatana Goswami. And *Abhidheya* - what we should cultivate in order to attain to our objective - was mainly

given by Srila Rupa Goswami. He taught us how we can attain fulfillment of our life in the Domain of Love. And what is particularly the highest point of our attainment, or *Prayojana* , was very vividly shown by Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. In his famous sloka he says:

*asabharair amrta-sindhumayaih kathancit
kalo mayatigamitah kila sampratam hi
tvan cet krpam mayi vidhasyasi naiva kim me
pranair vraje na ca baroru bakarinapi*

This sloka has given us the highest conception of our attainment in the school of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. What is that? Srila Raghunatha Goswami is addressing Srimati Radharani: "O Queen of my heart, for a long, long time I am waiting with great patience to have Your Mercy, which is so sweet to me that I cannot avoid it. It is heart-melting, heart-attracting, heart-crushing. It is so deeply touching me - I can't avoid Your Service Connection. Somehow I have managed to come such a long way, to endure such a long time, but I am impatient now. Be gracious; if You are not gracious upon me, I have got no hope. I will come to the end of my patience.

"My life will end here. So much so, that, what shall I do with this Vrndavana? Vrndavana is of no use to me! What is the utility of living my life? It is useless - it will end with no utility. I can't love even Vrndavana, which is associated with the *Lila* of Krsna. To say nothing of Vrndavana, I can't relish the company of even Krsna, without You. Without You, even Krsna is meaningless to me. I can't tolerate, I can't relish either my own life, or this environment, or even Krsna - if He Himself comes to grace me I can't relish that, without Your connection.

"So please be gracious upon me. You are all-in-all. Without You, Krsna consciousness is not Krsna consciousness. Your position is so great, so beautiful in *Krsna-lila* - You are the center of all the *Lila* of Krsna. Without You I can't conceive of any life worth living. I utterly surrender unto You, my Queen."

This is *Radha-dasya* . Our best fulfillment is in the Service of *Sri Radha* , because only She can fully attract the Grace of Krsna. She is the other Half who can draw the maximum *Rasa* , Ecstasy, from Krsna - in quantity as well as in quality. So those who are serving Srimati Radharani get the highest type of qualitative *Rasa* from Krsna in reciprocation for their Service. That cannot be had through any other channel. Service that comes through Srimati Radharani is of the highest quality, so Her Service should be our summum bonum of life.

This was announced clearly by Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami who is considered to be *Prayojanacarya* , the Guide to show us our highest fulfillment of life. By our association with this day and by our humble attempt to discuss all these matters, we may be benefited in the achievement of our goal. This is the day of the advent of such great personalities.

5. Departure of Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura

Today is also the day that Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura departed from this world. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura appeared about 180 years after the Advent of Sri Gaurangadev. He composed a commentary on *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and many other books to help the devotees coming later in the *Sampradaya* . He was such a great *Acarya*. In his own special way, he has dealt elaborately with many spiritual matters, giving the proper approach. He was the *sastric* or Scriptural dispensation of Sri Rupa-Sanatana, etc. By his grace, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana composed the *Sri Gaudiya Vaisnava* commentary on *Vedanta-sutra*, *Sri Govinda-bhasya* . From such great Masters there is much to be read.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti was born in a Brahmana family in Devagram of Murshidabad district. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit. He came in the line of Sri Narottama Thakura. He gave us extensive Scriptural writings to help us very precisely and elaborately to know about the

Pastimes of Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krsna, Vrndavana, Nabadwip, and the *Guru-parampara* . The *Gurvastakam* we chant daily was written by him, as well as many other important works. Srila Rupa Goswami wrote *Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* , 'The Nectarine Ocean of Devotional Joy,' and Srila Visvanatha wrote *Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-bindu* or a drop of that Ocean. And from Sri Rupa's *Sri-Ujjvala-nilamani*, 'The Brilliant Jewel of the Supernatural World,' or Krsna in *Madhura-rasa*, he gave *Ujjvala-nilamani-kirana* or a ray of that Jewel. In this way, he has given volumes of books and poems. As Sri Rupa Goswami gave the *Asta-kaliya-lila* of Krsna, or twenty-four hour Service engagement with Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, he has similarly given in *Caitanya-lila* twenty-four hour engagement in the Service of Sriman Mahaprabhu. So he has done great Service to the *Sampradaya* and profusely bestowed his mercy upon us.

5, 6. Departures of Srimad Bharati Maharaj and Srimad Parvat Maharaj

Today is also the disappearance day of two of our senior Godbrothers, *sannyasi* disciples of our Guru Maharaj, Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Viveka Bharati Maharaj and Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Svarupa Parvat Maharaj. They both preached extensively on the order of Srila Prabhupada. Sri Bharati Maharaj was very popular; his preaching style was very charming and engaging. In the beginning we appreciated his preaching very much.

Sri Parvat Maharaj was also among the earliest disciples of our Guru Maharaj. He was born at Svarupa Ganja, on the other side of the Ganges from here (Nabadwip). He was born in the house directly next to Surabhi Kunja where Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura lived for some time. During his childhood, he told me, he saw Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura chanting the Name. In the early morning Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura would chant the Hare Krsna *Mahamantra* just as one calling someone from a distance. A living thing - like one man calling another. In this way, in a living way, he was calling Krsna. He was in his old age, and his body was somewhat

attacked with rheumatism. There was a cement chair constructed there; he would stroll about at his sweet will, and when he felt fatigued he would take his seat on that chair. That chair is still there today.

So, at a very early age, Srimad Parvat Maharaj came to Srila Prabhupada and accepted his shelter. For a long period he was posted as the caretaker at Bhakti Kutir, the then 'head office,' a small seaside house in Puri owned by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Then, when Prabhupada began his preaching life, Parvat Maharaj became a *sannyasi*. During the lifetime of Prabhupada he preached throughout the whole of Bengal and beyond as well. He established a Math in Orissa.

I remember, once, when I was a newcomer in the Math, he was telling one gentleman about how he preached on the East side of Bengal. At that place, some people challenged him,

"Why have you come to preach here? Don't you know that just nearby on the bank of the river there is a *siddha-mahatma*? He has attained the highest end of life. Have you seen him?"

He replied to them, "I have seen many *siddha*, like *aloo-siddha*, etc.!"

Siddha may mean 'perfected soul,' but another meaning of *siddha* is 'boiled.' So he was saying, "I've seen many *siddha* - boiled things. Boiled potatoes, boiled cabbage, etc. We already have so many boiled things!"

They said,

„What are you saying? You are insulting him."

He replied,

"This is no insult. Those who are full of all those *siddhas* - they know nothing. What Mahaprabhu has brought us is the highest. All other proposals are trash and nasty things. We have come from a great

Mahatma to carry to you the highest objective, the summum bonum of life - accept Mahaprabhu and *Bhagavatam* . We hate all those ' *siddha* ' impostors who are deceiving the people in the garb of religion."

Such was the great preaching of Sri Gaudiya Math in those days.

To my best capacity I have tried my best to represent to you my humble knowledge of these *Mahatmas* , and I pray that they may be propitiated and give us their

favor. With this prayer, I end here: *vancha-kalpa-tarubhyas ca krpa-sindhubhya eva ca, patitanam pavanebhyo vaisnavebhyo namo namah.*

Chapter Eight

Approaching the Higher World

Devotee: Guru Maharaj, what is the reason the *Brahmanas* of Jagannatha Puri don't allow Westerners to enter the Temple?

Srila Guru Maharaj: This is rather a case of physical purity. They strictly observe the physical purity. They don't allow even the *Mrdanga* into the Temple. According to them, if it is analyzed it is impure since it is made from the skin of a cow.

Also, there was a pandit of the *Smarta Sampradaya* , who had a peculiar religious conception; wherever he went, he always kept the wooden sandals of his *guru* tied about his chest. Once he wanted to enter the Temple at Pandarapur, but he was refused. The *Brahmanas* there told him, "They may be your *guru's* sandals; no doubt, they may be pure to you in your relationship, but we nonetheless consider them sandals, so you must leave them outside."

Such *Brahmanas* strictly reject the physical impurity, with some mental modification. That is their custom. So both the mental and physical habits of the *Mleccha* and *Yavana* (non- *Vedic* races and sects) are impure, that is, closely connected with *himsa* or animal-killing, etc., and generally their lifestyles are uncontrolled and boisterous in many other ways. They are not regulated according to the *Vedic Scriptures*. Considering all this, those *Brahmanas* won't allow them entry to the Temple.

Even Gandhi wanted to enter the Puri Temple with some of his outcast or lower caste followers, but they were prohibited. Gandhi also stayed out. He wanted to enter along with the outcasts of society. Despite his great influence over the country, he was refused entrance. Without his knowledge, Gandhi's wife entered to have the *darsana* of Lord Jagannatha. When he came to know of it, he severely chastised her for entering without him.

So Gandhi was more of a patriot than a devotee. He thought his lordship over his wife was permanent and absolute, not to be modified even by devotion for Lord Jagannatha. But according to us, his wife did right. How permanent is the relationship between husband and wife? For the main part it is only a bodily relationship. And what is the relationship with the Lord - the Husband of husbands, the Master of the whole world? What is the nasty husband in this world in comparison with the Lord of the whole universe? For a national cause, or the cause of his political creed, Gandhi wanted to check his wife's going to the Temple, as though God were within the jurisdiction of politics.

Haridasa Thakura never entered the Jagannatha Temple, nor did Rupa and Sanatana. Not only that, but Sanatana Goswami even avoided the main streets where the servitors of the Jagannatha Temple would usually pass. He did not walk there, giving respect to the current laws and by-laws (of the *Pandas* , the *Brahmanas* , whose edicts were above the jurisdiction of the king). Furthermore, Sanatana Goswami wrote in *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* that the devotees should try to follow all the rules and

regulations he had listed therein, and any further practices that were not mentioned should be ascertained by noting the current practices in the Temple of Jagannatha. He was so catholic in his faith in Mahaprabhu. In other words, whatever transpired there in the presence of Mahaprabhu should be taken by us as approved by Him, so we won't dare to interfere with that. He is above law. His Will is law - law comes from His Sweet Will. This principle we must not forget.

Designed and Destined by the Absolute

Everything is not only designed, but also destined by Him. The whole universe is designed and destined according to His Sweet Will. His position is so high and unchallengable; and it is Absolute Good. Rules and regulations are created only to take us to the Absolute Good, but the Absolute Good is not under those rules or any law. The Absolute is independent, above everything. Krsna-lila is the nearest approach to the Absolute Good Himself. He is whimsical. If we realize that much, that is the best conception. To place any restriction over the Absolute Good is to commit suicide. Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: - because it is not only good, but Absolute Good. Our intellect cannot comprehend it. Once Swami Maharaj and myself had a talk here. Then after going from here to that blue house where Swami Maharaj stayed for three weeks, his disciple Acyutananda asked him, "What sort of talk did you have with Sridhar Maharaj?" Swami Maharaj replied to him, "If you hear that, you will faint." What does it mean, 'faint'? It means, "It is beyond the reach of your consciousness, unintelligible to you in your present stage of realization."

Once Ramanujacarya wanted to modify the rules and regulations that are practiced in the Jagannatha Temple. While contemplating in this way, he slept on a bedstead, and when he awoke he found that his body along with the bedstead was cast to Sri Kurmam of Ganjam District, in South

India, some hundreds of miles away from the Jagannatha Temple.

He suddenly awoke. "Where am I?" He thought, "You gave me inspiration by instructing me in a dream to modify the existing rules and regulations that are being practiced in the Temples, and now why do You oppose me? I wanted to modify the current practices of rules and regulations at the Jagannatha Temple." Then he again dreamt of the Lord telling him, "No, don't modify here! Go elsewhere. You got the dream for the sake of other Temples, not here. Go and preach your regulations in all other Temples save and except this Temple."

Pundarika Vidyanidhi is considered to be the incarnation of Srimati Radharani's father, here in *Gaura-lila*. He thought, "What are these *Pandas*? They are awkward people - they do not know what is pure or impure. Indiscriminately they use starched cloth for dressing the Jagannatha Deity." At night he found that Jagannatha and Balarama, two Brothers, had come to his bedside and were slapping him on both cheeks. In the morning he found that his cheeks were swollen. Others asked him, "Why are your cheeks so swollen?" He had to recount the incident. In effect, the Lord was saying, "This is not the place to suggest any change in the regulation that is going on under My direction - don't interfere!"

So there is some special grant and there are some special rules for that place. He is Absolute, unquestionable. Our inquiries need only be for the purpose of understanding something of the inevitability of how everything enters into the Absolute Good. Any law ever conceived of ultimately enters into the Absolute Goodness. Mostly, this is a matter beyond our conceptions.

Patita-pavana Jagannatha Sarvesvara ,Vrndavanacandra Sarva-rasera Akara. When enumerating one hundred and twenty Names of Krsna (*Sri-KrsnaVimsottara-sata-Nama*), Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura mentions at the end, *Patita-pavana* : Jagannatha has come to save the fallen; and Krsna's special quality is that He is the Emporium of all Rasas: *Vrndavanacandra Sarvarasera Akara* - the very Source of all types of

ecstasy, Personified. That is Krsna. Mahaprabhu is also *Patita-pavana* . He passed the major portion of His life there in Jagannatha Puri. *Patita-pavana* means 'Savior of the fallen.' Everything has its speciality. As a doctor may prescribe medicine with a free diet except for restrictions on only two or three items, similarly in the case of the Temple of Lord Jagannatha we also see great liberality, with the exception of a few items.

When I first began to appreciate Mahaprabhu and came to this line, I thought that if Mahaprabhu is the Incarnation of God, then why didn't He overthrow the non-Vedic rule? Why did he tolerate the non-Vedic rule here in India? He could have overthrown it easily. That was a question. But gradually I came to realize that this was a very trifling matter. The ruling power or political life has nothing to do with spiritual life.

Queen Kunti rather welcomed adversity. She prayed, "Keep me always in a dangerous position. That will be convenient for me to pray for Your Grace. And ordinary worldly favorable circumstances will encourage me to ignore Your valuable Grace. So always keep me in adversity." That was her prayer. So the political environment, social environment - all other campaigns have no value. According to the result of our karma we shall be placed in a particular environment, and we must start our spiritual life from wherever we are placed; we must begin our work of conquering all those *samskaras* that comprise the mental encasement we are living in.

Crossing the walls of misunderstanding

Tat te 'nukampam susamiksamanah. We should not only live in our present position without complaint, but moreover, we shall have to consider it as really necessary for our upliftment. In this way, we have to accept what ever adversities that come to us as the Grace of the Lord. We must cope, with this positive angle of vision of goodness:

"This is my real necessity. There is no error in the calculation of the

Lord. This test has been extended to me for my benefit. To stand, to face and cross this opposition is my chance to have my progress in life. This test has been given by Krsna to facilitate my progressive life." In the *Bhagavatam* we are advised to face all adverse circumstances in such an optimistic way. Then very easily and swiftly we shall cross these walls of misunderstanding, this *Maya*, and we will be liberated, and more - we will have participation in Krsna consciousness, the life of dedication.

Distinguishing Form and Substance

Devotee: Maharaj, I have a question. I have heard two things. One, that Vaisnava *sannyasa* is the devotional line; and I have also heard that it is a formality of *Varnasrama-dharma*. What is it really?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The outer touch of *sannyasa* is within the *Varnasrama-dharma* (socio-religious system), but it also has its positive side. Both negative and positive sides are to be considered. *Danda* means 'punishment,' as well as 'staff.' The three *dandas* represent thought, word and deed. On the negative side, the three *dandas* of the symbolic triple staff or *tridanda* that the Vaisnava *sannyasi* accepts indicate that he should not use his thought, word and deed for any mundane or exploitative aim and object. But the positive side is that he will punish his thought, word and deed - to engage them in the Service of Krsna, Narayana.

Then the function becomes Vaisnavism. Those who do not believe in the positive side of life may accept *sannyasa* only as abstinence from using their thought, word and deed for any mundane purpose. They will prefer *mauna*, silence. But the Vaisnava *sannyasi* will prefer *Krsna-kirtana*, singing the Glories of the Lord. They have the positive side.

So, to check these three aspects of life from mingling with the incidents of this mundane world is only one side. But the other side is to use them for the spiritual object. That is Vaisnava *sannyasa*.

Devotee: Doesn't a *brahmacari* or a *grhastha* also utilize his thought, word and deed for the spiritual objective? Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course; but the renounced order or order of *sannyasa* is a special emblem, a reminder. It doesn't follow that one who has not taken *sannyasa* will not engage his faculties in Spiritual Service. A *grhastha Paramahansa* who is a *Parsada-bhakta* (Associate-servitor) is also possible, without *sannyasa* . He may not necessarily have a sacred thread either.

The necessity is only to remind us of that life. That is healthy. The sacred thread, the red cloth, the *danda* - they always caution us: "Think that you have dedicated your life for the spiritual objective; you are meant only for this, so be alert. Don't misuse your red cloth, your sacred thread, the *Tulasi-mala*, etc." They will remind us always. They have their utility.

Asiddha-mahatma (perfected great soul) may not have red cloth. Sanatana Goswami and others wore ordinary white cloth. They accepted the minimum necessity of garments. No red cloth, no *danda*, no sacred thread. Pure life is possible without those things. But for the beginners these things will be helpful, so they are introduced into the society of the Vaisnava school, in the lower plane. And sometimes the higher also come to accept these lower emblems, as, for example, Mahaprabhu took *sannyasa* .

Such an emblem or the dress of a world *Acarya* is also there to help the public to give proper respect to the wearer. If he is in ordinary dress the people won't show any respect or give any attention to his words and teachings. If a policeman or soldier is in his uniform, people will show some respect to the police or the military. But a military man or policeman may patrol in plain dress also, and do even higher service. Still, the uniform is necessary to regulate the society.

So this is something like a uniform. The society should learn to take them as the Teachers, the holy men, and feel, "We should deal with them

very gently, for our future benefit." The society will also reap that benefit; and that holy man will also gain some instruction: "Oh, I should not mix with anyone and everyone. It should be seen that my practices keep up the standard, the model of the Teachers." Otherwise, independent of such symbols a man can culture his spiritual life, without taking the role of a *brahmacari*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* or *sannyasi*. Internally, he can improve his heart.

Devotee: Maharaj, how does one understand, or deal with, the fall-down of a *sannyasi* or *brahmacari*? What is the correct understanding?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Generally we shall take it that there was some offense for which he could not keep the standard of life that was expected of him by his Guru Maharaj. That should be the general way of thinking about them. Some previous offense is taking its course and not allowing him to go on smoothly in the way of his realization. It suddenly appeared and checked him. In particular cases it may be *Vaisnava-aparadha* or offense against a Vaisnava, and sometimes in general cases previous bad *karma* may have come and stood in the way of his progress.

The Vigilant Eye of the Guardian

We must always be cautious with our free choice. A minor requires the vigilant eye of the major guardian; in our immature stage our free will is surrounded by many deviations. Thus, in our lower stage it will be safe to be constantly under the guidance of a bona fide guardian until we attain promotion to the major stage. This is necessary.

Initiation and karma

Devotee: So, Guru Maharaj, if one has initiation and his *karma* has been removed, how is it possible for his previous *karma* to check him?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Do you think that by initiation all *karma* is finished at once? That is not claimed anywhere. The disciples are given a

chance - admission. When a doctor has accepted a patient, it does not mean that he is immediately cured; he must follow the direction of the doctor - take proper diet and medicine - then he may expect that he will be cured shortly. To call the doctor and have his prescription does not mean that the patient is fully cured. This is not practical thinking. Why hover in the theoretical, imaginary world?

Devotee: I was told in a religious mission I joined that at the time of initiation all previous *karma* is taken away. It's not like that?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Such a statement is only meant in the context that when you have called for a good doctor and accepted his treatment, your cure is guaranteed. Otherwise, we see that so many veterans are going down. If the *Guru* is so great as to be able to create a great revolution in the world, and he has given *mantra* to the disciples he has accepted, yet many of them are also falling back - why?

The initiation is a recommendation. It is not final. Cure is guaranteed under the treatment of a good doctor. But if as a patient you don't care to accept his guidance, and secretly indulge in an evil diet, of what value is your doctor? When you have a good doctor your cure is almost guaranteed. But you have to follow him. And also it is possible that if you are becoming a little ill and your doctor comes to know that 'my patient has taken this bad diet' or 'he did not use my medicine' - then the doctor will again take up the case more seriously, and he will cure you. We may receive such help from the *Guru* and Vaisnava, but our free choice is never snatched away.

Real Taste for the Truth

Until and unless we find in our heart a real taste for the Truth, we are not safe. First, over the surface, spiritual life begins with *sraddha*, faith, and underground with *sukrti*, or special merit. Next is *sadhu-sanga*, our company with the *sadhu*. Within that is our surrender to *Guru*. Then *bhajana*, our serving life in various forms such as *sravana*, *kirtana*

,*prasada-sevana* , or hearing, chanting, respecting the Lord's Remnants, etc., begins. Then *anartha-nivrtti* - our attraction for objects other than Krsna, objects other than God, diminishes. Then *nistha* - continued attempt for the Service, and not for otherwise. Then *ruci*, taste, will be created.

Real taste for the truth will be created, that is, awakened in our heart. We are safe then, but not before that. When spontaneous taste for the truth is awakened within us, we are safe. We can make fair progress from that time. Prior to that we must remain under the guardian. Taste will take me. "I have acquired the taste of sweetness, so automatically I shall run towards that which is very sweet." Until and unless we find that the Truth is sweet, Krsna is sweet, we are not safe in our approach towards Him. So many distractions may take us hither and thither.

The Guru Principle

Devotee: Maharaj, is the Guru also under the law of *karma*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: He is not under the law of *karma*. *Guru*, as I have mentioned before from the examples of the *sadhus* and the Scriptures, is generally of three kinds: one comes from Vaikuntha, or the land of wholesale truth. He comes here as an agent to take the souls up. Another *Guru* has one step here, another step there, and he carries persons from here to there. The last type of *Guru* has two feet here, but his eyes are fixed there, and he takes persons along with him to that Plane.

Chapter Ten

Supersubjective Reality

Devotee: It was very nice at your birthplace; I enjoyed that very much -

Srila Guru Maharaj: - enjoyed?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is not to be enjoyed. We should not use that expression 'to enjoy' about any place of reverence. We should try to see with only a serving attitude. Higher existence is to be tackled only with awe, reverence, and serving attitude. Otherwise, we shall be anthropomorphists; we shall take one thing for another. *Martya-buddhi - aparadha*. It will be offense. Whenever we shall approach the higher subjective realm, we should feel that "I am not seeing; I am not the subject, but that is seeing me." Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is the supersubjective element. For example, when we stand before the *Sri Murti*, the Deity, our attitude should be, "I am not seeing Him, He is seeing me." He's the seer. We have to approach the transcendental world not as a seer, but as we are being seen by Him. We are being bathed, cleansed by the ray of His vision. Can you understand this?

Devotee: Yes, yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Our whole approach should be like this, otherwise we shall see mundane things and imagine them to be spiritual. We won't come practically in connection with that reality. The reality is supersubjective. Taking this world as the object, we are a subject. But when I am going to have a touch of the Supersubjective, I must know that He is all-seer, all-feeler, all-hearer. The very basis of spiritual life is like this. Then we shall come in contact with the higher reality; otherwise we shall go on plodding in the mud of imagination. The attitude should be to want to be utilized by Him, and try for any chance of serving Him: "I have come here to serve, and not to enjoy the scenery." Can you feel this?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: This will take us to connection with the higher substance - subjective, super-subjective, super- super- super- super-subjective - the very fine, finer, finest - in this way, in the sphere of consciousness. So *jnana-sunya* - one should surrender himself: "How can I be utilized by Him?" This is the way. Otherwise, what is the use of sight-seeing? Enjoy the scenery - that is offensive.

Devotee: When the environment comes to attack us, how can we see that as Krsna?

Srila Guru Maharaj: When the environment is unfavorable?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: We shall try to find out the Supreme Will there. We should feel, "I have done something wrong, so this is coming to control me and to exact the reaction for my offenses. *Tat te 'nukampam susamiksamano*. In the perfect vision, we are not to quarrel with the environment. "Not even a straw can move without the Supreme Will, without the order of the Supreme Will. So, whatever is coming to attack me is my necessity. Just that is necessary for me, to correct me."

Just as when the mother is punishing the child, she does so only with the good will to correct the child. Similarly, the Absolute has got no vindictive nature to punish me, but His dealings are only for my correction. We shall have to see and approach in that way.

Tat te 'nukampam susmiksamano bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam: "Whatever undesirable I find here is the result of my previous *karma* , and by the good will al the Supreme, that previous *karma* is going to be finished. I will be relieved. I will be made fit for higher; service to Him, so this has come." That is the advice in *Bhagavatam*. Don't quarrel with the environment. Try to be adjusted with it; correct your own ego.

Everything is all right.

Your ego is demanding some sort of comfort from the environment. That is the cause of this hitch. There's no hitch in the outside, no ailment; but within, you ego creates the problem. That false ego should be dissolved, and the liquid nectar will flow and place you within the highest plane, the plane where there is no complaint. The smooth movement, affectionate movement of the most fundamental plane: your soul will find yourself standing and walking in that plane. And the false friends - the circumstances we think to be friends but which are really all false - those false friends will be withdrawn. That is *nirguna*, the causeless flow of welfare, most fundamental in the Absolute Plane. That is *Bhakti* proper. *Bhakti* means *seva* , service - Service Divine. That is a causeless wave. The deepest wave, the wave of the deepest plane. That is causeless and that is irresistible. That means no beginning, no end. Eternal flow. And only my soul can take a stand in that plane and move in harmony with that plane.

Katha ganam natyam gamanam. In Brahma-samhita it is mentioned, "All the talks there are as sweet as song; all the walking there, movement, is as sweet as dancing." In this way, everything is sweet. That is the harmonious movement plane. In Vrndavana. We have to go back to that home.

We have come out with the spirit of colonization in a foreign land, with the bad object of exploitation. For the purpose of exploitation we have come to colonize in this material world, and as a reaction we suffer. The whole cover must be eliminated, and our person within, the finest ego, must emerge. Within this gross mischievous ego there is the finer ego, soul; and that is the child of that soil. Do you understand?

Devotee: Yes. Sometimes I understand -

Srila Guru Maharaj: So, faultfinding will take us in the wrong direction. Finding fault in others is the negative side. We should feel,

"Cent-per-cent I shall engage my attention to correct myself. My responsibility is there. My main responsibility is to correct myself." 'Physician cure thyself.' That should be the principle of any bona fide student of this Krsna consciousness. That is the positive side; and the negative side, indirect side, is to judge others' practices and how to associate with them. We shall associate with the good and we shall avoid those who are not up to standard. But this is the negative side, and this is not as important as the positive side. We shall be optimistic to see good everywhere, and for ourselves we should think, "My knowledge and angle of vision is bad, so I can't see others properly." 'Physician cure thyself.'

If our *acara* or our own practices are well, only then can we have some qualification for preaching to others. How can one who is not in a normal position try to bring others to a normal position? If we shall take the Divine Name, there are also many considerations. Mainly there are ten kinds of offenses to avoid, which deny us proper conception. Proper conception will help proper dealing and positive attainment, which is how to get out of the negative side. Maya means misconception, misunderstanding, misleading. We are misleading the environment.

The difficulty is all apparent and suicidal. Sometimes we want causeless mercy; at the same time we can't tolerate others in that same line. We go to judge in the case of others: "Why should he receive causeless mercy? He has got so many defects, so much anti-attitude and disqualification, why should he be accepted or given any chance?" But for us - we want, "Don't come to judge me, otherwise I have no hope, my Lord."

Jnana-sunya-bhakti. "If You come to judge, I have got no hope. Please grant grace, then I can hope to approach You, to offer myself to make progress towards You; if You become very lenient, not to find fault with me"; but if at the same time, in the same breath, we say, "Why should this disqualified man get any grace? Why should he get some mercy and affection?" that is hypocrisy in us, and that causes a great deal of difficulty within us. It is suicidal.

This is *Vaisnava-ninda*, *Vaisnava-aparadha* - offense to the devotee. A devotee may be accepted by Him, and gradually he will be purified; but we are very eager to find fault in him. That is most dangerous for our own progress; it is suicidal. If in my case I want something higher, but in the case of others I can't tolerate the same behavior of the Lord, that is a most difficult position.

Generally that is the basis of *Vaisnava-aparadha*. When someone has been accepted by the Lord, and He is gradually purifying him, and we give particular attention to the remnants of impurities and difficulties in him, the result is that all those difficulties will be transferred to us. This is the actual experience. If I especially mark the fault of another devotee, that will be transferred to me. It happens. In our experience and also in the *sastra* we have seen this.

So, one must be very careful not to make any remark generally about the practices and activities of another Vaisnava. It may be possible only in the case when one is empowered by the Supreme; just as in the case of his disciple. To correct his disciples, with a guardian's sympathetic eye, he can mark the defects, and he will help them to remove them. There must be some affectionate heart within. Not jealousy or anything of that type, but with good will; the affectionate guardian's want to remove the defects.

Either from the position of *Siksa-Guru* or *Diksa-Guru* one may detect the faults of the students of this line, and help them sincerely to get free from them. Otherwise, if we are attracted by those faults, they will come to us and we shall have to pay for it.

It is a practical thing; and also based on good reason and scriptural advices. We must be careful. It is also warned in the Vaisnava literature that we must be careful about *Vaisnava-aparadha* that comes from the jealous spirit of competition. That jealousy is very detrimental to our spiritual life.

So we all must be very careful to not be especially attracted by any defect. If some doubt about anyone comes to our attention we may refer

it to the higher authority. But if we make too much of it, either in opposition or in any other way, that will be transferred back. We must know, "I am devouring. My mind is coming in touch with that fault." That is being devoured as food, and the contamination is transferred to the critic; somehow it is entering into the mental system of the critic, and it must get its satisfaction there, as a reaction.

This is like a trade secret of our devotional line. You must be aware and very careful about these practical difficulties in the path of your life.

So we have been recommended, *tat te 'nukampam susamiksmano*: the faculty of judgment has been discouraged; your standard of measuring things won't stand there. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti*. You have to learn a new alphabet here. In the devotional school you have to come in connection with a new alphabet. The old alphabet won't do. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti*. Give up all the pride of your past experience. Your knowledge out of experience of the mortal world won't do here, won't be applied here. This is the position in the case of the Infinite Autocrat and Goodness.

In our mouth we pronounce all these big things - Absolute Good - Absolute Truth - but we do not know about the characteristic of that. So we need His revelation. He reveals Himself. We must carefully note His nature.

So, *jnana-sunya* - give up the pride of your old experience on the basis of which you will go to judge things. It is not like that. A new law is here, and we have to think of the land of Autocrat and Goodness. In *jnana-sunya-bhakti* the first step will be to give up all the pride of our previous experience, and to begin a new life: "I shall accept the laws of the infinite, not the laws of this finite world that I acquired as a subject. I shall have to enter that domain as an object, of the subject. There, He is the subject and I am the object here, possessing only a particle of the space there; and that is also at His sweet will. At any time I may be dispossessed of it." This is not in the democratic government, but in the mad monarchy - a kind of dictatorship. This is to live in the land of dictatorship, and not in the democracy and law. *Jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva* .

Everywhere we shall try our best to find mercy, grace, kindness, pity. Because whatever the dictator is doing is all good. We have to be trained like that. He's the highest dictator, without fault, so we may or may not understand, but whatever is commanded by the dictator must be helpful for us. There is no law on which we shall base our judgment and give any remark. To remark is not only absolutely useless but it is faulty and injurious to ourselves. Such consciousness we have to acquire, and it is not unreasonable.

Newton said, "I am only collecting pebbles on the shore of the ocean of knowledge." He was a man of this world, yet he had the sincerity and courage to make this statement. If such a statement is made in deference to the knowledge of only this world, what should be thought of the knowledge of the infinite unknown and unknowable? We must have courage, just as Columbus floated his ship to discover America. He had the courage. To float our little boat in the ocean of the unknown and unknowable, we must be cognizant that the laws will be of that type. The laws of the higher ocean may not be applied in the strait or local sea. A thoroughly new thing we have to study - the revealed truth. If we go to measure the infinite with the law of finite, it will be hopeless for us to go that side. We must invite and think purely of that land, that standard. The unknown world.

*svayam samuttirya sudustaram dyaman
bhavarnavam bhimam adabhra-sauhrdah
bhavat-padambhoruha-navam atra te
nidhaya yatah sad anugraho bhavan
(Bhagavatam, 10.2.31)*

"O Self-revealed One, You are *Bhakta-vanchakalpa-taru*, the wish-fulfilling tree of the devotee. The great devotees surrendered unto Your Lotus Feet, who have crossed over this ghastly insurmountable ocean of mundanity, have left the boat of Your Lotus Feet in this world (in the *Guru-parampara* or in the line of Revealed Truth, *Srauta-pantha*) - because, they are greatly affectionate to all beings."

The Devas (Brahma and Siva) say in the Bhagavatam, "The saints who by Your Grace have crossed that insurmountable ocean, that dreadful ocean, with dreadful waves and so many water animals - those saints again sent back the boat, which is compared with the Lotus Feet of the Lord. By the help of the Lotus Feet of You, the Infinite Absolute Lord, they cross this ocean, by the Grace of Your Holy Feet; and they again send that boat back here for others to cross the same ocean. They're experienced about the ocean, and in which way they crossed and what difficulty they faced, and where. Your devotees are so magnanimous that after using the boat of Your Holy Feet to cross, they again send them back for us. Because, their friendship for the people is very white, and pure. And You are always in favor of those devotees, so by their request you can't refuse. You allow Your Lotus Feet again to come this side and take others across."

Chapter Eleven

Loving Surrender

Knowledge is our enemy, because knowledge in this world is all misleading. Its very basis is misleading. However spacious it may be, it is the negligible part of the infinite. We have collected, gathered and pushed into our brain all misleading misrepresentation. Our brains are full of misleading Maya, misunderstanding. So that is our enemy. We have to clear these things out and put in fresh things that are indented from the other world by pure sources. The theoretical is one thing, the practical another. Srila Rupa Goswami has quoted:

*jnanatah sulabha muktir bhuktir yajnadi punyatah
seyam sadhana-sahasrair hari-bhaktih sudurlabha*
(Bhakti rasamrita sindhu, Purva 1.36)

"(Mahadeva says,) 'By practice of enlightenment, *jnana*, liberation is attained easily enough. By pious work such as sacrifice, *yajna* , etc.,

worldly pleasure in the next life is attained easily enough. But Devotion for the Supreme Lord, *Hari-bhakti*, is very rarely attained."

By cultivating our knowledge of soul, we can attain *mukti*, that is, emancipation or liberation from miscalculation relatively easily. Though it is not so easy, still, considering the wicked nature of the environment, in a general sense one can easily renounce everything; by elimination, elimination, elimination - all elimination, for reaching something like sound sleep. That is *mukti*. Permanent sound sleep.

And we can gather our things of enjoyment by *yajna* , altruistic action. If we take altruistic action, then as a reaction they will come back to us, for our satisfaction and pleasure.

But our real wealth, Devotion to Hari, is not so easily attained. *Sadhana-sahasraih*: despite thousands of practices by the aspirant, still it is *sudurllabha*, it may or may not be acquired. Because, that is to acquire friendship with the Autocracy. Our enjoyment is 'labor and live.' If we loan some labor to another, that may come back to us. So, by the help of our labor, and by the distribution of that labor, we can easily get future enjoyment. Also, by practicing our sincere disgust with the present mortal environment, we can encourage our ego towards salvation. That is complete renunciation, cutting off all connection with the environment, *samadhi*, just like sound sleep. But to have affectionate connection with the Autocratic Infinite - that is hardly to be acquired.

Hari-bhakti-sudurllabha . And the gradual process of how one is to acquire that is also traced in *Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*:

*klesa-ghni subhada moksa-laghuta-krt sudurllabha
sandrananda-visesatma sri-krsnakarsini ca sa
(Purva 1.17)*

Klesa-ghni: all the afflicting tendencies in your mind gradually diminish. So many things - the proposal of subtle finer mundane happiness may come to try and dissuade you from this path. They are obstacles, and your sincere negligence to them develops. *Subhada*: all auspiciousness is

given to you. *Moksa-laghuta-krt*: the third result is that you shall trace that *mukti* , the result of mere renunciation, that is, relief from the influence of the negative side, now appears to be a very small achievement. The consciousness will awaken in you that mere withdrawal from the negative side is a very insignificant achievement. *Moksa-laghuta-krt, sudurllabha* : if you can only feel or experience that the goal of renunciation is insignificant, it is of a lower order, does that mean you will get *Bhakti* ? No. There is no such guarantee. Even at that stage, *Bhakti* remains far away from you.

Sandrananda-visesatma : then if somehow by chance you come in connection with that reality, you will find some fundamental awakening that infinite happiness is approaching you. *Sri-krsnakarsinica sa*: and further, if you can continue your devotional activity in a proper line, you will find that He is coming to you as Krsna Himself, in the conception of Krsna consciousness. The Krsna concept is coming to you as Krsna Himself.

'Krsna' means the full embodiment of all types of ecstasy. That is approaching, or you are being allowed to have His nearer conception, as the fulfillment of your devotional activities of life. In this way, things progress.

So die to live - dive deep into reality - *jnana-sunya-bhakti*. The area of surrender is so high, noble, great and fulfilling. That can come. That can only take us in the plane of love and affection. If we hope to see and to live in that plane of affection and love, not this mundane affection and love, but the love of the Absolute, then we must accept complete surrender at His disposal, at His mercy. The reaction comes as love. With your highest contribution of faith towards Him, He will be aroused and He will come to accept You on His lap.

So, no risk no gain; and that is risk towards the whole: Devotion proper. It is not merely a sum total of some certain activities, or a type of study - never. Practically it is concerned with the soul, with the inner existence of us. Giving and taking must take place from the innermost part of our heart. It is not a game to play with! No superficial knowledge or bodily

or mental labor can touch it. It is the dealing of the heart to heart. And that is wholesale.

Jnane prayasam udapasya . In this world we are proud of our mania for knowledge and worldly energy; bodily or mental energy, and knowledge about so many falsified things. But He can withdraw everything. Scientists may have discovered a certain law, but if He withdraws, it will be nowhere. Nothing is possible unless backed by His will. 'Let there be water, there was water; let there be light, there was light.' If we can find some faith in this, then we shall perceive that everything is designed and destined by Him. So what is the utility of some provisional incident? If He wishes, He may make or mar. The law may be reversed by His sweet will. The origin of the world is such. He is an independent designer, like a great master hypnotist.

Chapter Twelve

Earnestness

"If You kindly remove my blindness for a moment, I would like to see that great, noble figure of Yours that others have seen."

"No, no, it's not necessary for your blindness to be removed. If I just say 'see!' then you will see Me."

By His will, by His order, Dhrtarastra saw, without his blindness being removed. "Yes, being blind you can see me!" Despite being blind he could see, so what sort of sight is He? He can be seen only by His order. So, neither eyes nor our mental preparation backing the eye are indispensable to see Him. He ordered Dhrtarastra, "See me!" and he could see without eyes or without the mentality of sight. Dhrtarastra was *janmandha* , blind from birth; he had no idea of any color or figure, but still he could see - by the Lord's order. His position is such; so if we try to approach Him, what should our attitude be? How much earnestness

should we have to approach that land?

It is easy - it is difficult. Easy, because it is our inborn tendency. It is home. But now, we are far from home; It is home, my own, so there is hope that I may reach there one day. It is my home and I won't find satisfaction anywhere else, so I must go there, but I am far away from that home comfort. There is the difficulty - I have lost that land.

Jnane prayasam udapasya: scholarship is poison! Are you ready to admit this? All your learning is nonsense! You are plodding in the mud. All knowledge of misrepresentation - not a bag full of money, but a bag full of rocks. The brain is taxed and filled up with all misleading things. Are you ready to admit this? Not so soon! What do you say? Many of us boast of our knowledge. But the *Bhakti* school is striking a hammer on the head of knowledge or *jnana* . Rather, ignorance is better than knowledge! Can you accept that? Knowledge is more dangerous than ignorance!!

Why? Because the so-called learned are proud by comparison. They are more confident that they are holding a higher position, and to remove them from that position is very difficult. Qualitatively, they are in a position above the ordinary laborer, so they are confident of their superiority. So to relieve them of that proud superiority is more difficult than to relieve an ordinary laborer of his ignorance. That would be easy. It is easy to educate an uneducated person, but to educate an 'educated' person is more difficult. He has firmly entrenched himself in his superiority, so he won't budge an inch from that position.

*ei du'yera madhye visayi tabu bhala
mayavadi sanga nahi magi kona kala
(Saranagati)*

The company of ordinary persons, misguided souls in the ordinary street, is somewhat better than the company and influence of the so-called scholars. That sort of subtle poison is very dangerous and difficult to remove. They're proud, thinking, "I know. I hold a higher position than

the ordinary mass." That sort of fine ego is very difficult to remove. Ordinary persons may think, "Yes, we are culprits." Also, the ego of the ordinary religious men is very difficult to remove. "Oh, I am a religious man." It is very difficult to cross his so-called faith and religion, to give him something higher. This is the practical experience, and it is also advised in *sastra* .

vedasraya nastikya-vada bauddhake adhika
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 6.168)

Half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood. As in Sankara's Mayavada, there is atheism in the garb of theism. They say so 'ham , "I am the highest substance." They take the authority or the law as non-differentiated like zero. It cannot assert. Therefore they cannot admit, "I am among the creation." They imagine it is possible for them to hold the higher position. There is no God. There is no such thing as God who automatically holds the highest power and all that be, because ultimately there is a region of unknown and unknowable substance, and wherever there is enlightenment as a human, a wise man, he holds the highest position. "We hold the highest position." But if we have to admit God, then we have nothing. If we are his created objects, play dolls, we have nothing. As soon as we have admitted God, then we are dispossessed of everything! So much renunciation is impossible. To hold that "I am the absolute authority" means that I am nowhere. Such self-abnegation is not so cheap! Any questions?

Devotee: What can help an intellectual to develop *sastric* (scriptural) vision?

Srila Guru Maharaj: When the sleeping aspect will be awakened, the cover will vanish automatically. Intellectualism cannot be utilized, but that real causeless eternal wealth within should be awakened and strengthened; and this cover of proud intellectualism will evaporate. *Karma* and *jnana* are only foreign covers.

*vasudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogah prayojitah
janayaty asu vairagyam jnanan ca yad ahaitukam*
(Bhagavatam, 1.2.7)

If somehow with the help of the Scriptures and His agents, the devotees or saints, we can develop our Devotion, *Bhakti* , then, the proper knowledge and proper apathy towards worldly substances will follow us. Healthy, proper knowledge and healthy energy will come to follow us if the reality within awakens and we become adjusted by it.

This doesn't refer to the knowledge or energy found in this plane. This is entirely distinct. Energy is the capacity to work, to move. And knowledge is to have a conception. That will come in the retinue of Devotion.

Sambandha-jnana - 'what is what.' A new world will awaken within. Misleading ideas will evaporate and retire, and the proper reading will evolve from within. *Sambandha-jnana* . "I am such and such to my Lord, and these are the Lord's friends, the Lord's lovers, etc.; and what sort of knowledge and movement should be mine in this new environment."

In that way, readjustment will come from within. The present type of knowledge and energizing will have to retire and be dispelled like darkness. Conceptions may be utilized only when proper conception awakens. When the professor will point out our misconceptions we can learn the proper conception. "In this way you are misconceiving things; your proper conception is this; but did you misconceive this thing for that?" "Yes sir, I thought like that. Now I see the real thing is this. This is not mine. Not to speak of mine, I also belong to Krsna - my Lord."

"Everything belongs to Him; I am not a master, I am a slave. I don't hold the position of a master, not to speak of possessing so many properties. Even I am property to another possessor." The calculation must begin from that plane, and a new land will be found. That aspiration and aggression to think one can conquer the whole world by the atomic

energy is a false notion. It is suffering human intellect to think one has a position to challenge God: "God is only a superstition, an imaginary thing." We need this wholesale and radical cure: "I do not belong to me, I have my eternal master." We need slave mentality.

During the time of my Guru Maharaj's preaching, one newspaper in Calcutta complained, "Gaudiya Math is spreading slave mentality to the country - this is most objectionable. This will destroy the military spirit of the land, so they can't be encouraged to spread slavery. They have no patriotism, what are they!" The atheists cannot tolerate the call to come hither and live in Vaikuntha. They can't tolerate the spreading of this 'poison' within the country. And they hold that in *Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna supported war. But that was not from *their* standpoint.

Yada yada hi dharmasya . . . The Lord says, "Sometimes the world is so thickly attacked by the atheistic influence that I have to come down again to re-establish the religious environment here. The enemies are vanquished and the good thinkers are given certain relief in their lives. I have to come."

Sri Guru Arati-stuti

Arati Prayer to Srila Guru Maharaj

composed by

The Present President- *Acarya*

Om Visnupada Tridandi Swami Sri Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Maharaj

Sri-Guru-Arati-stuti

jaya 'guru-maharaja' yatirajesvara

sri-bhakti-raksaka deva-goswami sridhara [1]

*patita-pavana-lila vistari' bhuvane
nistarila dinahina apamara jane [2]*

*tomara karunaghana murati heriya
preme bhagyavana jiva pade murachiya [3]*

*sudirgha supibya deha divya-bhavasraya
divya-jnana-dipta-netra divya-jyotirmaya [4]*

*suvarna-suraja-kanti aruna-vasana
tilaka tulasimala, candana-bhusana [5]*

*apurva sri-anga-sobha kare jhalamala
audarya-unnata-bhava madhurya-ujjala [6]*

*acintya-pratibha, snigdha, gambhira, udara
jada-jnana-giri-vajra divya-diksadhara [7]*

*gaura-sankirtana-rasa-rasera asraya
"dayala nitai" name nitya premamaya [8]*

*sangopange gaura-dhame nitya-parakasa
gupta-govardhane divya-lilara vilasa [9]*

*gaudiya-acarya-gosthi-gaurava-bhajana
gaudiya-siddhanta-mani kantha-vibhusana [10]*

*gaura-sarasvati-sphurtta siddhantera khani
aviskrta gayatrira artha-cintamani [11]*

*eka-tattva varnanete nitya-nava-bhava
susangati, samanjasya, e saba prabhava [12]*

*tomara satirtha-varga sabe eka-mate
rupa-sarasvati dhara dekhena tomate [13]*

*tulasi-malika haste sri-nama-grahana
dekhi'sakalera haya 'prabhu' uddipana [14]*

*koticandra-susitala o pada bharasa
gandharva-govinda-lilamrta-labha-asa [15]*

*avicintya-bhedabheda-siddhanta-prakasa!
sanande arati stuti kare dina dasa [16]*

All glory to you, 'Guru Maharaj,'

Of *sannyasi* kings, the Emperor:

The glorious Srila Bhakti Raksak

Dev-Goswami Sridhar.

Extending in this world your pastimes

As savior of the fallen,

You delivered all the suffering souls,

Including the most forsaken.

Beholding your holy form

Of concentrated mercy,

The fortunate souls fall in a swoon

Of Divine Love's ecstasy.

Your lofty form of Divine Emotion

Is nectar for our eyes;

With Divine Knowledge and shining eyes,

Your effulgence fills the skies.

A golden sun resplendent,

In robes of saffron dressed;

Adorned with *tilak*, Tulasi beads,

And with sandal fragrance blessed.

The matchless beauty of your holy form,

Dazzling in its brightness;

Your benevolence of most noble heart,

In the glow of Pure Love's Sweetness.

Inconceivable genius, affection,

Gravity, magnanimity -

A thunderbolt crushing mundane knowledge,

The reservoir bestowing Divinity.

In the Golden Lord's *Sankirtan* Dance,

You revel ecstatically;

"Dayal Nitai, Dayal Nitai!"

You ever call so lovingly.

Eternally present in Nabadwip Dham

With your associates, by your sweet will,

You enjoy your holy pastimes

On hidden Govardhan Hill.

You're the fit recipient of your dignity

In the *Gaudiya Acarya* assembly,

The jewel of the *Gaudiya-siddhanta*

Adorning your chest so nobly.

You're the living message of Sri Gaura,

You're the mine of perfect conclusions;

You revealed the Gayatri's inner purport:

The gem fulfilling all aspirations.

When you speak, one subject alone

Is revealed in ever-new light;

Proper adjustment, and harmony -

All these are your spiritual might.

All your dear Godbrothers

Declare unanimously

They see within your Holiness

The line of Rupa-Saraswati.

Seeing you take the Holy Name,

With Tulasi beads in hand,

Awakens the thought of the Lord*

In everybody's mind.

Your feet, cooling like ten million moons -

In their Service all faith do I place;

The nectar of Radha-Govinda's pastimes

One day we may drink, by your grace.

O personification of perfect conclusions

Inconceivably one, yet different!

I sing this prayer at your *arati*,

With joy - your humble servant.

Pranama-mantra

to

**Om Visnupad Astottara-sata-
Sri-Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj**

by Srila Sri Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj

*sri-svarupa-rayarupa jiva-bhava-sambharam
varna-dharma-nirviseśa-sarvaloka-nistaram
sri-sarasvati-priyā ca bhakti-sundarasrayam
sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum
sindhu-candra-parvatendu-saka-janma-lilanam
suddha-dipta-raga-bhakti-gauravanusilanam
bindu-candra-ratna-soma-saka-locanantaram
sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum*

I offer my humble obeisances unto the Guru of the entire world, Om Visnupad Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, who carries the conception of Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Ramananda Raya, Sri Rupa Goswami and Sri Jiva Goswami; who delivers everyone irrespective caste or creed; who is the most beloved of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada; and who is the abode of Transcendental Loving Service [the only shelter of Sri Bhakti Sundar Govinda].

I offer my humble obeisances unto the Guru of the entire world, Om Visnupad Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, who revealed the Pastimes of his Holy Advent in the world in the year 1817 Saka era [1895 A.D.]; who constantly practices the wealth of Pure Loving Devotion in Divine Consorhood; and who disappeared from our eyes in the year 1910 Saka era [1988 A.D.].

The Guardian of Devotion and His Divine Servitor

by Tridandi Bhiksu Sri Bhakti Ananda Sagar

Bhakti means 'Devotion,' and Raksaka means 'guardian.' Situated within the Holy province known by the devotees as 'Gauda-mandal,' the humble village of Hapaniya has now become a cherished place of pilgrimage for theistic scholars and pilgrims the world over. Small wonder, since it is the Holy Place of Advent of Om Visnupad Astottara-sata-Sri Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, the Great Grandfather of all the faithful Vaisnava *Tridandi Sannyasins*, the Grand Preceptor of the Divine Nectarine Message of Sri Gaurangadev. This great saintly personage made his glorious Advent at Sripat Hapaniya of Radh-desh, in 1895 of the Christian calendar. The formidable scholar Sriyukta Upendra Chandra Bhattacharya Vidyaratna Mahodoy and Srimati Gauridevi, were both unalloyed pure souls imbued with righteousness and devotion for the Supreme Lord Hari. At the fitting auspicious moment, Srila Guru Maharaj made his Advent, choosing them as his father and mother, and revealing the advent of his Divine Pastimes to the world. They named their beloved son Sri Ramendra Chandra Bhattacharya.

In 1923 he was attracted by the Grace of Sri Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami, and at the Sri Gaudiya Math situated at No. 1 Ultadingi Junction Road, Calcutta, he heard Sri Srila Prabhupada's Holy Talks of the Supreme Lord. Not long after that, in December of 1926, with full surrender he joined Sri Gaudiya Math. The natural attraction for the Nama-sankirtana of Sri Chaitanyadev that Srila Guru Maharaj had felt since his very childhood now bloomed into the resplendent personality of Tridandi Sannyasin Sri Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj, at the behest of Sri Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami. Srila Prabhupada conferred this Holy Order, Name and Title upon Srila Sridhar Maharaj in the year 1930, having marked his profound expertise and depth of divine realization in the Holy Scriptural Theistic

Conclusions, thus recognizing him as a veritable 'Guardian of Devotion.' Srila Prabhupada further solidified this recognition upon hearing Srila Sridhar Maharaj's Sanskrit composition *Sri-Bhaktivinoda-virahadasakam* , when he endorsed the Holy Poem as a direct inspiration of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj took a prominent part in the founding, organizing and preaching of many of the Sri Gaudiya Maths of Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami all over India. As a climax to his Divine Affection and Blessings to Srila Sridhar Maharaj, during the last days of Srila Prabhupada's manifest Divine Pastimes in this world, he especially selected Srila Sridhar Maharaj to sing *Sri Rupa-manjari-pada* for him, which is well-known as the most venerated and adored Prayer of the entire *Gaudiya Sampradaya* ; by this action we can know Srila Prabhupada's indomitable confidence in his 'Guardian of Devotion' as the future Captain of the *Sri-Rupanuga Sampradaya* or Divine Succession of Faithful Followers of Sri Chaitanyadev in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami. And who could doubt this? The nectarine river of Sanskrit and Bengali compositions that flowed from his pen stand as great monuments in the line of Sri Chaitanyadev. In his latter years some hundreds of disciples of the late World Preacher, Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, flocked to Sri Nabadwip Dham to hear the holy informal talks and advices of Srila Sridhar Maharaj, and from tape-recordings of those talks many English publications reached to the Western public, scholars and devotees. The wholehearted acceptance of his Divine Delivery and those Transcendental Works by the genuine devotees is irrevocable, not only by dint of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj's openly avowed acceptance of Srila Sridhar Maharaj as his *Siksa-Guru* , but simply by the strength of their own spiritual merit. Therefore great numbers of sincere seekers from all over the world also flocked to the Lotus Feet of Srila Sridhar Maharaj to become surrendered disciples of the Guardian of Devotion.

His Divine Servitor

Om Visnupada Astottara-sata-Sri Srimad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj made his Appearance in this world on 17th December, 1929, at Brahmanparha, District Burdwan, only about six miles from Sripat Hapaniya where his beloved *Gurudev* made his Advent, also situated in the Holy Area of Gauda-mandal. Revealing his Pastimes to the conditioned souls of this worldly plane, at the tender age of only seventeen years, Srila Govinda Maharaj manifest his coming to the Lotus Feet of his *Gurudev* Sri Srila Sridhar Maharaj in April 1947 on the Holy Appearance Day of Sri Nrsimhadev (*Nrsimha-caturdasi*) .

If any of the dear readers of this short account may have, or have had, the opportunity of hearing directly from other stalwart veteran disciples of Srila Sridhar Maharaj (an opportunity the humble writer has fortunately had on many occasions), such as Sripad Bhakti Prasun Aranya Maharaj, Sripad Hari Charan Brahmachari Seva Ketan Prabhu, Sriyukta Krsnamayi Devi, Sriyukta Ramarani Devi, and Srila Guru Maharaj's own revered brothers and disciples Sriyukta Satyendra Chandra Bhattacharya, Sriyukta Amarendranath Bhattacharya and others - any fortunate soul will be able to trace the unbroken line of continuous unalloyed Divine Affection that Srila Guru Maharaj bestowed upon Srila Govinda Maharaj, and continues to eternally bestow from his Holy Abode in the *Nitya-lila* (Eternal Divine Pastimes).

On the *Amavasya* (dark-moon day) of 12th August, 1988, when Srila Guru Maharaj silently took his Form of Holy *Samadhi* at his beloved place of *Bhajan* , Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip Dham, at that time all the devotees felt that the Exalted Moon had disappeared from their vision; yet, by his Divine Grace, Srila Guru Maharaj had already foreseen the devotees' need for uninterrupted light, for the smooth continuation of their Devotional Services; and therefore three years before he conferred the Holy Order of *Tridanda-sannyasa* upon Srila Govinda Maharaj, naming him as his Illustrious Successor, as the guiding light to perfectly ensure that no darkness could enter into his *Sampradaya* (Divine Succession).

The illustrious *Acaryas* or Divine Preceptors have often been described to be as brilliant as the sun. Their Divine Dispensation of *Harikatha* and *Harikirtana* are as the life-giving rays of the supreme sun, giving life and warmth to all creatures, moving and stationary. They are the merciful bestowers of the very kernel of Love Divine for the Supreme Lord which is the Absolute Life of all that lives (*divya-bhagavat-premno hi bija-pradam*) . In this way, it was no surprise that the faithful loving devotees of Srila Guru Maharaj could only receive with great transcendental joy the appearance in the Gaudiya firmament of *Jagad-Guru Gaudiya-Bhaskaracarya* Srila Sri Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj. In the Personage of his Dearest Divine Servitor, Srila Guru Maharaj had long before selected our future Guardian.

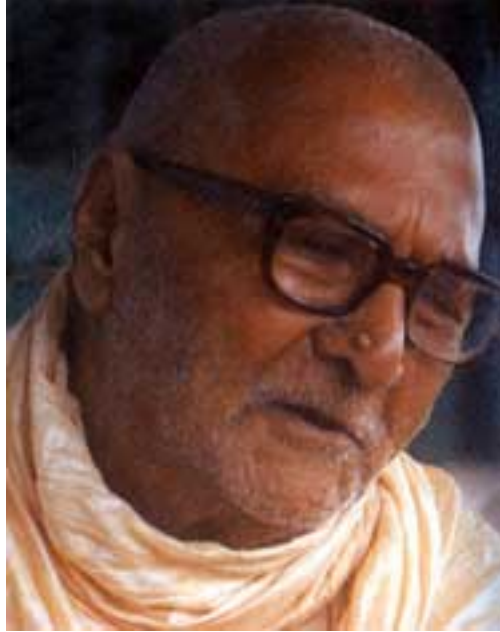
Highly learned in Sanskrit and Bengali, Srila Govinda Maharaj has, as did his Illustrious *Gurudev* , given us many Divine Prayers and Songs most valuable for the cultivation of our spiritual life; his valuable natural talent coupled with his fine delivery of *Harikatha* (Holy Talks of the Supreme Lord and His Pastimes), and, on the practical side of Devotional Life, his untiring Services to his Srila Guru Maharaj in nurturing and upholding Srila Guru Maharaj's India-wide and world-wide Mission from the very beginning to the present - it was none other than he who designed and supervised the building of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math - have, as we have seen with our own eyes, ever fulfilled the Divine Desires of Sri *Gurudev* (*gurvabhista-supurakam*) .

By his Grace we have been able to continue our spiritual life and do some service to bring out this transcendental series of Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion. Gradually it will come into all languages of the world. May Guru Maharaj and his Divine Godbrother Srila Swami Maharaj Prabhupada, and the most beloved Divine Servitor of them both, Srila Govinda Maharaj, cast their merciful glance upon us and our company, the fallen souls of the mundane world; with this prayer I beg to offer my humble *sastanga dandabat pranam* unto the Lotus Feet of them all.

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume Three

All Glories to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna
Chaitanya



From informal talks by
Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev Gosvami Maharaj

Foreword

srotavyadini rajendra nram santi sahasrasah
apasyatam atma-tattvam grhesu grha-medhinam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.2)

If we seriously take note of when Srimad-Bhagavatam appeared in this world, and through whom it appeared, immediately we can see with our clear vision that were present the speaker, Sukadeva Goswami, and the hearer, Pariksit Maharaj. The speaker is seen to be steadfastly situated in the transcendental plane of super-dedication, whereas the hearer shows himself to be in this mundane plane, to be very much confused, and in want.

King Pariksit had very little time left to live. He enquired as to what

process would give him the supreme benefit of life. Sri Sukadeva Goswami happily received his question, furthermore he declared this to be the only suitably sufficient question for the conditioned souls as well as for the real searchers of truth.

Within the jurisdiction of this question many other questions came, and the answers were revealed from above through our beloved Divine Master, Om Visnupada Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, and mostly those have been recorded by his compassionate devotees. Now, by good fortune, these recordings are manifesting in book-form as *Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion*.

By the mercy of the devotees we have previously received the first, second, and fourth parts. As bhakti is decorated in Srimad Bhagavad-gita, similarly we now receive this third part, decorated by the other parts of the Sermons series.

Srila Guru Maharaj tirelessly and continuously delivered his merciful lectures to the sincere searchers from all over the world even while he showed old age and poor health. In this way he presented himself to all countries, and in due course now we are very happy to see the published form of these sermons.

It is true that we may not succeed in fully satisfying His Divine Grace and his Divine Associates, but with our tiny capacity we are wholeheartedly trying to give satisfaction to his servitos' servitors' servitors, thereby expecting that one day we may receive his causeless mercy for our transcendental life's fulfilment. We are fortunate to have even a small connection with his transcendental service.

Myself, I may be worthless and unqualified, but, seeing my tiny service capacity, Srila Guru Maharaj has given assistance in the form of Sripad Mahananda Bhakti Ranjan. I feel very fortunate to receive this part of *Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion* which has manifest by his wholehearted energetic devotion and with the assistance of several Godbrothers. I pay my respectful obeisances to all those who helped with this publication.

You all know that Srila Guru Maharaj's glories are infinite and therefore nobody has the capacity of expression to fully describe them; but his joyful, beneficial play of transcendental vibration will not stop. Furthermore, in an ever-increasingly beautiful form it will manifest in future and bestow Srila Guru Maharaj's divine grace unlimitedly upon the conditioned souls like myself. This is my past,

present, and future, humble prayer to the devotees of Krsna as well as to the lotus feet of the devotees of my Divine Master.

Humbly,

Swami B.S. Govinda

Sevante President-Acharyya
Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip

Chapter 1

The Question

*yac chrotavyam atho japyam yat karttavyam nrbhih prabho
smarttavyam bhajaniyam va bruhi yad va viparyyayam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.19.38)*

King Pariksit asked: "We are exercising our senses in this plane but what will be most beneficial for us? We are receiving things from outside to meet the demand of our internal self, but what will be the best utility of our senses? Which things should we imbibe within ourselves for our best interest? We are always accepting something from the environment for the inner interest. Now how should we utilize our senses, the channel of our knowledge, that they may best help our inner interest?"

Pariksit Maharaj put his question to Sukadeva, and Sukadeva accepted saying,

*variyan esa te prasnah krto loka-hitam nrpa atmavit-samrnatah
pumsam srotavyadisuh yah parah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.1)*

"Yes it is a real question because two inherent signs of enquiry are here. Firstly, it is a general question: to find the solution is necessary for every one of us, and the answer to it will help us all. Secondly,

one who already has proper knowledge of his own self will also accept this question to be most relevant. So, one sanction comes from the subjective realm, and another sanction is that it is good for the whole public. Such questions are real questions of universal interest, the solution of which will help every one of the enquirers, and not only with any partial or provincial solution, but with the absolute solution which will help solve the problem of the whole. It is *the* question that should be asked by anyone and everyone in this world. So, yes your question is bona fide. It will solve not only your problem but it will give the general solution to the whole problem of the entire world. This is *the* question to be solved, the only question. The general population do not have any perfect knowledge and so do not know what is what, therefore their enquiry may be faulty. One may therefore conclude that the public are always wrong. Since the masses are ignorant their questions may not be the proper ones. The demand of the majority may be erroneous. It cannot be admitted that *vox populi is vox dei*."

So it is necessary that there be intrinsic purity in the question. Therefore Sukadeva said that those who really understand their own position will also accept and give their sanction to this question as to what is our best benefit and how we can utilize our senses to draw knowledge from the environment so it will help us to the best advantage. It is passed by the subject-committee of the higher section who have faultless knowledge. They are infallible and they will give their sanction that this is a relevant question.

Sukadeva Goswami continued, "So, from two sides, from the upper and lower, they will accept your question as relevant. I am going to answer. You try to listen with perfect attention."

srotavyadini rajendra nrrnam santi sahasrasah apasyatam atma-tattvam grhesu grha-medhinam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.2)

"Oh King, there is no end of ways by which we can utilize our senses. There are thousands of engagements by which all the senses are kept so busy that they find no time for leisure. They are mostly all engaged

in serving those that do not know the true necessity of the real self. Those who do not know their own want and home are travelling in a foreign land endlessly working to try to satisfy their curiosity. There is no proper diagnosis but they are very busy in treatment: that is the situation to be found in the world. But self-realization, *atma-tattvam*, is such an important thing."

One of proper, normal understanding will therefore accept the necessity of revealed truth. Revealed truth does not rely on the majority consideration of the abnormal thinkers. *Srauta-pantha* means revealed truth, and that must come from the perfect realm: from God Himself. So here is established the indispensable necessity of the *Srauta-pantha*, the method of revelation. It must come from the perfect realm, from *sarvajna*, from the quarter of omniscience. We find that there are thousands of engagements in those that are unconscious of their own real interest. They are very busy, but very busy about nothing. What do we see if we look around?

*nidraya hriyate naktam vyavayena ca va vayah diva
carthehaya rajan kutumba-bharanena va
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.3)*

"At night we see two things; either sleep or playing with women. And the the day-time is spent either in search of money or by serving the relatives."

*dehapatya-kalatradisv atma-sainyesv asatsv api tesam
pramatto nidhanam pasyann api na pasyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.4)*

"In this world we tend to group with those we can exploit. We are surrounded by those who supply our sense enjoyment, our sense pleasure. We are fully engrossed in their interest and only use them for our own sense pleasure. We are so much engrossed in that sort of false duty that we have not the leisure to find out about our own death that is drawing near towards us. Seeing, but not seeing. It is a plain thing: everyone is going to the jaws of death with the mood, I see but still I can't see. I don't care to see and so I don't see. And this is the

peculiar position I hold now. The danger, the final danger is approaching and I am asleep to that. I don't care to take notice of that greater duty.' What can be more strange than this?"

King Pariksit had only seven days more to live but Sukadeva Goswami told him: "You say that you have no time, only seven days. But that does not matter at all. Seven days is time enough, only the necessity is your particular attention for the solution. Only a moment is enough. There are so many trees, mountains and hills, they are living years and years, ages after ages, but to no benefit. So what is the necessity of such a long life? It is not a question of longevity or a question of time but what is necessary is the attention to one's own self: 'What am I and what is mine?' With that sort of attitude our attention will be drawn to our own real interest. That is the factor, and not the question of time. There is enough time."

So seven days is enough, but the peculiar necessity is to find out how our attention can be drawn towards the reality. When that is discovered, then and there our real interest will be satisfied. And only by *sadhu-sanga*, the association of the higher, highly realized souls, is that possible."

*khatvango nama rajarsir jnatveyattam ihayusah muhurtat sarvva
utsrjya gatavan abhayam harim
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.13)*

In history we find a precedent in Maharaj Khatvanga. He had only one moment left of his life but he so perfectly engaged himself that he gave himself for ever to the Lord. Without any reservation he surrendered to the feet of the Lord and he achieved the desired end. He achieved Hari. And who is Hari? *Abhayam*: when we get Him, then all apprehension, all fear and every undesirable thing will be vanquished for ever. That is the meaning of 'Hari.' 'Hari' means *saccidananda* eternal existence, perfect consciousness and also the fulfillment of life in ecstatic joy. Maharaj Khatvanga achieved all that within a moment!

sarvva-dharmman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja

(*Bhagavad-gita* 18.66)

So the problem is, how can we surrender, giving up our mundane attraction and our ignorance about our own interest? How can we jump into the Absolute Good - the ocean of our real interest? That is the problem and our questions should be of such a general character. Only there is this one question.

It is admitted by all that everyone wants the maximum happiness whether he be a stone, a tree, or any species up to the demigods, the *rsis* and *munis*: That is the only thing to be aspired for. Then how to attain it? What and who is the Lord? That is to be discussed and conceived. What is He? What am I? What is my end? How to reach the goal? What is the destination and how to reach the destination? *Sambandha*, *prayojana* and *abhidheya*. Under these three headings the Vedic Scriptures have discussed the whole problem. Who am I? Where am I? Then what is my best benefit—the goal—and how to attain it?

Divine relationship, practice and objective— *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*—it is all to be discussed under these three headings.

This is the general question. It is the question of everyone. It is not any partial thing and it has nothing to do with any sectarian or provincial interests, or anything of the kind. No such things can come against this campaign of the Gaudiya Math. Mahaprabhu began His campaign against Maya—misunderstanding—and, to the conscious, saner section, that is the very thing of general demand in the world.

The standard is not with the insane but it is with the saner section; they all will welcome the movement that was inaugurated by Swami Maharaj over the whole globe. And our Guru Maharaj began that attempt to attack Maya, the illusory energy, and to devastate and smash it. This is *kirttana*, this is preaching.

This is *Harinama*. And Mahaprabhu came here with this: "Don't fly away, don't run away for fear of Maya, misunderstanding. Ultimately it is misunderstanding but you want reality, so why should you be

afraid? Your basis is a real one - you are standing on fundamental reality so you should not be afraid and run to the jungle or to the cave. Even there, you will also always be afraid that Maya will enter. That is not being a bold soldier of the *sankirttana* party fearlessly wandering through the length and breadth of the world and chanting about Krsna, about truth. Truth! Take up that missionary work and Maya won't venture to approach you, for Maya is misunderstanding. By repeating your Krsna consciousness to others you will generate the truthful consciousness. With the help of Krsna consciousness you will be able to do away with everything infectious by spreading and distributing the disinfecting substances. That will be your duty. Be an agent of the disinfecting section who are throwing around the medicine to disinfect the infectious area. Be such an agent and thereby drive away infection from all around. If you go on in that way then infection cannot approach you. Because you are distributing disinfectant all around you, the infection cannot come to attack you, and at the same time others will also be saved."

There is only one necessity: the necessity to spread Krsna consciousness. And our object is *Prema*. *Prema* means to acquire more energetic tendency to spread higher and higher levels of Krsna consciousness. '*Dasa kari*' *vetana more deha prema-dhana*:

Prema will help us more intensely to engage in service—to serve, and to get the remuneration as *Prema*. The nature of *Prema* is that it will excite us more and more for service. It will move in a circular way: what we receive as remuneration will be the tendency to produce more service to the object of our reverence. That is *Prema*. *Prema* is not a separate thing from service, but it will help us more and more towards service. So it is continuous, it is dynamic. It is not that, "I have acquired *Prema*, now I am like a king and shall enjoy it—now there is no longer any necessity of service." Such a stage will never come, rather *Prema* will promote the speed and quality of the service. Love will actuate us more and more towards the service of the object of our love. So service will acquire *Prema*, and *Prema* will induce us to serve. That is our object of life.

Chapter 2

Finer than Matter

We find that certain Scriptures such as the *Upanisads* give mere Statements with no rhyme or reason; with no explanation or certification attached. This is because such knowledge is meant for the higher level where there is no possibility of any deception. whatever is said there is taken by the listeners as complete truth. There is no room for doubt because in that higher civilized plane there is no possibility of any deception. The *Upanisads* say: "This means so and so," and the natural response comes, "Yes, it is so." There is no *tarka* (reasoning), and no doubt or anything of the kind because the very plane itself is such that deception is unknown. So, in the case of the *Veda* and *Upanisads* we are cautioned: *acintyah khalu ye bhava na tams tarkena yojayet*. "Don't take your reasoning and doubt into that higher stage. It is unnecessary there where there is only plain speaking and fair dealing with no trouble from anyone wanting to deceive another. Deception and unfair dealings are unknown there." This is the level of the *Vedas* and *Upanisads* where rhyme and reason are unnecessary. But in a lower stage, the *Smṛti* and *Puranas* come to give their advice in another mood. The *Puranas* are like friends, advising, "Do this and you will be benefitted." They give examples, "This person acted in such a way and received a good result; but this other did bad things and a bad result followed. So, my friend, please learn from this." Then, the *Sruti* comes to our help by showing us how to apply these truths in our everyday life.

The *kavya* also approaches us and comes in a very sweet manner like an affectionate wife to advise: "Do this, it will be very good for you.." But the *Vedas* take another approach: *acintyah khalu ye bhava nastam tarkena yojayet*. This subject matter does not come within the jurisdiction of doubt, reasoning and so on. Don't drag all these worthy things into such a sphere."

In a lecture I gave an example to illustrate this. A mother gives a sweet to her son, she puts it in his hand but he says, "Oh, it may be poisoned! I must go to the laboratory and examine it." It is a

deplorable thing and a very low type of civilization where such an attitude prevails. But in such a plane where affectionate and fair dealing is unknown, *tarka*, *vicara* and *yukti* (discrimination); doubt, examination and inspection are all present. But that is really a filthy life. There is *Krsna-smrti* and its opposite, *deha-smrti*.

deha-smrti nahi yara, samsara-kupa kahan tara, taha haite na cahe uddhara

(*Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 13.142*)

One who is unconscious of his material body has no worldly material connection. We are conscious of our material body and therefore have come in connection with the atmosphere of the material world. If we are independent of this material body then we have no connection with the mortal world. This is the medium between the material world and the *atma*, the soul. The mental system makes the first connection, then comes this body consciousness.

After Sukadeva Goswami finished giving his *Bhagavata* discourse, in his conclusion he gave warning to the audience, especially Pariksit Maharaj, *tvam tu rajan marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi* (*Bhagavatam*, 12.5.2).

"Oh King, do not think you will die—give up this animal consciousness. Eliminate it fully from your thought and do not allow your attention to come down to any material conception. Remain in your own soul conception. Take your stand firmly there. Why do you allow yourself to come down to the conception of this matter: the world, your body and all these things? It is unnecessary. Don't allow your attention to come down to material consciousness, you are independent of that. Think of your soul, its higher achievement and prospect. Your transaction must be all upwards; stick to that. You, the soul, are independent of these. Free from matter you can live and move very happily. To think it not possible to stay without a body is animal consciousness, *pasu-buddhi*. What is this! Why do you allow yourself to come into this consciousness of matter which is mortal? Don't allow yourself to come down, to have experience of this material world. This is animal

consciousness. You must kill it, butcher it! *Tvam turdjan marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi*. To think, I shall die is animal consciousness. Just kill it once and for all. At the same time try to soar up from soul to over-soul, and beyond to the Narayana conception and onwards to the Krsna conception. Try to live in the connection of Vraja and the Divine Damsels there who are all serving Krsna. Consider how they are so recklessly engaged in serving the sweet will of their Lord. Each one of them is always prepared and is the emblem of sacrifice."

In Hitler's army there was a suicide squad who were always prepared for anything and everything. Similarly the Vraja Gopis are ready to give up everything for the slightest satisfaction of Krsna. They are prepared to sacrifice at a second's notice not only their whole body but their entire prospect of everything in their connection. Fully risking everything, they have this highest standard of preparedness for the service of Krsna - and that is the highest standard of life. In them we find sacrifice to the extreme. Sacrifice for the good, sacrifice for the Absolute Good, the Absolute Beauty, Bliss and Ecstasy. Your abode will be very near to Him according to your degree and intensity of sacrificing attitude. This is the close approach. By sacrifice we live. By enjoying we lose. By serving we thrive and by enjoying we lose. And the position of renunciation is zero: no loss, no gain - but in comparison with the positive acquisition it is loss. When there is no gain then that is a loss. Renunciation, *mukti*, salvation, mere liberation - by whatever name it is called - is a loss in comparison with the positive attainment of a servitor.

Reality is for itself. It is for nothing else than He. We are for Him - our existence is meant only for Him. Our purpose is to serve Him. He is the integer. He is existing. He is all in all, and we are all subservient. So we are to dissolve our body consciousness, this animal consciousness.

In a dream a man may see that his beheaded body is fallen before him; but that does not affect his existence or his perception. The soul has a similar connection with this world. It is not affected. In a dream he may see that although his body may be pulverized and the earth vanish

from under his feet he remains unaffected. Similarly the soul's position is independent. It is not dependent on material existence but it thinks that material things are indispensably necessary to maintain its existence. But this is wrong and a concoction. To stand on a material conception is not necessary for the soul. Although that worldly conception seems to be so very indispensable for our being, it is not so. We are independent from matter. Even the mental existence is independent of this gross material existence what to speak of that of the soul. Soul has nothing to do with this matter which is a foreign, concocted, dream-like substance. Rather, the material conception is poison to the soul and is drawing him in the opposite direction from his real interest.

The Mayavadis and the Buddhists consider that with the dissolution of the material conception nothing remains. And Sankara says that only some non-differentiated consciousness remains in which no individual conception can stand. But the Vaisnavas say, "No, there is a world of reality made of higher stuff than your soul. Your soul is made of vulnerable consciousness, but there is a world of invulnerable consciousness. If you can manage to enter there you will be happy, and only with the interest of rendering service there can you gain such entrance to that land. That sort of adaptability is within you. That is your *svarupa*, your true nature. The adaptability to the positive life is inherent within the soul. You are to blossom and bloom and when full-blown you will reach the Goloka stage."

Wrongly, we have adapted to matter and this has drawn us into the negative side, therefore we are wandering in different stages. This fallen condition is not only unnecessary but is injurious to the soul.

Just as by taking water from in front and sending it behind him a swimmer we can make progress, so also by hearing and chanting, we can make progress. *Sravana-kirttana-jale (Chaitanya charitamrita, 19.152)*. We are to hear, and what we acquire we are to distribute to others. A swimmer makes quick progress by passing behind him the water in his front, similarly, in spiritual terms we are to receive from the capitalist and deliver that to the customers. *Sravana kirttana, sravana, kirttana...* By imbibing and exporting we can make good

progress and the Absolute Capitalist will supply as much as the customers can receive from Him. This is Mahaprabhu's advice. *Yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa (Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 7.128)*: "Deliver these goods to anyone and everyone and new light will come to you which in turn you are to distribute to others. In this way you will have a dynamic and progressive life and there will be no shortage of higher backing."

Swami Maharaj invoked assistance from Krsna. He petitioned Him, "Please come to my help. I have been ordered by Your favourite to do this duty. Please help me. After finishing this duty I shall again join Your play in Vrndavana. There we shall play; we shall run, we shall jump and we shall do anything and everything in a boistrous way together. But for now I have some duty which is necessary to discharge and that duty has been ordered by Your most favourite person. If You help me to carry this out then Your friend, that most favourite friend, will be pleased with You and so You will get some advantage thereby!" In this way he made his petition, *krsna tava punya habe bhai*, "You will acquire good merit if You help me!"

Krsna supported Govarddhan Hill with the little finger of His left hand, and afterwards His friends, the cowherd men and boys told Him, "You did not hold it alone, we also helped You with our sticks! Be reminded of it. You could not do it alone!" They share the pleasure, and also they do not care to think about His extraordinary majesty, power and so forth. They feel, "He is one of us but very beautiful, and we cannot live without Him. We don't know why it is, but somehow if He is not in our midst we are all lifeless, and when He comes we become enlivened like anything." He is their very life and they consider, "He possesses some peculiar power no doubt, but still He is one of us."

If they should hear that He is God, then, "No, no, He can't be God, we don't admit that. Rather He is our friend. Who says He is God? We don't care for such grand claims. He is our friend, our very charming friend."

Mother Yasoda also thinks, "He is my son but some people don't like

that I live in peace, so they say He is God and He is this and He is that. Why do they say such things? He is my child but they are so jealous and envious that they do not like that I may stay living peacefully with my son and husband. They are so envious that they say He is God and He is so-and-so. No! Simply He is my child, only they are unable to tolerate that I have such a beautiful child and therefore they air so many different types of speculation. I don't like these things and this is all a little ominous for my child. Why should He go to be a god? Human beings are real!" *krsnera yateka khela sarvottama nara-lila nara-vapu tdhdra svarilpa*. Mahaprabhu taught that the human society is so valuable because Krsna is originally in this form. This human society is created after His original social style and therefore it is so important, *sarvottama nara-lila, nara-vapu tahara svarupa*.

It is accepted in this world that the human creation is the highest. But the materialists all think, "We are masters of the fossil world. We don't have to give any explanation for our activity to anyone. We are the masters." That is the materialists' scientific standpoint. But sometimes they are afraid, "If higher cultured people are in *sukra-graha* or any other star, should they come here, then we are nowhere. If in a flying saucer they should come once to attack us with any new types of weapons then we are nowhere."

But before this they may fight with one another with atom bombs and destroy everything. Suicidal! This is, after all, the suicidal plane, the discordant plane where one cannot live without devouring his environment. That is the law of this land. If you want to live here then you must devour your environment otherwise you can't survive. So it is the suicidal plane. One is eating another and only then he can live, that too is only for the time being. So is this a proper land to live in?

Prasada— that is the highest solution! The principle necessities of any life here in this world are to preserve and to propagate. Our first priority is to preserve, and for self-preservation we create havoc in the environment by exploitation. The first principle of exploitation begins from the urge for self-preservation, and that means eating. We are to adjust our dealings with the environment in our most primitive

necessity which we can't avoid in order to keep body and soul together. So if we can solve this one difficulty, we can almost solve the whole problem.

Prasada-seva korite hoyā, sakalā prapaṅcā jayā— Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakur says that the key to the solution of the whole problem of this mundane life is in *Prasada*. The first necessity of life is eating, and if we can solve that problem, we have solved the whole thing. *Prasada-seva korite hoyā, sakalā prapaṅcā jayā*— the most important thing is to learn how we should take *Prasadam* to maintain ourselves. Our life depends mainly on that.

To live here we cannot but consume, and we cannot but create devastation in the environment by our eating. If we go to consume anything, even plants, grasses or seeds, then microscopic creatures are being killed. So the question is how to get rid of this reaction? It is said in *Srīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (3.9): *yajñarthat karmano 'nyatra, loka 'yam karma-bandhanah*— we shall get relief from that reaction only if we can successfully connect everything with the Supreme Satisfaction, with Him whose pleasure all existence is meant to fulfil. So, in the taking of food, really we are to be conscious that we are collecting the ingredients for His satisfaction, and then cooking and offering to Him for His satisfaction - that should be our real purpose. And then because our whole life and energy is for serving Him, we need energy and must take something out of that. But the main point, the real substance of the transaction will be to collect, cook, and offer to Him according to His will expressed in the Scriptures. That is the first step, and only after the foodstuffs have been offered to Him shall we take anything ourselves. This will help to make us always conscious of why we are taking. We are taking because we want only to serve Him. Furthermore, whatever has been accepted by the Lord, the 'poison,' the bad reaction, will have been absorbed and digested by Him just as in the case of Mahadeva who drank the poison generated from the Ocean of Milk.

Kṛṣṇa is absolute and can digest anything. Not only that, but those things which have been consumed in His connection also receive

promotion, so actually there is no *himsa*, violence. What appears to be *himsa* is not really so, because those whom are apparently violently treated actually receive a high promotion through connection with the Supreme. In addition whoever has been instrumental in fulfilling that connection will also receive some reward. So the devotee must think, "What shall I take? I won't take anything from the world, I shall take only from my Master, as His grace. It is His grace. His free grace to me— *Prasada*."

The word *Prasada* means 'kindness,' 'grace.' The devotee will feel, "Whatever service I do, I am not expecting anything to be paid to me in return. It is a free transaction. And whatever I receive is only His grace. So I shall take *Prasada*, then I shall be free from all entanglement of action and reaction even though I am in the midst of it. Because it is a fact that with every action I must disturb the environment, then if all my actions are meant for Him, the Supreme Lord, there will be no bad reaction coming to me, but rather the opposite reaction will occur and help not only me but those that were offered also. Through me, through myself as a centre, such waves will emanate that will help others to progress in their path of purification."

So, through the godliness in his heart, everyone must be a purifying agent. God is on the throne of the heart, and from there He will emanate such a fine ray which will purify not only that person's heart, but also the environment. 'Vaisnava' means a purifying agent who emanates goodness, absolute goodness, everywhere - through his movements, his words, his actions, everything: deed, thought and word, *kaya, mana, vakya*. A Vaisnava is an agent of auspiciousness; *te vaisnavah bhuvanamasu pavitrayanti*. There are so many Vaisnavas, and by their chanting the Holy Name, by all their practices and by their whole lives, they are like so many purifying agents.

By proper knowledge, proper dealings and proper conduct they set everything in its proper position and create adjustment in the domain of maladjustment. This world is maladjusted, and the balancing agents, the unifying factors, are the Vaisnavas. Just as there is a germ, a virus which spreads a particular contagious disease, so there must be

the opposite of that, something which emanates only a pure and healthy atmosphere, and that is the Vaisnava.

Chapter 3

Personal Glimpses

Devotee: Please can you tell us how you happened to meet your Srila Guru Maharaj, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There is some background to our first meeting. When I was at school I had some appreciation for the students from East Bengal because I had heard from one of my cousins about their sacrifice for their country and so forth. So during my college days I would take my seat in that hostel where they generally lived. When I came in the association of the students there I found there to be two sections. Many were studying medicine. If any patient was admitted or any other physical duty was required one section would immediately run to meet those requirements. Another section was inclined to be engaged in meditation, chanting the Holy Names, doing *sandhya* (worship), and so forth but they would hate to attend to any patient or other such duties.

My own nature was inclined to both kinds of duties, and when I was a fourth year student I suddenly met a boy from the first year who was similarly inclined. He would engage himself in meditation, *sandhya*, etc. He would take the Name and sing the praises of the Lord, but also if any patient should be admitted he would forget his class and studies and attend to him. That attracted me towards him and I tried to gain his association.

One morning we were going to the jungle to collect twigs in order to cleanse our teeth when in the course of our talk he said suddenly about his father. He referred to him as, "That gentleman." I protested that it was disrespectful to use such a term for his respectable father. Then he said, "Yes, I should not have mentioned in that way in your presence, but ultimately it is really so. Where was I in my previous lives? Only he is a 'gentleman' to me because it is only in this life that I have come in his house."

Somehow that touched a fine chord in me and I began to think, "Yes it is right. Nobody can stay here; not the father, the mother, the brothers or even this house. Everything is temporarily connected and I am wandering in eternity." That sort of impression came in me in a very, very intense form, and the whole world became as if it was just empty - fully empty. At that time that boy anyhow connected me with the life of Mahaprabhu.

Presently I was given a publication about Sri Chaitanyadeva by the gentleman who founded the Amrta Bazar Patrika newspaper. Into my thirsty mind I drank fully the life of Mahaprabhu with much pleasure, and my attraction was drawn to Him. I also think that from my previous life there was some attraction. I found that my mother's family had some connection with Mahaprabhu but my father's family were anti-Gauranga. They were strictly *smartta brahmanas*, worshippers of the Sakti, or Goddess, and logicians of the *nyaya* school. But somehow, I had connection with Gaurariga and then I came to want a good connection with the His devotees. I searched for such a *sadhu* to accept as my Gurudeva, but I was not satisfied and in due course I went to study law in Calcutta. Then, leaving college I joined with the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. I joined temporarily because I considered that my fate was already tied with Mahaprabhu and therefore could not give anyone my whole life's energy. After six years the movement allowed me temporary leave.

I was in search of a Gurudeva. The founder of Bharat Seva Asram was the same age as myself. His name was Paramananda. That boy whom I had met in college was connected with him and so I also met him, but he was a *karmmi*. He tried his best to take me within his fold. I answered him, "No, my head is already sold to Gaurariga Mahaprabhu."

He said, "Yes I also recognize Gaurariga Mahaprabhu to be the highest, but first it is necessary to follow the *vairagya*, the indifference and renunciation of Buddha, then the discussion of the *Vedanta* of Sankara, and after that the highest is the *Prema* of Sri Chaitanyadeva. Without following each step, that *Prema* would be

misunderstood by the ordinary section."

He explained in that way, and of course I was very much pleased to hear him giving such position to Mahaprabhu. But I put to him this question: "You say that first we must pass through the stages given by Buddha and then Sankara and only then come to Chaitanyadeva, but Chaitanyadeva did not say, 'If you want to come to Me, come through Buddha and Sankara and then to Me.' Rather He said, 'Wherever you are you can take the Name with the company of the *sadhu* and in that way you will come to Me.' He did not say, 'First become Buddhist, then become Sankarite and then you will come to Me.' He did not say so." He became silent.

I asked him, "If you have some *siddhi*, you please say where is my Gurudeva." Then he gave some idea: "Go to that particular gentleman." By his request I went there but that man was not present. Then one day I found that there was a placard advertising a one month festival in the Gaudiya Math at No.1 Ultadingi Junction Road near Poresanath Temple. I went to visit that place thinking that having the name 'Gaudiya' they must have some connection with Sri Chaitanyadeva, and I found, "Yes, they are educated men. It is a gentleman's association and they are well studied in Scripture as well as being very good practitioners."

In our family of course there was no intoxication and they followed so many other pure practices, and I found also such conduct there at the Gaudiya Math. But what attracted me most was their deep knowledge of the Scriptures. I had done some studying but still I felt myself to be in a lower position concerning knowledge of the *Bhagavad-gita*, *Bhagavatam*, Sriman Mahaprabhu, etc. Their high regard for the Scriptures attracted me very much. I began to go there to hear, and gradually became inspired.

I had some objections in the beginning but I found that what those devotees gave was correct, and my conception was wrong. In this way I gained understanding and inspiration by hearing more and more.

Whenever anything was said to them from the Scriptures they would come to listen very carefully. But if something was said quoting Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Ramakrsna, Gandhi, etc. it was summarily

rejected, "No, no, we have no time to lose. We have no time to waste to hear all this." But whenever there was reference to any Scriptures their reaction was, "Yes, what do you say? Please express it."

What attracted me most was that they had within them such devout appreciation for the Scriptures and for the risis, as was also in me perhaps to an overflowing degree. Thereby gradually I discovered the real meaning of *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* for which already I had great appreciation and reverence. I was pleased to find that they are very much part of this Mission and I learnt amongst other things that Sri Chaitanyadeva and Sri *Caitanya-caritamrta* are the highest authority.

I then entered into the Mission. Whatever misunderstandings I had, gradually cleared. I was converted, so much so that even the senior men used to ask me, "What Srila Prabhupada has said, please repeat it for our clarification." And I would repeat, reproducing for them what I had heard from Srila Prabhupada, and they were satisfied. In this way I came to such a position that generally the educated section began to say, "Sridhar Maharaj can represent the things very well."

One respectable gentleman similarly said, "In a very concise form he can represent the very substance and without any excitement."

There are some who when they say something show signs of excitement, but in a sober temperament I would try to deliver the substance using only a few words. I was not very pushing, not forward, but rather my nature was to hang behind. I would not try to go ahead and be in the front, but it would be as though I was playing from behind. That was my nature, keeping myself back, and more busy for my own realizations as to the meanings of the different *slokas* of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *Sri Caitanya-caritamrtam*, etc. Generally I would meditate on the meanings of the various *slokas*. Sometimes also I would perhaps receive some new illumination and understanding concerning the meaning of the higher plane. In this way I passed my days.

I first came across Swami Maharaj a little later in Allahabad when he was the agent of Kartti Bose of Bengal Chemicals. Then in the Bombay Math also I had his company for a long time. But the main

association I had with him was in Calcutta after the departure of our Guru Maharaj. I opened a centre there in the house next to his, which was also owned by him. Downstairs there was a laboratory and on the first floor there were four rooms that I took on sublease from him. I stayed there for some time. He used to come almost every day and we had discussions about the inner meanings and teachings of *Bhagavad-gita*. Briefly we discussed other things also, but mainly our discussions were based on the *Bhagavad-gita*. Govinda Maharaj was there all along. Hari Charan Prabhu was a newcomer then and he also was there for some time. Govinda Maharaj was very much liked by Swami Maharaj who often mentioned, "I saw him as my child."

That was how I became connected with the Gaudiya Math and joined in the Mission.

Devotee: Srila Guru Maharaj, what inspired you to compose the book *Sri-Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Much later when I left the association of the disciples of our Srila Prabhupada to live alone, I felt some sort of helplessness within me. I knew that *Sarandgati*, surrender, is the indispensable necessity in the life of a devotee, and felt, "I have left, or somehow or other I am excluded from the company of Prabhupada's association. I am helpless, but *Sarandgati* may come to my relief." So I especially came to think, "*Saranagati* is the basis, but what is *Saranagati*?"

On reading Bhaktivinoda Thakur's book *Saranagati*, this point impressed me most. He wrote,
sad anga saranagati haibe yanhara tanhara prarthana sune sri nanda-kumara

"If you want Nanda Kumar, you must have this six-fold *Saranagati**,
I wanted to culture that, so at that time after coming to live alone I recollected all I had imbibed in my Math life, and also consulted about *Sarandgati* in *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, in Jiva Goswami's *Bhakti-sandarbha*, and in the Ramanuja *Sampradaya*'s writings. I then tried to collect it all together and arrange it in a particular way as I thought best. In this way I began to write the book *Sri-Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam* that it may also help others who might come in such a

position as mine. That was the real reason.

The six limbs of *Saranagati* are: i) acceptance of the favourable; ii) rejection of the unfavourable; iii) full confidence in the Lord's protection; iv) embracing the Lord's guardianship; v) full self-surrender; and, vi) surrender in humility.

Devotee: What is the meaning of its title?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The title *Sri-Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam* means, *prapannanam, jivane, amrta-svarupam*, "The nectar in the life of the surrendered souls." This was my conception from the beginning - *prapanna-jivanamrta* - that those who have come to take this, to feel it, this will be like nectar to them. To those who have surrendered, it will be nectar to *them*, but others, the ordinary people, may not appreciate it.

It will be the nectar in the life of those who have surrendered, those who have the real *adhikara*, the proper qualified standard of faith to receive it. Srila Jiva Goswami wrote, "Those who have faith in the *Veda*, in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and such things, *they* are to read this book; otherwise, I put a curse, that those who do not have such faith should not come to read my book." Jiva Goswami has written in such a way: "You unbelievers won't come to touch my book. You who are unbelievers, it is not meant for you! It is only for those who have faith in such things. Others are discarded. You, the ordinary public are discarded. You must not touch my book because you will misunderstand it."

This is also a custom of proper behaviour. If one goes to venture to read such things, at least he must approach with some caution, and not with the mood of curiosity, "Oh, why does he say this?" for that will be dangerous. So, *adhikari nirnaya*— that whoever will come to read the *Veda*, if he has not attained the standard, he will misunderstand, or mutilate it.

Paroksa-vado vedo 'yam, balanam anusasanam (Bhagavatam, 11.3.44). "The Vedic purport is presented in an indirect, veiled manner in order to instruct undisciplined, childishly foolish persons."

In his *Uttara-mimamsa* of the *Vedanta-sutra*, Vedavyasa has written *athato brahma-jijnasa*. Sri Sankaracaryya says that in relation to this aphorism *athato*— means *anantaram*— 'after this.' After what? "After one has attained *Sama, dama, titiksa*; all these qualifications. One who has qualities such as having controlled his senses and his mental speculations (*Sama, dama*), having a very tolerant and persevering spirit (*titiksa*), and so on, he will come to study this book. After he has acquired a certain grade in such qualities, he will come to study this. It is not for the ordinary people who will misunderstand, misinterpret and mutilate it thus creating trouble in society." So for the benefit of society Sankaracharyya says that only such persons will come, and they will gain a clear and proper understanding. They will then preach that to the public in particular instalments and all will be benefited thereby.

Ramanuja says, "No, *athato* does mean that. *Athato* means, 'after finishing the *purvva-mimamsa* of Jaimini.' There is *purvva-mimamsa* (primary teaching) and *uttara-mimamsa* (higher teaching). So, after one has finished the course of *purvva-mimamsa*, that is, *niskama varnasrama-dharma*, he will then come to understand the study of this *uttara-mimamsa*. When he has finished successfully the *karmmadhikara* he will come to enter into *jnanadhikara* and that will be beneficial to him." This is Ramanuja's opinion.

And Baladeva Vidyabhusana says, "Whoever he may be, whether a *karmmi* or *jnani*, *atha* means he must have *sat-sanga, sadhu-sanga*. From any position, if he can get the association of a proper *sadhu*, he is qualified to study this book and he will understand the real meaning."

So everywhere there is consideration of *adhikar*— that is, *yogyata*, or 'fitness.' He must acquire the standard of qualification, then he will come to tackle the particular plane, and he must have healthy association.

Devotee: Our Guru Maharaj, Srila Swami Maharaj Prabhupada, used to say, *athatho* means, "now that we have come to the human form of life," "after coming to the human form of life."

Srila Guru Maharaj: But the human form of life alone is not sufficient. *Sat-sanga, sadhu-sanga*, is necessary, *sad-guru caranasraya*. Anyone who has received the grace of a *sadhu* can have that nectar, whereas, *ya'o pada bhagavata vaisnavera sthane*, even a *brahmana* may not be qualified to enter into the *Bhagavatam*. Sriman Mahaprabhu said, "Go to a Vaisnava, from him you will get the real stand-point of *Bhagavatam* and how to approach it."

Devananda Pandit, a real *brahmana* of noted scholarship, was a 'professor' of *Bhagavatam*. Many people used to come to hear from him. But although a scholar, his stand-point was that of the Sankara school. Srivasa Pandit also lived locally but he was an expert in the real explanations of *Bhagavatam*.

Mahaprabhu suddenly one day said, "Oh, that Devananda Pandit, he teaches *Bhagavatam* to so many students, but he himself does not know its real purport. He is spreading poison in the name of *Bhagavatam*. I shall go and tear up his books!" Inspired one day with such a spirit Mahaprabhu suddenly ran towards that place, but Srivasa Pandit, and others perhaps, stopped Him, saying, "No, no, this won't look good for you."

Anyhow, on another day Mahaprabhu met Devananda Pandit and told him, "You are teaching *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to the students, but do you know what is there in *Bhagavatam*? You yourself do not know what nectar is there."

In a very ridiculing way, Mahaprabhu told him:

paripurna kariya ye saba jane khaya tabe bahirdese giya se santosa paya

(*Sri Caitanya bhagavat, Madhya 21.73*)

"When one who has eaten and has a full belly goes to the latrine, while passing stool he feels some relief, but you do not even get *that* sort of meagre pleasure! But in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* there is such high nectar, such high taste, but you, such a mean fellow with your mean mind, approach the *Bhagavatam* and teach it in such a filthy way. What do you know about *Bhagavatam*?"

On another occasion, Srivasa Pandit came to hear *Bhagavatam* from Devananda's *tol*, Sanskrit school. While Devananda was pronouncing the *slokas*, Srivasa was understanding them in his own way thus causing many feelings to come in him: sometimes he shed tears and sometimes he shivered. Devananda Pandit told his students, "Oh, that man has come to disturb us with all these lower sentiments. Take him out!" So, his students took Srivasa Pandit from there and left him outside; but that enraged Mahaprabhu.

Later on Mahaprabhu's intimate devotee, Vakresvara Pandit, came to Devananda's house. He came and had a private talk with Devananda, and Devananda was converted: "Yes, I did not know that such meanings may be found in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I was influenced by Sankaracharya's teaching that Brahman is all-in-all, therefore I considered these topics of *Bhagavatam* to be all *saguna*, all under Maya." So, when Mahaprabhu after five years of *sannyasa* came again to visit this area, Kuliya here in Nabadwip Dham, Devananda fell at His feet, crying, "I have made such great offences!"

Mahaprabhu said, "Yes, but you have committed offences not so much against Me as against Srivasa Pandit. Go and beg forgiveness from him and you will be absolved from your offences."

kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya

(Caitanya bhagavat, Antya 3.541)

In this way Capala Gopal and many others who had made so many bad remarks about Sri Chaitanyadev's conduct all came there to Him saying: "We could not understand Your outstanding personality and superiority, therefore we have unknowingly done much wrong against You. Please forgive us."

Mahaprabhu forgave them saying, "Oh, no, no, there is no offence, everything is alright. Go away peacefully now."

So also, in the case of reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* there is this question of *adhikara* and *sat-sanga*. Even a *brahmana* may not have the proper position to understand, what to speak of teach, the Scriptures. Only *sadhu-sanga*— the association of a good teacher—is

necessary to understand the *Sastra*.

Ragunatha Bhatta was the son of Tapan Misra and he lived in Benares. Tapan Misra was a devotee and scholar. When Ragunatha Bhatta went to visit Mahaprabhu in Puri, Mahaprabhu told him, "Don't marry but serve your parents, they are Vaisnavas. When they pass away, go to Vrndavana and live with Rupa and Sanatana. In the meantime, read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* under the guidance of a Vaisnava teacher. From him you will get the real stand-point from which to approach the subject in order to see what is its theme, what is its end and so forth. Such a teacher will be able to give you real direction in your study of all these matters;

ya'o pada bhagavata vaisnavera sthane.

Similarly Baladeva Vidyabhusana comes to say that a person may be from any position, but if he approaches a proper guide, a Guru, he can receive the capacity to enter into the meaning of the Scripture.

Devotee: What is the meaning of *bhakti-rasa-patra* in the following verse?

*eka bhagavata bada - bhagavata-sastra ara
bhagavata - bhakta bhakti-rasa-patra
(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 1.99)*

Srila Guru Maharaj: This verse explains that there are two types of *Bhagavatas*: the book *Bhagavata* and the person *Bhagavata*. *Bhakti-rasa-patra* means the *sadhu*, one who is living the life of a *Bhagavata*. *Bhagavata-rasa-patra*— means 'one containing divine *rasam* pertaining to Bhagavan.' Living Scripture is *Bhagavata* and the Vaisnava is *Bhagavata*. The *Srimad Bhagavata* is the Scripture, and the person *Bhagavata* is also the Scripture.

Devotee: What is the specific meaning of *bhakti-rasa-patra*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: *Bhakti-rasa-patra* means a person who is 'filled up,' or a pot which is filled up with *rasa*—*raso vai sah*. He is full of

anandam. *Patra* means 'person' as well as 'pot'. There are two meanings of the word *patra*: it means both a 'pot, glass, container,' and 'the person who is also a 'container'.'

So, in the title of my book, *amrtam* means— *prapanna-jivanamrtam*, or *prapannanam jivane amrta-svarupam*: for those who are surrendered, it is the nectar in their lives. It is the nectar in the soul's surrender. It will sustain the surrendered souls like *amrtam*, nectar, and they will live by taking that; it is their food and will give them sustenance.

Devotee: We would like to hear from you, Srila Guru Maharaj, how Nityananda Prabhu asked you to come here to Nabadwip and start giving initiations.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Sometime after the departure of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada I was asked by some leading members to take the position of Acaryya; but from the beginning I had within me no impression or inspiration to do so. However when I came to stay alone there was always some sort of hesitation in me that my Guru Maharaj did not like *nirjjana-bhajana*, the separate practising life. He liked that devotees would associate together and engage in *kirttana*. But if I live in an association it would mean there must be preaching and many newcomers will join, but who will give them initiation? They asked me to take the charge of initiating but I did not feel any inner inspiration to do so. I did not feel any urge for that, but I was anyway passing my time in the cultivation of Krsna consciousness.

Before I went to Vrndavana I had in mind that I would not stay there. I felt that Vrndavana is for the higher devotees but I am of lower order. The fallen should take shelter under Mahaprabhu at *aparadha-bhanjan-pat* (the place where all offences are forgiven) in Nabadwip, so it was a foregone conclusion to me that I would take my shelter in Nabadwip, and not Vrndavana.

By the grace of Nityananda Prabhu we can receive the grace of Mahaprabhu. There is no other alternative for us, the fallen souls,

especially the beginners. *Heno nitai bine bhai, radhd-krsna paite nai*— by the grace of Nityananda we shall receive the grace of Gauranga and by the grace of Gauranga we shall receive the grace of Radha-Govinda. That is the general way—the grand trunk road that was even foretold by Lord Brahma: *krsna bhakta haya yadi balavana, bidhira kalama kathi kore khan khan*— "If a devotee of Sri Krsna is very powerful, he can easily cut into pieces that which is written down as his destiny."

Then when I came from Vrndavana to take my permanent residence here at this *aparadha-bhanjan-path*, Koladwip, I thought, "I am going to take my shelter in Nabadwip Dham permanently. But *Dhamesvara*, the Master of the Dham, is Nityananda Prabhu, therefore before going to Mahaprabhu's birthplace I must visit Nityananda Prabhu's birthplace at Ekachakra and beg His permission. If He is propitiated then I may live in Nabadwip Dham safely, otherwise it will be impossible." So before I came here I went straight to Nityananda Prabhu's birthplace and made my prostrate obeisances with the prayer, "You are *patita-pavann*, saviour of the fallen, and I crave Your mercy. Please grant me permission to stay permanently at Koladwip in Nabadwip Dham, that I may have my shelter there." At that time I had already chosen this place at Gupta Govardhana.

Whenever I fell flat with that prayer, at once some urge came in my mind, "You are praying for the grace of Nityananda Prabhu as *patita-pavana* but you are apathetic to *patita*, the fallen, so how can you hope to have His sympathy?" This suddenly came in my mind. "Nityananda Prabhu is *patita-pavana* but I do not like to extend my helping hand to others, so how can I expect His grace and mercy?" That sort of strong reflection came in me and anyhow I put forward my position to Him and came here. Also our Srila Prabhupada's nature was always pressing on my mind: he was always against *nirjjana-bhajana* but I was going to do that very thing.

Anyhow, I came here and for two rupees per month I rented a room nearby and stayed there. During the day-time I read the *Sastra* and from evening I used to take the Holy Name, and after finishing the chanting of one lakh (100,000) Names I would go to bed.

I took Giridhari with me from Vrndavana and kept Him on a small throne in the room. I would cook something just once in a day, offer to Giridhari and then take some *Prasadam*. In the evening I would also take a little *Prasadam*, and in this way I passed my days. Unknown to anyone I came to this place but gradually my Godbrothers searched for me, and finding me, they began to come now and then. Some began to stay and did not want to leave.

At that time when going through the books of Jiva Goswami I found he had written that those who have money but do not spend it for the Lord, they commit *vitta-sathya*. Similarly those who have some knowledge and experience about *bhakti*, about Krsna and the devotees, but do not like to help others, they commit *jnana-sathya*. At the same time I had in my memory from my early days a story from the *Puranas* where it is mentioned that a particular *brahmana* was a big scholar but he gave no education or help to anyone. As a result, in his next life he received the body of a mango tree which bore many beautiful fruits, but not even a single bird would touch them. Then one day Anantadeva noticed the tree while on his way to see God. When he enquired about it, the Lord replied, "He was a great *pandit* but he did not instruct or give his share of learning to anybody. He was so miserly in his scholarship that in his next birth he was put in such a position as this tree."

Another thing also came to my mind, that a doctor is not omniscient, but should he not try his best to cure a patient? As much as he has capacity he must try to help, otherwise the world will be at a standstill. It is not that everyone will say, "Only if I have complete and full knowledge will I approach to help another," for that is not possible in this world. Everyone has some relative position. With this also coming to my mind I began in a mild way to help. I decided not to engage on a broader scale to would try to educate him in this spiritual line in the minimum way, or to initiate. With this spirit I took my position here remembering the inspiration from *patita-pavana* Nityananda Prabhu that came to me: "You must try your best to help those that in your consideration are fallen."

I was not fully reluctant, but I was not making any big attempt because it is mentioned also in the *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* that it is

prohibited to make so many temples and so many programmes on a big scale:

*bahu-grantha kalabhyasa vyakhyavada-vivarjanam vyava
hareha pyakarpanyam sokadyavasavartita
(Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhuh Madhya, 2.79.76)*

When our Guru Maharaj was delivering lectures from *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* on the 64 kinds of devotion, I noted, "Establishing temples and programmes on a large scale is prohibited there, but our Srila Guru Maharaj is doing that very thing. On a big scale he is making propaganda and money, and he is spending also in great quantities to construct the temples and other things. In *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* Rupa Goswami has prohibited this but yet our Guru Maharaj has undertaken all these things. What will he say when this point comes up for discussion?"

Then I found that in one or two words he explained the whole thing. He said, "It is a question of personal capacity. One man may manage an empire and may still find time for leisure whereas another man is barely able to manage his family and cannot find any leisure-time." So it depends on the capacity of the individual whether something will be considered great or small. It is a question of personal capacity, and according to our capacity we must try our best.

Chapter 4

Affectionate Krsna

Some poets can describe very beautifully anything they touch; that is called *kavi*. Someone may be a renowned *kavi*, but that does not mean he is an Acharyya. His life may be a filthy one, and what we receive from him is not acceptable. Professor Nisikanta Sanyal, the author of *Sri Krsna Chaitanya*, was a very strong and almost 'blind' follower of our Srila Guru Maharaj. After coming to this line of Gaudiya Math he noted in his diary, "One who does not sincerely believe in a particular

creed, but goes to write about and eulogize that line of thought, is a hypocrite. We must be very careful about this: to see if a man does not actually believe what he himself says. If the man and his word are different we must not believe him, rather we should be very careful in his association. He does not believe in what he is saying. He himself does not believe it, so he is just a hypocrite who is double-dealing!" This was found in Nisikanta Sanyal's diary.

Once a doctor came to give me treatment when I was ill. He said, "You have come this far in your life and have passed so many days wearing your red cloth, what have you achieved?" He wanted to know: "You are passing so many days as a red-clad man, but have you got anything?"

I said, "Yes; and I think I have enough as to say with boldness that what is written by so many big poets who don't have the conviction given in their own writings is all false! They may hold the highest position in the 'culture' of the present day, but what they are giving is all wrong and filthy. This much I have understood!"

One of my friends from my previous life also came to see me and put to me a straight question. He asked, "What have you got, have you seen God?" I answered, "No, I have not yet seen Him as you may think He is to be 'seen'."

Then he asked, "What have you got, that for so long you have lived such a life?" Then I told him, "The great famous *kavis* of our land, they had nothing, and what they said is all false, this much I have understood!" He was very much depressed and went away. This kind of 'sight,' when they said that "this is God," and "I have seen God," is all false and empty. It is all *saguna*: it is within Maya.

There is another important example that comes to mind. I had been in the Mission perhaps only a year or so. At that time the Calcutta Math was in a hired house at Ultadingi, and on the Day of Appearance of Bhaktivinoda Thakur there was a festival. A pandal had been erected in the street, and meetings were going on there. One respectable zamindar was invited by our Godbrother, Goswami Maharaj, and he asked Prabhupada, "I want to have a very private talk with you."

It was on a dark night, and a meeting was arranged. Two chairs were placed together. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada came there and that gentleman sat close to him. I was thinking that Prabhupada should not be left alone, and so managed to take a position a little distance away in the darkness. I was also very curious: "What does he have to say?" Then that man, very close to our Guru Maharaj's ear, whispered, "Have you seen God?"

Srila Prabhupada's answer was, "What is the good of saying that, 'I have seen,' or, 'I have not seen'? As long as *you* don't know how to see or know what is necessary to see God, you cannot get any benefit by my mere statement that, 'I have seen,' or, *I* have not seen.' You are blind to both things. The first thing is that you should learn *how to* see God. You must get that sort of 'eye' to see God. Without that, any man may say, 'I have seen'—but what is that to you? You may be deceived! If I say, 'No, I have not seen your 'God'—what you have concocted within you as God—that will also just misguide you."

As Prabhupada tried to say this the zamindar repeatedly asked, "Have you seen, have you seen?" But Prabhupada firmly stuck to his own point: "That will be of no good to you. You should know what is God, how to see Him, and what is His nature; all of this you must study yourself, otherwise you will be deceived by anyone and everyone. A mere statement has no value." Such was the meeting I witnessed there.

On another occasion our Madhav Maharaj, who was first named Hayagriva Brahmachari, went with his cousin-brother, Narayana Mukharji, to visit Katwa in order to see Mahaprabhu's *Sri-Murti*. From there they came to see Mayapur and then to Srila Prabhupada. Prabhupada saw the two young men of fair complexion approaching him, and asked, "Where have you been?" Hayagriva answered, "We went to Katwa to have *darsana* of Mahaprabhu's *Sri Vighraha* there."

I heard from Madhav Maharaj himself that Prabhupada pressed him: "Did you see? Could you see Mahaprabhu?" They said, "Yes, ordinarily we have seen." But the way he put his question and pressed, "Have you had *darsana*?" raised some question within their minds, "Oh, he means something else. *Real* sight" They then reflected, "Yes, we have seen what ordinary men see. But that is not proper seeing. If we want to see Him, then we have to get such an eye by

going to Guru."

*om ajnana timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya caksur
unmilitam yena tasmai sri gurave namah*

"I was blind in the darkness of ignorance but my Spiritual Master applied the ointment of proper spiritual knowledge and thus opened my eyes. Unto him I offer my respectful obeisances." All these things came in Prabhupada's teaching.

Hayagriva Prabhu, who was previously Hrambo Banarjee, related that he had been working in a private European company when suddenly by reading a book of Sankaracharya he felt some intense indifference to worldly life. He then ran away to Hardvara and went far up into the hills where he stayed for three days and three nights under a tree, only eating some bael fruit. Then, as he told me, "I heard a sound: 'Leave here now, you will find a real Guru, a *sad-Guru*. You will find him, so now you leave.'" He came back down, and consequently to the Gaudiya Mission. That was Hrambo Banerjee, who was later called Ganesa, then Hayagriva Brahmachari, and finally Madhav Maharaj.

So the question is, "How to see?" The proper eye is necessary and that is called *divya-darsana*. In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna says to Arjjuna:

*na tu mam sakyase drastum, anenaiva sva-caksusa divyam dadami te
caksuh, pasya me yogam aisvaram
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.8)*

"By these present eyes of yours you will not be able to see Me. Therefore I give you supernatural eyes by which you can see My almighty, mystic power." But here we find another extraordinary consideration: Arjjuna already had the capacity of higher vision (to see the Lord in His two-handed human-like original form), so here the *divya-darsana* that was given to Arjjuna in order to see that Universal Form of the Lord meant he was to come down to a lower level. He had to actually come down to have that kind of *darsana* of the Lord, which

was not the highest. Then, when Arjjuna could not tolerate that *divya-darsana*, he said, "I cannot bear it. You please come to my level, as I had experience of You before." Then the Lord became first *catur-bhuja* (four-armed form of Narayana) and then *dvi-bhuja* (two-armed human-like form of Krsna), and Arjjuna said,

drstvedam manusam rupam, tava saumyam janarddana
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.51)

"O Sri Krsna, seeing this charming two-armed, human-featured form of Yours, now my heart has become fulfilled and pacified. Now I have come to my normal position."

Then the Lord said:

sudurdarsam idam rupam, drstavam asi yan mama deva apy asya
rupasya, nityam darsana-kanksinah
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.52)

"Oh Arjjuna, the chance to see Me as you are now seeing Me before you is very, very rarely attained. Even the gods constantly aspire for a glimpse of this human-like form of truth, consciousness and beauty."

Generally it may be thought that the *divya-darsana*, the vision of the Universal Form, is what is very rarely to be found. But by the specific use of the words *drstavam asi*, in the present tense, and not *drstavam* which is past tense, our interpreters say that here what is being referred to is the human-like form. The Lord is saying, *deva apy asya rupasya, nityam darsana-kanksinah*, "At present, how you are seeing Me, that is in My two-handed figure. But the public can't understand, they generally look to My *catur-bhuja-rupa*, four handed form. Or they look to My *divya-rupa*, which contains the whole cosmic manifestation within, as the highest; but that is a troublesome form of Myself. It is not natural, but it is like My playing the part of a magician: 'Everything is in Me! See this, and this and now this!' That is not *aprakṛta* but it is full of majesty of different types mixed together."

But the *aprakṛta-rūpa* is *dvi-bhūja*, the two-handed form. Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna:

*sudurdarsam idam rūpam, dr̥stavan asi yaṁ mama deva apy asya
rūpasya, nityam darsana-kanksināḥ
(Srimad Bhagavad-gītā 11.52)*

"This *saccidānanda* two-armed human-like form of mine which you are seeing is very, very rarely seen. Even the demigods constantly aspire for a glimpse of this form."

Of all the Lord's Pastimes, the highest is very near to that of human type— *aprakṛta*. It is like human life. Rather, human life has been fashioned after His highest form of Playful Life. The model is there in the original, highest form of life, and human society has been fashioned after that.

In the Bible also it is said, "God made man after His own image." And the *Vṛndāvana-līla* appears most human-like and ordinary, even to the extent where the Lord acts like a rogue and a debauchee by stealing, lying and doing anything and everything— all in the sweetest way. Without it being so arranged, those who serve the Lord in particular *rasas* cannot maintain their positions. Perhaps if He did not steal and make such boisterousness. Mother Yasoda would die! So such roguery and impertinence is there. Though externally Yasoda is angry, still her very constitution is such that if that impertinence were absent she could not live! An important part of *vatsalya-rasa* is the essential pleasure in tolerating the impertinence of the child.

Kṛṣṇa is always *aprakṛta*. *Prakṛta* means 'mundane' and *aprakṛta* means similar in appearance to the mundane plane but in fact just the opposite. He appears to be similar to the patient but it is not so.

*kṛṣṇera yateka khela sarvottama nara-līla nara-vapu tāhara svarūpa
gopa-veśa venukara nava-kisora natavara nara-līla haya anurūpa
kṛṣṇera madhura-rūpa suna sanatana
ye rūpera eka kṇa dubaya saba tribhuvana sarva-praṇi kare
ākarsana*

(*Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta, Madhya 21.101,102*)

"The most supreme form of Godhead is Krsna, who plays in His eternal Divine Pastimes just like a human being. An ever-youthful cowherd boy of Vrndavana, He enacts His Pastimes, always playing His flute. His beauty is so charming and sweet that the whole universe is flooded by an atom of it, and all beings are drawn irresistibly to Him."

It has been mentioned in the Scripture that amongst all the Lord's Pastimes the human-like Pastimes are the best. His human-like behaviour has been considered to be the highest and most tasteful conception. The highest type is not the godly, grave and majestic, rather the simplicity of His apparently ordinary human-like behaviour has been considered to be the best of all and the most original. Grandeur, majesty, and awe and reverence are not liked by the devotees of higher type. These qualities imply a very distant relationship whereas the human-like relationship is very intensely intimate and close, as if equal with us; and that has been said to be the highest mercy. When He shows such merciful Pastimes, that really is His highest position. There He appears as though of the same rank as His servitors and He is so merciful, so loving, and so affectionate. Sometimes Mother Yasoda whips Him and He weeps, and sometimes He carries His father's shoes upon His head, and sometimes His friends climb on His shoulders. Through this affection He in many ways shows Himself to be very homely; so very homely. His magnanimity, love and affection is of such a high degree that He becomes so homely.

The '*aprakṛta* realm' must be the origin of everything. It cannot but be so. Here in India we have our Vedic culture and tradition, but the present-day *pandits*— the European scholars—say, "No, the first origin of civilization was from Asia Minor, or Babylon, or some other quarter." The empirical scholars are of a particular opinion, but we do not accede to that. If we can accept that the *aprakṛta* realm is the origin of everything, then whatever is there, although appearing simple and plain, contains within it all the grandeur of Vaikuntha. In *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛtam* there is a description of the discussion

between Svarupa Damodara Goswami and Srivasa Pandit on *Hera-pancami* day. Srivasa Thakur was an incarnation of Narada Muni. In order that the truth be known to the public so others may understand, he pleaded on behalf of the opposition party. He spoke in favour of the supremacy Vaikuntha, with all its grandeur and splendour. In response Svarupa Damodara said, "It is not actually so, but, Srivasa, you, being in the mood and temperament of Narada Muni, can appreciate more about the majesty and grandeur of Vaikuntha. Don't you know, can't you remember that although the *ratnam*, the jewels etc., are all in Vrndavana in a suppressed way, the residents there do not like such things."

Those who are poor adore gold and jewels whereas those who have enough of such riches prefer flowers, trees, and all such natural, simple things. Similarly, the grandeur of Vaikuntha is suppressed in the *aprakṛta* world where there are *kalpa-vṛksas*— desire-fulfilling trees—and where everything is made of *cintamani*, touchstone. Anything can produce anything there in that original place! So. once we admit that to be the original position, by deduction we will see that everything, however gorgeous and dignified must all come from there. And that is the acme. By analysis and logic we must regulate our thoughts in that direction.

Chapter 5

Priority Service

Generally every movement coming from Kṛṣṇa's plane originates from the central will to satisfy Him. The whole *Svarupa-sakti* cannot be taken under any law; it is sweet will. *Yogamaya*, or *Svarupa-sakti*, gives the inspiration for one to be captured by the higher inner potency of Goloka and Vaikuntha, and in that way to become utilized for the purpose of the Centre. In this mundane plane inspiration draws us towards different stages of enjoying spirit. That vibration comes from innumerable local centres of local interest. Also in the attraction to the Centre there are many stages, but that vibration is from the Narayana Centre, the Rama Centre, the Kṛṣṇa Centre—all in

consonance with the main Centre. In Vaikuntha there are different types of *rasa* and inspiration than in Goloka, and the residents act accordingly. There are also different specific centres of interest, *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya*, and *madhura*, but all are for the satisfaction of the Absolute.

In this mundane plane we also find different centres but almost all are meant for local interest. All the different vibrations come to clash for different interests which are, on the whole, all of separate enjoyment. This is found in the material plane all the way up to Satyaloka, heaven. Above that are Viraja and Brahmaloaka from where no traceable vibration originates. Then again from Sivaloka onwards some vibration originates, but that is of service. That vibration is of different stages, but all are of Centre-carrying interest.

Here in this mundane universe those who come from the higher region always try to connect with the Centre. Some are able to escape from local interest and realize such a position. Although they may not be cent-per-cent converted, they may sometimes be used as agents of that world according to the wish of that higher plane. As much as they are inclined towards that central interest, they are utilized by the higher office.

Devotee: So one might be inspired from the higher plane to describe Krsna consciousness according to time and place?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It may be so. If he is so qualified, reliable and pure that he can catch and transmit the will from above, he may be selected as an agent to reveal the truth of that land.

Devotee: But it is a rare thing?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Rare, of course. When Mahaprabhu was in Puri, He utilized one of His devotees, Nrsimhananda, as the mediator. It is mentioned in *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta* that Nrsimhananda while here in Nabadwip would lose his senses and, being inspired by Mahaprabhu, would talk here about Him. Nrsimhananda would receive inspiration as though hypnotized from afar. A hypnotist can

normally only hypnotize within the range of his senses, but it may sometimes be possible also that from afar one can inspire, hypnotize and engage another as a medium. It is mentioned that Mahaprabhu did just that to Nrsimhananda Brahmachari who was able to tell what Mahaprabhu was doing. He also foretold Mahaprabhu's imminent arrival in Nabadwip as well as many other things. It was all true and verified in due course of time. Such things are possible.

In this modern age it is possible to communicate over long distances physically by means of radios, telephones, etc., but in earlier days this was done mentally. Mental and psychic powers previously were more developed by the *yogis* and devotees. Now physically such transmission is being achieved by scientific knowledge and it is generally easy for people at large to believe. But in previous days such communication was psychic, so ordinary people could not know how it was being done. We also tend to think it is impossible even though now it is physically possible by telephone to talk with others in America and London. Such modern communication is also a miracle. Previously the development was such that the *yogis* who may not even be devotees or connected in their practice with God, were able to develop such psychic powers that they were able to communicate on the mental plane.

It has also been recognized in the writings of the Western philosophers that it is quite possible and believable that Indian *yogis* can cure diseases from a distant place. In those writings the opinion has been given that by creating a magnetic force a disease may be cured, and also it has been considered that previously some Indian *yogis* may have had the mental power to do so. And all the big Indian *yogis* themselves say, and stand as proof, that so many wonderful things can be achieved only by improving psychic powers. They used to communicate with even the demigods. They were also able to go to the demigods, but only mentally, and similarly the demigods would come here. That transaction was not imaginary but was reliable and scientific.

Devotee: There is a great interest in the West in this subtle science of parapsychology.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. Several years ago some Russians came here to enquire amongst the Indian *yogis*: "How can we understand or read things that are far away such as on the moon, sun, mars, jupiter etc.?" They had heard that the ancient *yogis of India* could do such things.

The speed of the mind is considered to be most rapid, faster even than electricity or light. This appealed to the Russians who wanted to know whether any *yogis* were available who could help fulfil their material purpose: "We have sent a rocket towards Jupiter and wish to know whether by mental energy it is possible to receive information from there very quickly."

In India there is recognition that only the mind, and no other material thing, can be quicker than the velocity of light or the electron. *Manogati*, mind can hear. Despite the great distance, a far off place can be remembered within a second. The mind is the quickest conveyance, the quickest medium. So those Russian gentlemen came here with the enquiry: "We have come with some material object, to see if we can utilize the speed of mind in the case of scientific research." But finally they said, "No, we could not do it. We failed. It appears that we are unable now to meet a man with such capacity here in India."

Once I was delivering a lecture to an assembly of advocates. They put a question to me, "How is it that a few years ago we had higher connection with the demigods and Satyaloka but now we seem to have become disconnected? No god comes here although only a few years ago such things took place. Devarsi Narada and so many gods no longer come here, and we cannot go to them. Even in the time of the *Mahabharata*, gods used to freely come here, and Arjjuna and others used to go there to heaven. How has this come about?"

In reply I explained: "The psychic powers were very much improved at that time. The power to communicate subtly was very developed scientifically, but now we have lost that capacity."

I gave an example. Consider the present situation: the scientific civilization has created so many wonders such as aeroplanes, buses and rockets, but the whole world is afraid of atomic war, and if that should happen then everything may be ruined. The whole present civilization would be destroyed, but some books may be scattered here and there. In those books there is much mentioned about the present-day scientific advancement, so the later generations will read that there used to be aeroplanes, buses and so many things. But after the nuclear war those future generations of crippled persons will not be able to understand that such things really existed. They will consider, "What is written in these books is all false, all imagination." They will say that the scientific improvements were all imagination. Without any aeroplanes, rockets, etc. having remained, they will think, "All is bogus!"

Our present situation is similar: the extensive development of the mental powers that was cultured in earlier days is now no more. We have deviated from that previous position, so even if Devarsi Narada would come, we would not be able to see him. If Devarsi Narada comes here he will not come with a physical body but with his astral body. Our minds are not sufficiently developed to be able to detect that, but if they were, we would be able to see:

"Oh! Devarsi Narada has come." The impression in the mind's eye would be able to detect when such as Devarsi, Vyasadeva, Mahaprabhu or Nityananda Prabhu would come here. But that capacity has been blocked in the present age, rather this is the age where with a microscope we can scrutinize an insect or see a virus. This is the age now!

Devotee: Many years ago when Srila Swami Maharaj was in the West, a lecture programme was arranged but hardly anyone attended. The devotees apologized but Srila Swami Maharaj said, "Well, Narada Muni, Lord Brahma and many others came—I could detect that, but you were unable to see."

Srila Guru Maharaj: Just as when Sukadeva delivered *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, his Gurus—Narada, Vyasadeva, Atri, Vasistha and

others—all came there, similarly Srila Swami Maharaj went to the West with so much earnestness to preach the doctrine of Love Divine, so his Gurus went there to see how He was getting on. It is not impossible.

naham vasami vaikunthe, yoginam hrdayesu va mad baktah yatra gayanti, tatra tisthami narada

The Lord Himself says, "O, Narada, wherever My devotees sing my praises I cannot but be present there."

"Naham vasami vaikunthe— I do not live in the transcendental plane; *yoginam hrdayesu va—* nor in the heart of a *yogi*; *mad bhaktah yatra gayanti—* but wherever My devotees sing with most earnest heart; *tatra tisthami—* I present Myself there. I take My seat and hear their hearty song. Their singing and chanting carries Me from the heart of the *yogi* and even from the throne of My Vaikuntha. I run towards the place where the devotees chant with hearty devotion about Me: that is what really attracts Me most." Narayana Himself says this, therefore it is so that Narayana and His higher devotees come to attend such assemblies.

Devotee: Can mental powers still be developed or is it no longer possible due to the influence of *kali-yuga*, the age of quarrel?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It may be possible but devotees do not like to waste their time in such affairs—they have no time to lose. They do not care to cultivate any form of mystic *yoga*, rather their concentration is on service.

There is a story about a devotee who was very busily engaged and absorbed in the service of his Gurudeva. By his service he satisfied the Lord who came in disguise and said, "Dear devotee, I am satisfied with your services. Come, I shall take you to Vaikuntha."

The devotee replied, "No, no. I have no time. My Guru Maharaj has entrusted me with this service, so I must attend to it. I have no time to go to Vaikuntha with You." He had such attention towards his service

that he could not find time even to attend to the call to go to Vaikuntha.

We are to concentrate on our duty given by Gurudeva, and shall have no time to spare to go to Vaikuntha to fulfil our curiosity. Such sort of exclusive attention is laudable and necessary for the devotee. If the master says to his servant, "You have laboured a long time, now you are tired. Come and take your food." The dutiful servant may reply, "No, no, my Master, I have no time. I must finish this and then I shall go to take food." Such dealings are not impossible. Similarly a faithful worker on being called by his master to stop work and take rest may reply, "No, no I have no time to take rest now." I shall finish this, then I shall take rest." This is responsibility in service.

Another example is found in the service of Mother Yasoda. She was boiling milk for young Krsna, Gopal. He was engaged in sucking Mother Yasoda's breast while nearby some milk was being heated in a pot. Suddenly the milk came to the boil and overflowed into the fire. Immediately Yasoda forcibly took Gopal from her lap and went to take care of the milk.

Naturally, Krsna became dissatisfied to be snatched away from His Mother's breast. So it may apparently seem that Mother Yasoda committing an error: that she interrupted Krsna's immediate satisfaction of sucking her breast by forcibly putting him to one side to go to save the overflowing milk, which may or may not be going to be directly utilized for Him. But this is an extreme example to show how much care and attention must be paid to save and protect the materials to be used in the service of Krsna—even if that should make Him dissatisfied for the time being.

Everything is meant for Krsna, so we must preserve and take care of everything. "For the time being Krsna may be a little dissatisfied, but what does it matter? I need to look after His service materials." That should be our tendency and it is a very fine, very subtle thing to detect and understand. What is the underlying tendency? We must have the mood that everything belongs to Krsna, and at the cost of the present, the future must be kept up: "At present we may suffer, but we must

still store for our future." When this sort of tendency is in the interest of Krsna, it is to be appreciated. So we are to engage in *jnana-sunya-bhakti*—service with no mood of curiosity. It is not that we shall want to be a big word-juggler, *yogi*, *jnani*. or any type of 'big' person. But we shall feel satisfied if we have the chance to lead even a half-educated forest life, but as humble servants of the Gopis. Such humility, and not grandeur, satisfies Krsna most. Grandeur may be adored in Vaikuntha, but it is ignored in Vrndavana Dham. The Vrndavana Pastimes are simple, plain and ordinary: neither high nor low—but a golden average. The degree of meanness can be infinite. The degree of nobleness and grandness can also be infinite. But the middle point, we may say, is the golden mean. Love is there. Love does not want to see into the future, but only the present—the concentrated present. Love. For love we may risk the whole future and may not care at all about the past. "Act. Act in the living present." Grandness and reverence are not very suitable for love. We are to think that a plain life is the highest position for the transaction of love whereas grandeur disturbs us in our transaction of true love.

Chapter 6

Humility in Service

Devotee: Does Lord Balarama expand Himself into the form of the Dham? Is Vaikuntha-Dham an expansion of Lord Balarama?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is Lord Balarama's representation in the form of Sankarsana. Lord Balarama Himself is in Goloka, and his *Vaibhava*, extended or delegated Self, is in Vaikuntha.

Devotee: And He Himself expands into Goloka Dham?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, Goloka Vrndavana is all His expansion, but there He is always active through His expansion as the 'underground' *sandhini*, unifying, potency; whereas His *madhura-rasa* is passive. In Goloka, Radharani's *Vaibhava* is having full play, and Balarama's potency is there passively as Yogamaya. Balarama and

Yogamaya are of a similar function: both of them combined are conducting the arrangements of the stage for Krsna's Pastimes.

Devotee: Maharaj, what is the position of Subhadra?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Her position is not in Vrndavana, but in Dvaraka. The Subhadra in Jagannatha-Dham is *Arjjuna-patni*, the wife of Arjjuna, and sister of Krsna. She is within Dvaraka-lila and has nothing to do with Vrndavana. Besides this there is another Subhadra who is one among the many *sakhis* of Radharani in Vrndavana. She is called Bhadra or Subhadra.

Devotee: Is it Dvaraka-Subhadra who is also sometimes referred to as Yogamaya?

Srila Guru Maharaj: No. At the time when I was composing *Sri-Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam* I was faced with the position of having to think very deeply on this point: "What is the relation between Baladeva and Yogamaya?" Then, although I did not find it anywhere in the Scriptures, I discovered within myself that Baladeva must be the Master of Yogamaya. That is, after analysing the spiritual environment of Their Pastimes, I came to the conclusion that They must have some connection. They are both making arrangements for Krsna-lila, so Their relationship must be very intimate: Yogamaya must be in the position of the wife of Balarama. This conclusion came to me, and then later on I found that Jiva Goswami had also expressed such opinion that Yogamaya and Baladeva are very close and similar, and also Vrndadevi's nature and conduct is of very similar nature to Them in this respect. Yogamaya is in the inner circle—the *sakti* position—and Balarama is in the outer or 'male' circle—the second layer. But in the centre is only Krsna feeling His own ecstasy: *sukha-rupa krsna kare sukha asvadana* (*Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya* 8.158).

When extension begins, we find that Balarama and Yogamaya make arrangements for that transaction of Krsna where *rasamrta-murti*, Krsna the embodiment of all rasas, tastes Himself. *Rasa* is tasting Himself. It is different in the case of the mundane *rasa*, where the soul

is the subject and the '*rasa*' is an object to be 'enjoyed' by him; but here, *rasa* is Himself the Highest Subject, and He is tasting Himself—*sukha-rupa krsna kare sukha asvadana*.

He then gradually extends Himself and so we find Baladeva who is a facsimile of Krsna. But because in the science of *rasa*, Baladev's direct approach to *madhura-rasa* is not admissible. He extends Himself as a special potency, Yogamaya, and goes to perform in that *madhura-rasa*.

Another representation or delegation of Baladeva is Ananga Manjari, the younger sister of Srimati Radharani. It is found that Baladeva as Ananga Manjari participates there in the service of Radharani, whereas the external management is in the hands of Yogamaya. Ananga Manjari is the manifestation of Baladeva through whom He is represented in *madhura-rasa*. The science of *rasa* does not allow Baladeva to enter there with His own *abhimana*— mood—, therefore, we are told. He has to go there as Ananga Manjari. The laws of *rasa* are of such fine importance.

The extensive management is the department of the Yogamaya potency, but that is in a second-hand position. The first position is that of Krsna, and in a secondary position, helping Krsna-lila from outside, is Yogamaya.

Devotee: Didn't Balarama return to Vrndavana and perform the *Rasa-lila* with the Gopis?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, but that was with a separate group of Gopis. The interpretation and inner understanding of the Goswamis is that Balaram performed the *Rasa-lila* externally, but within His heart He was making *Rasa-lila* of Krsna. His position and personality is such: He is faithfully dedicated wholesale to the cent-per-cent satisfaction of the Centre. His very constitutional position is such that He cannot do otherwise. That is His intrinsic nature: to put everything towards the satisfaction of Krsna. So the key for service to the Master, Krsna Himself, is in His hand. And that Master is an autocrat! But He says, "Don't be jealous of Me. I am your friend. You are all My own, so don't be afraid."

*bhoktaram yajna-tapasam, sarvva-loka-mahesvaram
suhrdam sarvva-bhutanam, jnatva mam santim rcchati
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 5.29)*

"Your anxiety will subside when you come to understand that everything is in My hands and that I am not your enemy, rather I am your friend. I have a friendly relationship with you all. I am all-in-all, but I am your well-wisher and friend. When you come to realize this you will be in real peace, otherwise you will always have worry without end."

Our anxiety will end only when we shall see, "My own interest is fully represented in the Cause, in He who controls the whole. He must give me favourable consideration as He is my friend, and so there can be no fear of any misdeed or injustice." Only then can we find peace within our heart.

Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam, sarvva-loka-mahesvaram— the great Master .of all that we can conceive is the recipient of everything. *Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam*— everything, to the farthing, goes only to Him. *Siihrdam sarvva-bhutanam*— and He is friendly to me. He is friendly not only to me, but-the real interest of everyone is represented in His consideration. And, *jnatva mam santim rcchati*— only the person who realizes, "My interest is assured in the highest quarter of management," can attain real peace of heart. He will feel, "Yes, I have no worry, no anxiety."

In the Lila, however, we find so many kinds of anxiety and worry, but that is something else. It should not be equated with the life of this plane, rather it comes under another category:

*bahye visa-jvala haya, bhitare ananda-maya
krsna-premara adbhuta carita
(Sri Caitanya-caritdmrta, Madhya 2.50)*

This means that union-in-separation is the highest form of union. It cannot be attacked or challenged by any circumstances. It appears to

be very painful, but internally the position is one of greater intensity of ecstasy. The real gist of the whole meaning of the study of this higher subject is this, and we are to understand and follow it with particular attention and intelligence.

The real fact is that this is only intelligible by faith, *sraddha*. *Buddhi-grahyam atindriyam*— no precedents will come to 'prove' such things; it has no other verification. Faith alone can enter that domain. It is an infinite thing but we are tiny people, so what capacity does our faith have? Even in this universe there is so much which seems far beyond the stretch of our faith. Our faith is in such tiny measure when compared with the Infinite, so how much can we boast to have in relation to Him? Therefore why should we be so miserly in our faith? To be miserly will be suicidal. Faith will come first, then research will follow. In this world also, it is the same: the intuition, the theory or idea of a thing comes first and research follows. So unbridled faith must be allowed to have its free movement there.

Devotee: There is a verse by Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati:

vancito 'smi vancito 'smi, vancito 'smi na samsayah visvam gaurarase magnam, sparso 'pi mama nabhavat

"Deceived, deceived, no doubt, deceived am I! The whole universe became flooded with love of Sri Gauranga, but alas, my fate was not to get even the slightest touch of it."

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is a clear thing and it expresses the very nature of the devotee. That is, as much conception of the infinite as one has, he must feel within himself that he is insignificant to the same degree. It is the infinite conception from the view of relativity. It is a question of relativity. When you can see a bigger thing then relatively you cannot but think that you are very infinitesimal. When you look at a great thing, in comparison with that you are the smallest. Do you concede this? When you see the ocean you can perceive how tiny you are in relation to that great magnitude of water. In comparison you are very insignificant, is it not? So apply that principle in this instance also. One who looks at a great thing, whether

in size, or knowledge or love, when standing at the verge of a great thing, from the consideration of relativity he shall think, "I am very poor and very low."

Purisera kita haite muni se laghistha: Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami says of himself, "I am so mean, lower even than the worm in stool." When one has seen such pure and higher things, in comparison with that he must have such feelings. Mahaprabhu Himself says, "I am as insignificant as an insect but still I continue my life. My life is like an insect's."

*na prema-gandho 'sti darapi me harau
krandami saubhagya-bharam prakasitum
vamsi-vilasy-anana-lokanam vina
vibharmmi yat prana-patangakan vrtha
(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 2.45)*

"Such a pure and merciful ocean of love I see spread before Me but I am so unqualified that I do not receive even a drop of it. Why? Because I am a hypocrite. I really do not want it, so I don't deserve it. I don't want it, and so My life is unfulfilled. I have come near such a vast and beautiful thing but I am not allowed to even touch or receive a drop of it. I am so low, so unqualified. Why? Because I am a hypocrite. But still I think I am great, that I have importance, *pratistha*. Despite all of this I cannot leave my vanity, my false vanity. I want to display that I have some great achievement of *Krsna-prema* and therefore I shed tears. But these tears are not real, for still I am addicted to My lower self, I am self-centred. My self-centredness has not been dissolved. I am a seeker of My own fame, so I am not being allowed to partake of that ocean of nectar."

So, seeing such ocean of nectar one must gradually come to see himself as the meanest of the mean. As much as one comes in connection and consciousness of the higher reality then relatively he is compelled to think himself to be the meanest of the mean. That is the truth. That is the law of nature.

Therefore devotees of the higher order are seen always to say, "Everyone has the chance but not I. I cannot avail myself of this

ocean."

Narottama dasa Thakur said, "Jagai and Madhai were such great culprits but they were released and received the nectar, but it seems that only I, Narottama, am barred and cannot touch it."

It is the nature of one who appreciates the highest that he will think himself to be in the lower position. We find this in the practices and sayings of the great men. It is a question of *trnad api sumcena, taror api sahisnuna*, and this is a necessary qualification of a devotee. We must have that sort of qualification, that sort of heart. That must not be an artificial thing but if we are not ready to think ourselves lower,, we cannot come in connection with the higher.

trnad api sunicena, taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena, kirttaniyah sada harih

Your attitude towards the search will be such that you are almost unfit to search for such a goal, yet you sincerely want to begin your new life. To feel you are so unqualified is the qualification for the finite to approach the Infinite. If you think that you are something, that is a disqualification in your search for the Infinite.

With humility you are to take the Name of the Lord, that Divine Sound. But the process is that you must be mindful of this necessity of humility otherwise the search will be in vain and your attempt will be lost. So what will be the proper attitude? *Trnad api sunicena*— you are to think yourself to be the meanest of the mean and the humblest of the humble. Sincerely you must feel that way. *Taror api sahisnu*— your forbearance must not have any limit. You must not feel, "So many days, so many ages I have passed in this search but I haven't reached there yet—I shall give up." Be sure that you have come to search for the Infinite. So there is no time limit and no room for any vanity that you shall think yourself to be master of that higher realm, for that is a disqualification and must be given up from the beginning. *Amanina manadena*—your highest enemy is your self-seeking nature: to think that you have some standing, some greatness in you. That sort of vanity must be abandoned. *Amanina*— you must never seek any honour for yourself: no reward. *Manadena*— at the same time you

must be modest in your dealings with all others, then your *amanina* will be genuine. If you do not like to give the honour to others then your own self-seeking will be present and traceable. But when you can give honour to others without wanting any for yourself, you will be qualified to search for Govindam, for the Centre, the Infinite, the Absolute. You are a qualified student if you can give up all these bad and unfavourable prejudices. If you come to search after the Absolute then you must have such qualifications otherwise you will fail. So we find that the great devotees always condemn themselves to the extreme, beyond what we can conceive even for ordinary persons.

Kaviraj Goswami, who is the giver of the highest conception of the truth says,

*jagai madhai haite muni se papistha purisera kita
haite muni se laghistha mora nama sune yei
tara punya ksaya mora nama laya yei tara papa haya
(Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Adi 5.205,206)*

"I am worse than a worm in stool. When Jagai and Madhai came in the relativity of Mahaprabhu they were considered to be the worst sinners, but I am worse than them. My sins are so dirty no one can even dream such things. I am such a great sinner that whoever will hear about me, dirt and sin will enter him through his coming in contact with my name. Sin will enter one who once hears my name, and his good qualities will vanish." Kaviraj Goswami continues, "I am a person of the worst type, but the grace of Nityananda Prabhu possesses such a high degree of disinfection that He has given me so many things: He has taken me to Vrndavana and has given the relationship of Rupa, Raghunath and Govinda. There is no qualification in me but all is the grace of Nityananda Prabhu."

By this he wants to express his highest gratitude to Nityananda Prabhu: "It is shameful to speak about one's own life but still I do this. Why? If I do not do so then I shall be ungrateful to the grace and magnanimity of Nityananda Prabhu. So fallen am I but Nityananda Prabhu has given me all these things: Vrndavana, Rupa, Sanatan, Govinda, Mahaprabhu, Raghunath Dasa and so much else. It is all the

gift of Nityananda Prabhu. It is His unconditional gift to this one with no qualification, and therefore I have mentioned: 'Yes I have such things.' If I do not say so then I shall be an offender to Nityananda Prabhu's grace, so I am compelled to confess that I am so sinful and fallen but by His grace I have received these things."

The conception and feelings of all the great devotees are of such type. Srila Prabhodananda Saraswati similarly expressed, "It is there. I can see and feel that it is there but I am deprived— *sparso 'pi mama nabhavat.*"

Radharani Herself says, "Krsna is qualified in every way. I can't blame Him in any way at all, but still He is so cruel to us all. He left Vrndavana and so we are all feeling extreme pain, but I cannot accuse Him in any way. This is my *durddaiva-vilasa* ('Pastime of separation')"

This is union in separation and is a peculiar type of achievement. Externally there is suffering but internally there is transcendental ecstasy: *bahye visa-jvala haya, bhitare ananda-maya* (*Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 2.50*). When one actually has the thing, he says, "No, I don't have it." This is the special characteristic of the Infinite. One who has it in his possession says, "No, I have nothing." This is because it is a statement from the negative to the Positive. And when he says, "I have it," then he has not! The negative cannot assert at all but can only attract. Assertion is only with the Positive.

So the negative can hanker, he can express his own reality in the negative characteristic. He can express his degree of want. The measurement of his position is according to his negative tendency: his necessity, his depth of attraction—not of gain. It is just the opposite to the general measurement of one's standing in this mundane world. The real measurement is in the negative side: the depth of necessity and the depth of attraction, but not of gain. Only the Positive can assert His existence.

Devotee: This is beautiful!

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. And it is because of your beautiful

attraction to all these things that they are being drawn out.

Devotee: It is one thing for such great personalities as Kaviraj Goswami to make these statements. But for men like ourselves, we actually are like that!

Srila Guru Maharaj: That will be the standard to keep in front of us, the ideal as given by our Guru Maharaj. But we must not assume ourselves to be of the standing of Kaviraj Goswami—that is another type of wrong thinking also.

In his book *Caitanya Bhagavat*, Vrndavana Dasa Thakur tries his utmost to describe the greatness and magnanimity of Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. Then he says, "In such a modest and broad way I am appealing to the people at large, I am touching and holding their feet and putting to them: 'Please turn and appreciate the magnanimity and great gift of Gaura-Nitai, it is for your benefit. Please accept this. No matter what class of sinner you are or what filthy position you are in, you please try to come and connect with Gaura-Nityananda. You will be blessed and all your hankering will be fulfilled. Do it, it will be for your benefit.' But, after so much fervent appeal to earnestly request you all to appreciate Gaura and Nityananda, if anyone still wants to criticize and blame Nityananda and Gaurariga then I want to kick his head!" This is also a peculiar sentiment that may come in the heart of a devotee. And how to explain it?

So many superficial critics have said "Kaviraj Goswami has appealed in such a modest way but this Vrndavana Dasa has such vanity! His vanity is so great. He is so proud that he wants to kick those who do not have faith in Gaura-Nityananda. His attitude is most impertinent." Before joining the Mission I had read such comments, but when I came to the Gaudiya Math I heard a particular interpretation from our Srila Prabhupada. He explained that by this statement Nityananda Prabhu has come to the relief of the most sinful and heinous. They have no other method to come to divinity, but Nityananda Prabhu has opened a way for them: they are being punished by His devotee and so Krsna's special attraction will be drawn towards them. Krsna's attraction will be there because apparently His child—His devotee—has done something wrong, so He will come to compensate

for that. If punishment is given by His devotee to a member of the public, Krsna's special attention will be drawn to that man to compensate. He has tolerated and by way of compensation he will be benefited. Vrndavana Dasa has given them some punishment and dishonour; they are mortified so they must be taken in and some special grace will come to them. So by this statement Vrndavana Dasa has, even to the worst accusers, opened the door to enter into Krsna-loka. We received that sort of interpretation from our Srila Prabhupada.

From the stand-point that there cannot be any filthy thing in the devotee, then by whatever they do, some connection will be established with Krsna. Ultimately a mother has no feeling of revenge to her child. When she chastises her child then he may cry, but the mother will again come and take him on her lap. So there is no permanent apathy, jealousy or any spirit of revenge, but rather any connection that comes in any way is only of compassionate temperament to draw him forwards. Of course that does not mean that willfully we should offend the devotee and try to get benefit thereby! That will be *aparadha*. It will be in the category of offence to think, "I will take the Name and the reaction for sinning will not affect me."

Chapter 7

Intelligently Aware

Devotee: What is the real meaning of the word *anartha*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: *Anartha* means 'separate interest.' Krsna consciousness is causeless, *nirguna*, it has no end. *Nirguna* means that the central flow and vibration of Krsna consciousness is eternal. That wave has no end. Any interest which is separate from Krsna consciousness is *anartha*. '*Artha*' means 'necessity' and '*anartha*' is that which is not my necessity—that which is opposed to my necessity, being based on separate consciousness and interest. So to get out of the trap of separate interest which is misleading us, and to learn how to read the Infinite, we are to identify with the

universal flow, the universal wave. At present we are being carried away by different waves of separate-interest consciousness— *anartha*, it is not necessary for us. Our only necessity is to merge in the wave of the universal interest, which is for Itself, for Himself.

The Lord says:

aham hi sarvva-yajnanam, bhakta ca prabhur eva ca
(*Bhagavad-gita*, 9.24)

"I am the only enjoyer of all sacrifices, of all movement in this world. I am the only enjoyer, and everything belongs to Me unconditionally."

God's position is such. He is paramount. He is the highest harmonizing centre, and we must all submit cent-per-cent to Him. Any deviation from that is *anartha*. *Anartha* means 'meaningless,' it has no meaning. The only real meaning or purpose worthy to be served is the connection with the universal wave, the universal movement. Anything besides that is *anartha*—undesirable and unnecessary. The *anarthas* will serve no purpose. We are in connection with *anarthas*, undesirable things which won't serve any real purpose towards our cause. But the real cause of our life, and the whole satisfaction of our very existence will be found only in connection with the universal wave of the whole Absolute. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is the most universal, fundamental wave, and we have to catch that. Our goal, our satisfaction and the very fulfillment of our life is only to be found there, in that layer, that plane, and not in the superficial plane of nationality interest, family interest, social service, etc.—for that is provincialism.

One section is busy with many local interests, and another section wishes to stop all activity. To stop one's own movement, to do away with one's own existence, is renunciation, *samadhi*, and is also suicidal. So we have to give up renunciation as well as enjoyment. The tendency to do evil and also the tendency to go on strike, both are to be given up. In a nation, we may find so many workers doing some wrong, going against the principle of the law; but that is hooliganism and is bad. At the same time, to go on strike, refusing to work, is also

bad. The good path is only to work for the interest of the country.

This we have to learn: from local interest we must go to the universal, the Absolute. We are not to have any local interest however extensive it may be. Whether self-centred, family-centred, village-centred or society-centred as in humanitarianism, it is all only a part of the Infinite. This is the fact, and generally we are to try to understand things in such a way. The technical words like *anartha nivrtti*, *bhava*, *asakti*, all these are covered by this understanding.

Lord Kṛṣṇa has recommended in *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* how one can conquer *kama*, lust, by regulating the senses. He advises us to become acquainted with the nature of the soul, then all the problems caused by *kama* will be turned into ashes:

*indriyani parany ahur
indriyebhyah param manah
manasas tu para buddhir
buddher yah paratas tu sah*

*evam buddheh param buddhva
samstabhyatmanam atmana
jahi satrum maha-baho
kama-rupam durasadam
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 3.42,43)*

Lust is not easily accessible, but is hidden. We cannot easily trace where he lives, but he comes suddenly and, after looting, disappears. But we are told here that really he lives in the intelligence, the mind and the senses. To conquer that lust we are to regulate the senses, but in order to do so we first have to analyse what the senses are and what is their position, and then, what is the position of the internal king of the senses, the mind. After that we are to analyse what is the intrinsic position of the *buddhi*, the faculty of reason, judgement and intelligence. Then, with the help of reason, we are to try to find out what is in the background of that faculty of reason, of judgement and of decision making.

In the background is a pencil-thin ray whose nature is diametrically opposite to the world of experience. In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* an

example is given that in the night a cloud may cover the moon. Though the cloud obscures the moon, still the cloud can only be seen by the light of the moon.

*na rarajodupaschana, svajyotsna bhasitairghanaih aham matya
bhasitaya svabhusa puruso jyatha*

In this example the soul is likened to the moon and the *ahankara* is likened to cloud cover. The sense-consciousness, the mind and the intelligence have all combined to form a system, *ahankara*, which has covered the soul. But they are seen, and it is possible for them to act, only because there is light—the light of the soul, the moon. So by the help of our reason we must try to perceive what is above reason, and we shall come to see that it is the *atma*, the soul. In this way we may have some direct connection with the *atma*, or at least some conception, however vague, of its existence and nature. At that time our whole material aspiration will turn into trash and within ourselves we will be able to conquer all the charms of this world. The Lord's advice in *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* is to somehow or other try to obtain understanding of the true nature of our own *atma*. We are really of such a superior nature and hold a noble, dignified position in the higher plane; but lust and so many base things have come to entrap us.

Raso 'py asya, param drstva nivarttate (Bg. 2.59). By even slightly coming in contact with the dignified position of our own soul, all worldly charm will vanish; and even that will seem to be a negligible thing compared to the awakening of higher levels of realization, up to the Super-soul—Paramatma—then to Narayana and Kṛṣṇa! There is so much ecstatic enjoyment on that side and it will be realized only when it will be revealed within us. Though to our present conception it is far away, still, that experiencer, that taster, is within us: it is the *jivatma*. And if we try to concentrate even for a second there, we will find what a dignified position the soul holds. We shall think, "Who are these thieves? The intellect, mind and senses are all thieves and plunderers. They are taking me into the land of misery as if through some intricate conspiracy." It will seem like that to us.

indriyani parany ahur, indriyebhyah param manah

(*Bhagavad-gita*, 2.42)

Our senses are superior in comparison to all the things we experience around us. Suppose we were devoid of all our senses of touch, sight, hearing and so on, then we would have no conception of anything external. The world would mean nothing to us.

Then again, the central figure of all the senses is the mind. Someone may call but we may find: "He was calling me? Oh, I was unconscious: I was unmindful and did not hear. I have my senses but because I was unmindful I did not hear or see him." So the mind is in the centre. And the mind has two functions, *sankalpa-vikalpa*—"I want this, I don't want that—I don't want that, I want this." This is mainly the function of the mind.

Then comes the *buddhi*, intelligence. From the mind we are to go up to the *buddhi*, the reason. What is it? Discrimination. "Oh, my mind wants that, but it will bring such a reaction, so don't go to do it." The *buddhi*, the intelligence or faculty of judgement will give the warning, "Don't go! Don't listen to what the mind says; don't obey him." That is the intelligence.

Then if going up from there, surpassing the intelligence, we search for what is next, what is above the intelligence, backing it and making the function of intelligence possible, we will be able to see, "Oh, this is my real self and everything else is an outside extension in the material world, it is all a material overcoating. I can leave it, and with only myself, my own *atma*, alone I can go up to somewhere higher. This present atmosphere is not at all necessary for me, rather it is harmful, a coating, a garment which has been thrust onto me in order that I come in connection with this bad environment." With this realization, with our soul proper we can go in a higher direction, towards Paramatma, Narayana and Krsna.

Chapter 8

Beyond the Yogi

Devotee: Maharaj, I read that in the dream state the living entity also

sees. So, what is that medium by which one sees in a dream? What kind of 'eye' is that?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The mental system, that is the subtle-body within, called *sukma-deha*, cannot only see; he has eyes, ears, the sense of touch as well as all the other senses. Everything that exists in the form of flesh and blood is also there in our subtle body; it is closer to our real self and is more perfect than this external body. Everyone has that mental system. There is a mental world with its own government where Yamaraj is the judge. Independent of the physical body, the mental body can live and move in different levels in that subtle region. Good and bad are there in degrees, but all within the jurisdiction of the three modes of nature within this *brahmanda*, this material universe.

Sri Ramanujacaryya says that dreams are not false; just as we have experiences in our waking life, we also live through many experiences in dreams. In our dreams we feel pain and pleasure, thereby many of our reactions are finished. By suffering in the physical life, the result of bad *karmma* finishes. By feeling pleasure, our *puny am*, merit, is exhausted. Similarly in a bad dream we feel some pain and as a result some of our previous bad *karmma* finishes; and in a good dream when we feel happiness and pleasure, some *punyam* resulting from our piety is finished. That kind of life is also 'real' in the mundane sense.

The higher planetary systems Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svar, Mahah, Jana, Tapah, Satya, are various stages within material existence, but where are they? They are not in the physical plane but in the mental plane, the world of mental experience. Devotee: So are the living entities there already living in their subtle bodies, not in gross bodies of flesh and blood? Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. Even the trees and stones have their subtle bodies, but they are not awakened sufficiently. The degrees of awakenment are all different. Misconception under the modes of mundane nature (*guna-mayi*) extends, according to its degree, up to Satyaloka, the plane of Lord Brahma; and finally the negative side merges into Viraja and is finished. Then the spiritual plane begins with Brahmaloaka, the spiritual effulgence, and ascends through the levels of spiritual variegatedness from Sivaloka to

Vaikuntha. Above that is Ayodhya, then Dvaraka, and finally Vrndavana in Goloka. So gradation extends everywhere up to Svayam Bhagavan in Radha-Kunda. There are the *Rasa-lila*, the Govardhana-lila and the Pastimes at Radha-Kunda, and in all these the standard of measurement is according to the *rasa*, the *anandam*: the degree of ecstatic joy. Each individual country has its own currency such as dollars, pounds, rupees, roubles, yen, etc.; but the international standard is gold. Similarly *rasa* or *anandam* is the universal standard by which we are to measure what is high and what is low.

Devotee: Why don't the Gaudiya Vaisnavas use any *yoga* practices such as *yoga-asanas*, *pranayama*, etc. in their service to Krsna?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The Gaudiya Vaisnavas discard any artificial things. God is with the heart and that is the important part. We are to appeal to the heart and have transaction with the heart, and not that by manipulation of the natural forces we shall gain some mystic power and try to exert that on God. Is that a form of worship? For one who has a heart, the hearty transaction is the most natural. And that is service. Satisfaction is for the Lord so what is the value of trying to gain some power from elsewhere and by dint of that, to try to encroach upon Him? What is the result of doing *yoga*? It will give some power but what effect can that power have on Him? None. We are not to try to exert our energy upon Him, but the opposite is necessary. We are to consider that we are the most fallen of the fallen and the meanest of the mean. "I want Your grace. Please accept me as a slave, as Your meanest servant." This is the way to approach the higher and not that we are to gather some power and by dint of that power jump on that Superior Entity, for that is not the process of getting Him, of receiving His favour. Favour is favour!

The Lord is all-complete and all-perfect. If we want His favour we must approach keeping ourselves in the meanest position. We have no position. We are nowhere. We are wholesale dependent upon Him. This is our natural position, our constitutional position. We are wholly dependent upon Him. So any petition to Him must be with this temperament: "I want Your favour. Your grace. Please accept me. I am so heinous, so sinful, and the meanest of the mean. You are my

best friend, but neglecting You I left and went somewhere else to search for my prospect, I was so mean. I am not only a sinner but I am a traitor, a treacherous man." In this way we are to go back to our highest and most affectionate friend.

What help will this *yoga* power do for me? He is above all seduction. Shall I think that with the power of *yoga* I shall influence Him to favour me? It is not possible for Him to be controlled in any way by yogic power; so *yoga* can give me no benefit. What will *yoga* do for me? He is all-independent, absolute. He is perfect in Himself. To try to exert other influences upon Him will have no effect rather that will anger Him. Instead we are to approach Him with some recommendation or with a guardian.

The Guru and Vaisnavas are our guardians. We are not to go to any external power of nature but to His agents, and ask them to plead for us. By *yoga* we can acquire some subtle power, but no power can work on Him against His sweet will. We must approach Him in the line of His sweet will and with those who have faith in His sweet will. Those who have faith in His sweet will are His devotees. Through them we must approach Him and not by any attempt through any other power, for that will give just the opposite result. If we want to know Him, it is futile! We cannot know Him by our attempts. Still, if we find such necessity, we shall pray, "Please make Yourself known to me," otherwise it is not necessary to waste our energy asking that He will reveal Himself. If we can leave the idea that we must know Him then that request becomes redundant. Rather our mood should be, "I want to satisfy You. I want to contribute something for Your satisfaction. Please accept me. You are full. You are perfect. You have no needs, but for my necessity please give me some sort of service." Service means in the line of satisfaction to Him, and that should be our attitude to approach Him. To approach a friend, an affectionate friend, so many mystic persons should not be called to help in our attempt.

*yamadibhir yoga-pathaih, kama-lobha-hato muhuh mukunda-sevaya
yadvat, tathatmaddha nil samyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.6.35)*

It may be possible for us to control our senses to a certain extent and for some time by the practice of *yoga*, but *yoga* cannot give the Absolute. That He is Absolute means He is above all. Absolute means that He is self-sufficient; He is not dependent on any other thing. *Yoga* can only help us to control our mental and physical anomalies or eccentricities, that too only for the time being, not for eternity. For the time being, lust, anger, greed, illusion, etc. (*kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, etc.) all may be brought under control but only for some temporary period. *Mukunda-sevaya*— but if we can engage ourselves in the service of Mukunda, then all disturbances will leave us once and for all. By finding the sweet taste in His service and company, all these so-called charming proposals will retire eternally. The charm for lust, the charm for anger or for greed, all these things will vanish altogether and won't come back again if only we can get the taste of serving the Lord, Mukunda.

*naham vedair na tapasa, na danena na cejyaya sakya evam-vidho
drastum, drstavān asi yān mama bhaktya tv ananyaya sakya,
aham evam-vidho 'rjjuna jñatum drastum ca tattvena, praveṣtum ca
parantapa
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.53,54)*

"All other means fail. Only exclusive devotion can draw Me as you see Me here, Arjjuna, but other things cannot lead to such a position. Temporary devotion also will not be sufficient, but what is necessary is permanent, exclusive devotion."

*sarvva-dharmman parityajya, mām ekam śaraṇam vraja
(Bhagavad-gita 18.66)*

"Reject all else and only concentrate on My own Self for that is the only sort of devotion that can draw Me to the devotee. All else is futile and shameful. It is not that someone will come with hired persons to canvas Me. No! My agents are the best benefactors to you. They are searching to canvas persons in my favour. My agents are there and not for any business purpose. Their business is to do good to others, and with this idea so many agents are out to canvas for Me. Come through

them and do not seek any recommendation from outside to use various means to try to force Me to favour you. That is not the proper path, but come to Me through My own agents. They have no aspiration to fulfil for themselves. They are all-given to My service and they are wandering trying to recruit persons, to benefit them. So come through My agents, never otherwise. What is *yoga*? There is air and there are so many things but by controlling those do you think you will force Me to come to you? I am the Absolute Autocrat. I don't care for anything else. I have no necessity to care for anything else. Not any force, any tactics, any cunning methods, any canvassing— nothing can influence Me. I am the Autocrat. And admitting the line of autocracy, try to come to Me. There are many demigods. They are making trade, but I am not amongst the commodities of their trading. None can make trade with Me. I am Absolute. I look only for devotion, exclusive devotion which is not formal, but natural, hearty and sincere. I look for that. I look for the heart and not for anything else— *bhava-grahi-janarddanah*."

*patram puspam phalam toyam, yo me bhaktya prayacchati tad aham
bhakty-upahrtdm, asnami prayatatmanah
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 9.26)*

"Whatever My devotee offers to Me with sincere devotion, with sincere affection, I accept that. It does not matter whether it is a leaf, a flower, water, or anything else. Rich food or rich presentations are not necessary for Me, but what I want is the heart. I want sincerity and good faith. That is the highest requirement within Me."

There is a carefully written poem: "Oh Kṛṣṇa, You have everything but only You do not have Your heart. Your heart has been stolen by the Gopis. You have everything except for Your heart and mind, they are not present in You for they have already been stolen by the Gopis. So You take my heart. You accept my mind. That is what is wanting in You, so please accept my heart and mind for Yourself. Your heart is missing, and that has attracted my heart towards You, so please take it."

Chapter 9

The Foundation of Fortune

Devotee: What advice do you have for a devotee who is struggling along in his spiritual life, with no taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The first question is, struggling for what? 'Struggling' means struggling for something. A struggle presupposes something—its aim and object, its purpose. So, what is the aim of that struggle?

The German philosopher, Hegel, has given his philosophy called 'Ideal Realism.' He says that the ideal is not unreal or abstract imagination, but is real and all-important whereas the material body is nothing, rather it is only a servant to obey the dictation of the ideal. First there is the idea, then the body follows after it. So the ideal is real. This philosophy was put forward by Hegel.

So, 'struggle,' but struggle for what? A struggle may be of two types. First is the case where there is no taste for mundane enjoyment or renunciation but there is the desire for something unknown but at least above these two aims of life. If the person feels, "I can't tolerate the world of enjoyment, but also I dislike renunciation," then it is presupposed that he has some previously acquired *sukṛti*, devotional credit, in the background. From his subconscious region will come the desire, the struggle for the company of a *sadhu*, a good agent, a good Master who can help Him. He will feel, "I am in a vacant position. I want some shelter. Who is there who can give me shelter? Who can save Me?" He may feel this sort of uneasiness—both dissatisfaction with the present, and also no sight of any positive engagement in the future. Yet he is unconsciously wanting something. To have this hankering for something positive presupposes some *sukṛti*. This is one type of struggle.

Another is where there is no positive aim but only the aim to get out of the undesirable negative side. This desire for renunciation, to enter

samadhi and be reduced to zero, to be finished, is like committing suicide. Just as when a person who cannot tolerate an unfavourable situation feels, "I cannot maintain my life any more," and so commits physical suicide, similarly renunciation is spiritual suicide. He feels, "I have no taste for this mundane world where there is always struggling amongst so many transient things. I have no prospect here." Feeling in this way he desires to enter into *samadhi*. This is like putting a living man into a tomb and then sealing it up. But if one is neither satisfied here in the temporary mundane world, nor wants to commit suicide and so efface his existence, then if he is even subconsciously hankering for some bright life, it means that *sukrti* is underground within the foundation of his subconsciousness. After that, some *sadhu* may come to visit him and give him some good news and instructions, "Do this, do that." He will have some tendency to follow that advice, and from that stage gradually his positive life begins.

There is an example in one Godbrother. When he was a boy of perhaps eighteen or so, he was dissatisfied with his existing life within his family household, so he went to Jagannatha Puri. Within his mind and from the bottom of his heart he wanted to find the association of a *sadhu* and join with him. At that time our Guru Maharaj was in Puri and one of his followers who was a very learned and clever man, met him and asked, "You are a very simple boy. Why have you come here?" "I have come in search of a *sadhu*."

"Oh, then come with me!" He took him to the camp of our Srila Prabhupada, and he joined. The acquisition from his former life was such that when he went to search for the positive spiritual path he easily found it; and so he joined, and joined for ever. He joined at the age of eighteen years and received *sannyasa* at twenty-eight. But before accepting *sannyasa*, someone had discouraged him saying, "You are so young and it is not sure how long you will live, so to take so much risk is not very wise!" He was also hesitating, and said, "Prabhupada has proposed this but I am hesitating and some of my friends are also misleading me."

I put it to Srila Prabhupada that he was hesitating. Prabhupada's response to him was, "You are frightened? Fear is in *this* world but

you are going to take shelter in the *abhaya pada*, the fearless Holy Feet. Where is the fear? Don't have any apprehension. All fear is confined here in this plane, but you are going to take shelter above this area of fear. You want to enter into the fearless area, you are going to connect with the fearless world. Rather *this* world is the fearful place!" This came from his mouth. At last he accepted, and his *sannyasa* was given by Prabhupada in Puri. Every day in the morning for about a month he used to sing Srila Prabhupada's favourite *bhajana*: *Sri Rupa Manjari pada*. Practically, Prabhupada took him from Gaya to Puri only to hear it sung by his sweet voice. He sang:

*radhapadankita dhama vrndavana yara nama taha yena
asraya karila*

Bhaktivinoda Thakur says, "What is Vrndavana? It is where there are the footprints of Sri Radhika. The criterion of Vrndavana is this: that it has on its head the footprints of Srimati Radharani." This is Bhaktivinoda Thakur's finding. So, if we want to see what is Vrndavana, and who is Radharani and who is Krsna, then we must take some note, some clue, and some impression from this. Bhaktivinoda Thakur says that Radharani is all-in-all:

radhapadankita dhama vrndavana yara nama taha yena asaya karila

"Where does the name 'Vrndavana' belong? Upon whose head the footprints of Radharani are borne, that is Vrndavana!" It is all-sweet! And there everything is sweet because the paraphernalia has all emanated from Her. Just as the entire screenplay for a film evolves from the brain of the director, who then himself may come to act his own part within it, similarly the entire paraphernalia of Vrndavana has come from Sri Radhika.

And from Sri Gaurahga we receive the combined gift of the grace of all these things. His gift is full of so much transcendental sweetness and is eternal in its play.

There is a bird called a *cataka* which always faces towards the sky praying for water. His nature is such that he can only swallow from above and cannot collect from the ground. We should be converted

into that type of bird in our hankering temperament. for a divine drop of the divine sweetness, of the divine nectar which Mahaprabhu is distributing. Nectar, not honey, is the sweetest liquid of which we can ever conceive. Honey is mundane but nectar is something from above the mundane world. Honey is found here in this lower plane but nectar is only of our imagination. We have no experience of nectar in the mundane world, its character is transcendental. It is called *amrtam* or 'God's food.' There is nectar for the devotees, the godly, and poison for the demons.

Mahadeva, who gave indulgence to the demons, had to take poison generated from churning the Ocean of Milk. This appears to be a peculiar thing, but he took that poison on the order of Visnu, therefore through the connection of being engaged in Visnu's service he did not die, rather that poison became ornamental to him by making his throat blue. So sometimes Mahadeva puts a petition to Narayana, "You have given me this undesirable service only to deal with the culprits. What to do? It is Your will that I should be given charge of dealing with the demons, so sometimes I have to become friendly with them. But Your will is supreme." This is the position of Mahadeva who has the touch of the world above but who is the master of the whole of the misconceived area.

Devotee: What is the most direct and effective means to attain a taste of Krsna consciousness?

Srila Guru Maharaj:

*satam prasangan mama virya-samvido bhavanti hrt-kama-rasayanah
kathah taj-josaniid asv apavarga-vartmani sraddha ratir bhaktir
anukramisyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.25)*

"One will rapidly progress on the path of liberation, and naturally will develop firm faith, attraction and devotion, when he cultivates the activity of engaging in discussions about My glorious Pastimes in the association of pure devotees. Such activities are very nourishing to the ear and heart." And,

*krsna-bhakti-janma-mula haya 'sadhu-sanga' krsna-prema janme,
tenho punar mukhya anga
(Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta. Madhya 22.83)*

"By associating with the *sadhus* and gaining their mercy one can get *Krsna-bhakti* right up to the stage of *Krsna-prema*. Furthermore the practitioners very life depends on the association of the *sadhus*. Without *sadhu-sanga* it is not possible to receive the real seeds of *bhakti*."

*krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate tatra
lauilyam api mulyam ekalam janma-koti-sukrtair na labhyate
(Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya 8.70)*

"Pure devotional service to Krsna cannot be obtained by performing pious activities even for millions of births. It can be purchased only by paying one price: intense eagerness. Wherever it is available, one must purchase it immediately." And,

*sadhu-sastra-krpaya yadi krsnonmukha haya sei jiva nistare, maya
tahare chadaya
(Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta Madhya 20.120)*

"If, by the blessings of a pure devotee and the Scripture, a *jiva*- soul becomes devoted to Krsna he naturally becomes liberated and Maya withdraws."

Do you have your answer?

Devotee: Yes. The most effective means of attaining Krsna consciousness is to associate with the exalted devotees of Lord Krsna— *sadhu-sanga*.

Srila Guru Maharaj: What does it mean to keep company and to have association with the *sadhus*? What have you understood to be *sanga*?

Devotee: *Pariprasnena sevaya*. (By relevant enquiry from a real Guru and by serving him.)

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, but that is not up to the mark. *Sadhu-sanga* means it must be of this nature:

*dadati pratigrhnati guhyam akhyati prcchati bhunkte bhojayate caiva
sad-vidham priti laksanam*

(*Sri Upadesamrta* 4)

This is *sanga*, and in this way we can get the benefit of the association of a *sadhu*. Firstly, to give something to *sadhu* for his pleasure, and to take something from him as his *Prasadam*— *dadati pratigrhnati* Then, *guhyam akhyati prcchati*, whatever is concealed within our own heart, we are to divulge the whole of that to him; and we are to receive "his instruction. *Bhunkte bhojayate caiva*— we are to give the raw materials to him for his taking of *Prasadam*, and then we are to receive his remnants; *sadhu-sanga* means this.

Devotee: What is the process for one to test whether or not a *sadhu* or a Guru is genuine? Isn't it that one should first of all try to be sincere himself, then he will get a sincere Guru, and *sadhu-sanga*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: But from where will that sincerity come?

*bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhaktasangena parijayate sat-sangah prapyate
pumbhih sukrtaih purwa-sancitaih*
(*Brhan-ndradiya Purana*)

Actually we can recognize a *sadhu* by *sukrti*. Apparently we can know him from the *sastra*, the Scriptures, because the *sastra* helps us to know who is a *sadhu*, and the *sadhu* gives us the interpretation of the *sastra*. So *sadhu* and *sastra* are interdependent, but the *sadhu* holds the more important position and the *sastra* has the secondary position. The living *sastra* is the *sadhu*, but to know who is Guru, who is *sadhu*, we are to consult the descriptions given about them in the Scriptures. The symptoms of the *sadhu*, both of the Guru as well as the disciple, have been written in the *Bhagavatam*, in the *Gita* and in

the *Upanisads*. In the *Bhagavatam* we find:

*tasmad gurum prapadyeta, jijnasuh sreyah uttamam Sabde pare ca
nisnatam, brahmany upasamasrayam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.3.21)*

"A person in search of the ultimate good should surrender to the Guru who knows well the Vedic Scriptures (*sabda-brahman*) and the Supreme Absolute Lord (*Parabrahman*), and for whom the mundane world holds no charm whatsoever." And the *Gita* says:

*tad viddhi pranipatena, pariprasnena sevaya upadeksyanti te jnanam,
jnaninas tattva-darsinah
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 4.34)*

"You will be able to attain all this transcendental knowledge by satisfying the enlightened Spiritual Master with prostrate obeisances, relevant enquiry and sincere service. Great souls who are most expert in scriptural knowledge and endowed with direct realization of the Supreme Absolute Truth will teach you that divine knowledge."

So in the *Upanisads*, in *Bhagavatam* and in *Bhagavad-gita* it is clearly mentioned what should be the symptom of a Guru and also what should be that of a disciple. If such a qualified disciple comes to a qualified Guru then the real transaction begins. Otherwise there may be so many bogus transactions; such black-marketing is going on in this world in the name of religion. But from the association of the real devotee comes devotion, *bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-sangena parijayate*. And, *sat-sanga prapyate pumbhih, sukrtaih purwa-sancitaih*— one can come to a proper guide, a *saddhu*, as a result of his previous activity. *Sukrti* is of two kinds, *jnata* and *ajnata*.

Ajnata-sukrti is in the beginning when, unknown to him, he is utilized in the service of the Lord through the *sadhu*. Suppose a man has built a *dharmmasala*. So many persons of different types come to stay there, but because they take advantage of the energy of the builder, the results of their actions will go to him. A dacoit may come and stay. A pilgrim may also come, and a *sadhu* also. If a dacoit will stay, then

because he utilizes the energy of the owner of the *darmmasala*, the owner will have to take some bad reaction (*papa*), and will suffer for that. But if an honest man will stay there then the owner will get some *punya*, pious credit. In this way *papa* and *punya* will come to him, but after duly suffering or enjoying those fruits, they will be finished. However if a real *sadhu*, a devotee, will stay there and utilize the owner's energy, then that owner will acquire something permanent.

*nehabhikrama-naso 'sti, pratyavayo na vidyate svalpam apy asya
dharmasya, trayate mahato bhayat
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 2.40)*

"In this *bhakti-yoga* there is no loss of initial endeavour and there is no diminution of results. Even the slightest performance of this *bhakti-yoga* saves one from the great fear of birth and death in this material world."

Some permanent acquisition is deposited in his 'account,' and everything else, both the happiness resulting from accommodating a good, honest man in the worldly sense, as well as the suffering resulting from his accommodating a dacoit, will be finished. This sort of acquisition is permanent, and when it accumulates to a sufficient degree it will attract the man to do some sort of vague service to the *sadhus*, though not very consciously. That is also accumulated and when it reaches a certain stage the search for the truth will awaken within him. He will think, "For what are those *sadhus* living?" Then he will approach them, and if he goes in the proper mood as described in the Scriptures, the transaction will begin. The association, or connection with a real *sadhu* occurs by some underground activity known as *sukrti*. *Sukrti* is of two types:

ajnata and *jnata*— unconsciously acquired, and consciously acquired— *sat-sanga prapyate pumbhih, sukrtaih purvva-sancitaih*. Of this *sukrti* stage, Mahaprabhu says:

*brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva guru-krsna-prasade paya
bhakti-lata-bija
(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 19.151)*

"Wandering throughout the material universe, the very fortunate living entity who receives the grace of Guru and Krsna receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service."

Sukrti is described by the word *bhagyavan*, good fortune. There are so many different types of *sadhus*. Among the *tyagis* there are so many different classes: the naked *nanga babas* and others. And among the theistic group also there are so many different sections like the Ramanujas, the Ramanandis, the Nimbarkas, the Vallabhis and the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The Gaudiya Vaisnavas are the followers of Mahaprabhu. So even in the theistic section there is a graded classification, but it is through our *sukrti* that we shall be guided from the subconscious area to have connection with a *sadhu* of a particular section.

Chapter 10

Dictation of Sri Guru

Devotee: I know that at present I am a conditioned soul and am in Maya, but it is said that I have an eternal relationship with Krsna. So is it that I will only know that relationship when I become purified?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, when the mist will be cleared the sun will shine in its full pristine glory. The mist of misunderstanding, in the form of *anyabhilasa*, *karmma*, *jnana*, etc. is a covering. As that covering is gradually dissolved, the internal relationship will appear.

Devotee: Is this eternal relationship always the same or can it be changed, such as from *vatsalya*, parental loving affection, to *madhura*, conjugal love, or from *madhura* to *dasya*, servitude?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That will be known gradually. When the barrier, the cover, will be cleared, it will become revealed. That separating wall will gradually fade and as it becomes thinner and thinner the relationship will be conceived. It is a gradual process and

at first will be vague. When we will come to the stage of *bhava-bhakti*—heart's Devotion—then it will come within our understanding somewhat, and gradually will become clearer.

There are various stages leading to *bhava*: *anartha-nivrtti*, *nistha*, *ruci*, *asakti*, then *bhava*. When devotion will reach the stage of *bhava*, then of course that eternal relationship will appear to a certain extent in a vague way. Then by a gradual process the definite identification, the particular quality of attraction one will feel for Krsna, will become clear. The attraction, the connection between the two, is intervened by the foreign propensities of *anyabhilasa*, *karmma*, *jfiana*, etc. As that barrier becomes thinner the nature of *rasa* as well as its depth and intensity will gradually be disclosed. It is not vague or a product of the imagination but it is more clear than the sun.

Devotee: When the Guru is here he engages us for something that Krsna wants. But in the absence of our Guru we may do some devotional service according to our own initiative. How do we know whether Krsna actually wants that particular activity from us?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Preferably we shall enquire from a *Siksa-Guru* but if none is available then we shall try to ask our internal Guru:

"In such a case what may be required of me? My Master, please reveal this." We shall have to make this appeal to our internal *Caitya-Guru* and proceed accordingly. *Nahi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati (Bg. 6.40)*: The sincere will have nothing about which to repent. He who is sincere to his own self will have such dictation as will help him to progress in his spiritual life. He will ask his Master within, "In such a case what should please my Gurudeva? I shall do that. As much as I can understand and feel I shall do." This sincere internal approach will be the last resort, but if any outside *Siksa-Gurus* are available we must consult with them.

Devotee: Sometimes *Siksa-Gurus* have differences of opinions.

Srila Guru Maharaj: In that case also we are to appeal to our own

inner Guru, "Please suggest to me which advice I should follow? Please give me some internal suggestion otherwise what can I do?" If any difference of opinion should come from the outside guides, then in every case we are to make this appeal to our own conscience and follow that dictation from within. If possible we shall go to another recognized *Siksa-Guru* whom we can consult regarding these differences of opinion. But if there also we fail, then we must appeal to our internal Guru. There is no other alternative.

Devotee: I may ask the *Caitya-Guru*, the Guru within my heart, but how shall I know whether the response is coming from the Guru or only from my mind?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That will be according to our own realized position. It may not be clear always, but we have no other alternative. Ultimately it is up to our inner judge to decide: "I came to my Gurudeva but my inner selection took me there. How did I leave my previous environment and come to my Gurudeva? My internal guide helped me to accept this person as Guru, so I cannot neglect that guide within me."

If my dictator within has taken me to a true Guru then he is not a traitor, so we can consult with him as a reliable friend.

Devotee: We are just neophyte devotees and so do not feel so pure as to be able to communicate with the *Caitya-Guru*.

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is so and therefore it will be better, safer, more helpful and easier if it is possible for us to secure a *Siksa-Guru*. But in an extreme case when that is not possible, then we are to appeal fervently to our own Guru within, the *Caitya-Guru*.

Also my own Divine Master may be living but if I am posted for duty in a far away place and some urgent decision is required then what shall I do? If an immediate decision is required and there is no time to receive my Master's order I may appeal to my inner Guru and I shall do that which I consider my Guru will be pleased to accept. I shall take up my duty and work with the assertion, "This will please my Gurudeva."

It is mentioned that one who has surrendered may not commit any

offence. If you are surrendered and then appeal, "What am I to do, my Master? Please dictate to me," and do accordingly with sincerity, then if it is wrong also, you are not to be a party to that wrong because you did not consciously want to disobey the Guru—you tried your utmost to obey him cent-per-cent. But you are not a perfect person, still, from your position, as much as possible you have done and he will be satisfied with that. He is all-knowing. He is omniscient and will see, "He has tried his best."

So from our position we shall try our best and we will be rewarded accordingly. But we must be cautious that within us there may not be any insincerity, duplicity, or hypocrisy, for such things are self-suicidal. *Nahi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati (Bg. 6.40)*: One who is sincerely trying for the good is never to be deceived. In whatever plane we may live we must be true to our own self, to our own conscience. To our own capacity we must be true to that plane, and when we rise higher we must consider and follow the faith of our new plane. We must not be insincere.

The dictation of Sri Guru is also similar in that he gives us some order according to our stage of spiritual development. To one who is in a lower stage he will give a particular order, to one in a higher stage he will give another order, and one higher still will be given yet another. He will give us orders according to our capacity, stage and nature; otherwise it will be impossible for us to progress. So according to our stage our duty should be attached and the results expected accordingly: a man who has the capacity to lift a weight of ten kilograms will not be instructed to lift a hundred.

Devotee: Sometimes we feel we have sincerity but later we realize that the sincerity we had was only superficial.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course it may be possible in all cases to feel in this way. We are to be dealt with according to our stage. A boy should be given the standard of examination of a boy, not of a grown-up man. The questions in a boys' examination will be of a different standard than those for the adults. Gradually we will be taken to the higher standard. *Paroksa-vado vedo 'yam, balanam anusasanam (Bhagavatam, 11.3.44)*. Just as a child is guided with some modified

policy, similarly that sort of process has been adopted in dealing with ourselves.

Devotee: What should we do if sometimes the Guru should engage us in service above our capacity or ability to perform?

Srila Guru Maharaj: If you think that the particular duty is beyond your capacity you will simply inform Gurudeva, "It is very difficult for me to do, and I do not think myself to be fit to efficiently discharge this sort of duty. If I tell you this doubt in my mind then you may wish to appoint some other service." But if he still says, "No, you are to do this," then you will do as best you can. If you have faith, considering him to be a real Guru then you can attempt to do that duty the best you can. You must consider that he has some super-motive, that some higher purpose will be served by engaging you in such activity.

Devotee: This Krsna consciousness is very, very beautiful. The cult of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is very sweet. Many people become attracted by Krsna and by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu but why after some time do we find that some devotees lose their faith and go away?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The first thing it depends on is the intensity of the *sukrti* of the devotee. And secondly is of course his free-will, his independence. The circumstances will also have their effect. Every action is the combined result of several factors. In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* we find:

*pancaitani maha-baho, karanani nibodha me sankhye krtante
proktani, siddhaye sarvva-karmmanam
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 18.13)*

If we analyse any one event we will find that it is the combination of different forces from different quarters. So generally we can consider that the devotee's situation will depend on his previous initial merit, his present free-will, the environment and the mercy of the Lord. His free-will may cause him to commit *Vaisnava-aparadha*. And his previous merit, *sukrti*, will tend to keep him floating at the standard he

previously acquired. By his free-will he may commit offences. Also there is the free-will of the environment: the surrounding paraphernalia may grant him their mercy. There are many contributory factors.

Devotee: One of your Godbrothers told me that we are chanting Hare Rama in the *Mahamantra* but we are not supposed to pronounce 'Rama.' He said this is not *suddha*, pure, but we should say 'Ram.' Is this correct?

Srila Guru Maharaj: 'Rama' is the true pronunciation, but if one says 'Ram' that does not mean it has no value—it will have some effect. The internal feeling underlying the sound is more important than the pronunciation. One may say Krsna, Kanai, or so many Names but it depends mainly on the *bhava*, the internal realization and feeling of the meaning of the word.

A child has a particular registered name. His mother may call him by a sound not fully according to that word's pronunciation, but that does not detract anything. Her affection is all in all. If a mother calls her child by a name, the name may not be pronounced in the perfectly correct way but the affection behind her calling his name is more valuable. So whether we say 'Rama' or 'Ram' may not be considered to be very important. The internal feeling with which the Name is taken is of much greater relevance.

Devotee: Sometimes we introduce the *Mahamantra* to new persons who have no idea or feeling about what or who is Rama and who is Krsna. How should they pronounce the name Rama?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Naturally they should chant 'Rama,' not 'Ram,' for that is the real pronunciation. If one pronounces it as 'Ram' that does not mean that the whole thing is spoiled, but 'Rama' is the grammatically correct pronunciation. Everything depends on the heart, the feeling and the sincere dedication. The highest importance is your earnestness of surrender. The child may call his father by the name 'Papa' or by any disfigured sound, but that is overlooked. The inner earnestness is always to be reckoned.

Devotee: While introducing the chanting process to many new persons we find that, because of some previous idea, some do not like the Hare Krsna *Mahamantra*. Can we tell them something else such as *Govinda jaya jaya*...?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That depends upon their stage of devotion, and that is why you find a particular section will chant *Govinda jaya jaya*, *Govinda jaya jaya*— but when asked to pronounce *Hare Krsna* they show no enthusiasm.

Devotee: Our Guru Maharaj has instructed us to chant a minimum of sixteen rounds daily. We are neophyte devotees and sometimes don't have so much attraction for chanting sixteen rounds. What can we do to become more attracted to chanting?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The most important thing is to engage in service. Service of the Name and 'service of the Guru-Vaisnava are almost equal but still to a certain extent the basis must be the service of the Holy Name. Your Guru Maharaj introduced a daily minimum of sixteen rounds, and our Guru Maharaj instructed that we must chant at least four rounds per day on the *main*, the rosary. But this is a minor difference because our Guru Maharaj wanted that we be very busily engaged in the various services, but we must see that the *mala* does not fast. Some sort of service must be done to her by way of chanting at least four rounds daily. That was his instruction but he also instructed that when one had the opportunity he could chant more and more.

The general standard set by Mahaprabhu was not only sixteen rounds, but four times sixteen which equals one lakh (100,000) Names. This is particularly so for one who is not within the body of an organized society and especially if he is living individually. When one is in an organized body he always has orders from the superiors to do this and that and thereby he engages in service; so the minimum quantity of chanting becomes a little relaxed from the sixty four rounds. But in the case of *grhasthas*, householders living separately from the main body of devotees, they especially should chant one lakh of Names daily. That is the general standard recommended by Mahaprabhu and

by our Guru Maharaj. But when one is in an organized body and is required to do service running here and there, sometimes he is so busy that he can't even find any opportunity to sleep in the night; in that case he will try to chant at least four rounds. He is so busily engaged that within twenty-four hours he is not taking any rest but still he is required to chant a minimum of four rounds, whereas the general recommendation is that one who lives individually as a *grhastha* should chant at least one lakh of Names.

Mahaprabhu asked and advised us to purify ourselves with the help of Divine Sound. But, the sound should be proper transcendental Krsna consciousness; and in this *kali yuga*, the age of controversy, there will be only the minimum demand from us for our purification. The word *kali* comes from *kalah* meaning 'quarrel, controversy.' We are cautious about everything: everyone thinks, "No, I won't accept anything without some proof."

The mind is very suspicious, so we should take advantage of Divine Sound. Only the very minimum demand is necessary from us, yet the transformation which will occur in us will be very great. To have some *Sraddha*, faith, is the minimum demand, the minimum admission fee required of us: "If I do this, if I attend to this *sankirttana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of God, then everything will be done." That underground faith must be there, and it will help us. That sincere cooperation from the heart is necessary for Krsna consciousness, and that can purify very quickly. To have faith that this process of Krsna consciousness will purify us, is the minimum demand. One must think, "If I attain this, everything will be done." If such a sort of generous, wide conviction is there within us along with a sincere mood of cooperation, then that can help us very quickly. That 'cooperation' means cooperation with the Divine Sound, the sound aspect of the Supreme. It is easily approachable for the beginners, and from that many other aspects of the Infinite will come to help us.

Beginning with the universal sound aspect, which is easily approachable, other aspects will follow in its retinue, gradually. But our faith must be heartfelt and sincere. "I am in difficulty, and this will

give real relief to all my troubles. It will put an end to all the troubles I am experiencing now as well as any I am to experience in future. I am a bona fide student of searching my own real inner interest. I must be faithful to my own self. I feel that I am uneasy here in this world and I must search for some home comfort. If I am sincere I know that the way forward will be open to me, and that it is not difficult: it is there in the sound aspect of the Supreme. That Greatest Reality is Himself present also within the Divine Sound. This Divine Sound is not an imaginary thing Even though to my present conception it is coming and going appearing and disappearing, it is not a trifling, transient thing. It is the Reality."

And for a beginner, that ear experience is a great thing. Sound carries things from far away, and the ear can catch them. The eye-experience is not able to see so far.

Chapter 11

Distributing Divinity

Mahaprabhu has issued a general order, "Whomever you meet, talk with him only about Krsna."

yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa amara ajnaya 'guru' hana tara ei desa

"Whomever you find, talk with him only about Krsna. In that case, I am your Guru." Mahaprabhu has given this most broad and wide advice. The underlying feeling is, "Do relief work. All are in danger, acute danger. So don't consider so many minor things but go on with relief work and connect all fully with Krsna. The jaw of death is devouring them—save them! Now they are in the human species, but after death they may be lost in some other species. So, while their heads are on the surface, try to hold them, otherwise they may dive deep into the inner current and you won't be able to see them. From the human species they may go down to another species and be lost waiting there. There are so many different layers, but when they are floating, their heads are seen above the water, catch them, save them,

otherwise at the next moment they may go down under the water and they will be lost without trace. So wherever you find them, somehow connect them with Krsna. Try to give them *that* connection. It is so urgent: 'Take the Name Krsna - always! You can have no plea of, I am taking food, or, 'I am going to sleep.'"

Our Guru Maharaj wanted the continuous attempt. He said, "While taking food, or going to bed, doing anything or going anywhere, keep connection with Krsna. Only try to keep His connection." Our connection with Krsna is so urgent. What a valuable life that is, and where are we?—in the jaws of mortality! So, everyone needs to be saved. Save them. Do relief work. In this general activity no specific order is necessary. It is a general thing; it is common sense in the devotional school and by this process you will be helped yourself. You will be able to keep yourself from sinking just as by the movement of one's hands and feet one can keep himself floating on water—it is something like that. *Kirttana* will help you in that way. So try to practise Krsna consciousness, any time and every time, to anyone and everyone.

There is an article in which our Guru Maharaj addressed his disciples: *vipada uddharana bandhu-gana*: "You are my saviours. You are all saviours to me in my danger; in the real danger of my life." He addressed his disciples in such a way: "You are all my saviours. You have given me support. You have come to hear me, and so I have the chance of *kirttana*, *Krsna-kirttana*. So you have come to save me. You are supplying food to me, otherwise I would have died without engagement. In this eternal atmosphere we are helpless without the cultivation of Krsna consciousness. You have all come to give me engagement in *Krsna-kirttana* and so you have come to save me from my dangerous position."

He addressed his disciples in such a way. It is so deep, "You are all my friends, you have come to release me from my danger; to save me from my danger."

He saw his disciples in such a great way—and this is reality. So *Krsna-kirttana* is the only life-giving, life-saving thing in this world. Without Krsna consciousness the souls are going down deeper into the

unknown quarter.

Srila Guru Maharaj (to a devotee): You have returned here to the Math after taking the Name of Krsna throughout the world! *Krsna-kirttana* was so dear to our Guru Maharaj, and especially to carry Krsna consciousness to the West. His incarnation at this time was mainly meant for that—to take it to the Western civilization.

Devotee: In the countries where I preach, the law says that everybody has to have a job, therefore the devotees are all working. In addition to their regular work they also do *puja* and so on. Sometimes they say it is becoming 'mechanical'—their *puja*, *sadhana*, lectures, etc. are becoming mechanical. So their question is, how to keep everything in such a way that it is fresh?

Srila Guru Maharaj: How can it be mechanical? 'Mechanical' will be that which is ordered by the government. Physically we are to observe that, but our inner tendency will be towards the worship. Then how can that be mechanical? That is real, and the mechanical thing will be the outer show which the government requires of us.

When Mahaprabhu began His *sankirttana* preaching mission, at that time the two brothers Rupa and Sanatana were engaged in the service of the king in Gauda-desa. They were very high scholars and studied the Scriptures. Sanatana found that the time for the *Yuga-avatara*, the Lord's incarnation for *kali-yuga* to preach *Nama-sankirttana* was drawing near. So he was alert: "Has that incarnation appeared? And where?" Then when he heard that in Nabadwip *Nama-sankirttana*, the preaching of the Holy Name, was already begun by Sri Chaitanyadeva as Gauranga, he could trace that the *Avatara*, the incarnation of the Lord, must have come there, and that Gauranga was that *Avatara*. Then he wrote a letter to Mahaprabhu: "We are fallen souls and are engaged in the management of this government which is anti-Hindu. We are engaged in such a position, and outwardly we are affected by this influence. So what will be our future?"

Mahaprabhu replied to them with a letter, in which he wrote:

para-vyasanim nan vyagrapi grha'karmmasu tad evasvadayaty antar

nava-sanga-rasayanam

(Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya 1.211)

"A married lady who has love and affection for another gentleman may be seen to be always engaged in her household activities but her heart always realizes, or tastes, the company of that person whom she loves. Though outwardly she is seen to be very busy with household work, at heart she's always enjoying the company of her beloved. (Similarly, outwardly you may be captured and may be seen to be busy in the association of the government's activities, but your heart is not there. It is searching something, and it is receiving the benefit of the association of that inner substance.)"

So others cannot capture our heart; they can control our physical activity, but whenever we shall do something in the form of worship, of *Harinama*, our heart will go there. So how can that be mechanical? The mechanical side will be the outer side; and the sincere side will be the inner. The man is inside. The man proper is not found in his forced activity. Generally also ordinary men do like that: they outwardly show their cooperation and show that they are not interfering with politics, but internally the heart cannot be captured by anyone. The devotee's heart will go towards the Lord.

Of course when great personages like Christ, Mohammed, or Sri Chaitanyadeva Himself come for the good of the public, they preach openly, thus causing disturbance to the existing order and there is some clash; they cross over that and are victorious. But as far as ordinary people are concerned, the government does not generally challenge them or interfere in their private affairs. But when preaching from a centre where there is the sort of inspiration, "You fight with the external circumstances and establish this particular creed and thereby save the people," in this case there will be some difficulty. There it will be necessary to fight with any anti-party. But for the private individual's practising life that is not necessary.

Devotee: In some countries the devotees are not allowed to preach. They are allowed to worship in their houses, but outside they are not allowed to preach, so what do you recommend for them so that they may advance in spiritual life?

Srila Guru Maharaj: To do whatever is possible—to make the best of a bad bargain—that should be the policy. Whatever is possible to do, you should take that advantage inside the house. Later, if the Lord wishes, favourable circumstances will come and then you will push out. At present, you alone cannot fight with them in this respect, so as much as possible, you will do it inside. But if the Lord wishes for preaching there outside. He will give you favourable circumstances and then you can go out. Otherwise save yourself first, and do as much as possible within the circumstances with the policy of 'making the best of a bad bargain.' When the special will of the Lord will come to devour the whole and change the people's hearts wholesale, then the circumstances will be otherwise; but at present first save yourself, and then do as much as is possible to make progress, and be satisfied with that. Just fighting is not necessary, but to keep up the very life, that is necessary. The fire, the spark is there; when it will be in a favourable environment it will be transformed into a conflagration. The spark must be maintained.

Devotee: So, how can we maintain the fire?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In your heart; and whomever you find to be favourable, you can spread it to them, but in a restricted way, not very boldly asserting or pushing onwards. Keeping within that limited boundary do as much as possible without inviting the outward clear fight. And don't enter into politics.

As much as possible, you must try. But that means to be prepared to risk everything, and to die, to be a martyr. But to actually fight is not necessary. As much as possible you will follow *yukta-vairagya*, the middle path. *Yukta-vairagya* means not a clear, external fight, but to go on, to maintain everything in a consonance, in harmony with the external circumstances. And whenever you get any chance to advance, capture it—in this way you should go on.

So, 'wait and see,' and do your duty. Don't rush ahead forcefully or hastily otherwise your energy will be wasted: the higher quality energy will be wasted in a lower class of fight. The higher quality substance will be wasted. Though actually it is not really wasted, but

for the time being it will be checked. No energy used in service is wasted.

*nehabhikrama-naso 'sti, pratyavayo na vidyate svalpam apy asya
dharmasya, trayate mahato bhayat
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 2.40)*

"Even a small beginning in this devotional service cannot go in vain, nor can any loss be suffered. The most insignificant practice of such devotional service saves one from the all-devouring fear of repeated birth and death in this world."

Still, the best policy is not to invite any fight, but to approach in a mild way, ready to make the best of a bad bargain. Otherwise, if you go directly to attack, you will be killed or imprisoned. But that is also one type of policy! One may be imprisoned, but also because of one's incarceration the atmosphere may change. Or, if one is murdered like Christ, then some influence may also come out of such a life-sacrificing position. That also we find, but that is an extreme step.

We want the middle course. We will wait and see, and take any good chance to advance, but not waste our energy in the first fight. This is the policy. One who wants victory won't be very rash but he will be very diplomatic—sometimes coming back, sometimes making progress, and sometimes taking a firm stand. So, military force is not all, but the strategy and tactics have their position.

One kind of policy also is that the military may attack the enemy from another side. Similarly in your preaching duties you may try to make some progress where there is not so much restriction from the authorities. Then if those people should accept your preaching propositions they will become strong, and the opposition will be influenced from that direction. We won't go to attack from this side, but if it is more suitable to attack from the other side, or from the rear, then we can prepare our army there. So, instead of going immediately to capture a particular section, you may preach somewhere else within that region. The influence will gradually spread until it reaches the neighbours of that section and ultimately they themselves will be influenced a little later.

It is also not necessary that our attention for preaching be drawn specifically to a certain section. There are so many people to be helped. When I was in Madras some people came and said, "Oh, you do not help the diseased people and the poor. You do not attend any hospital or any death-bed, but if they die, to whom will you preach? What is your answer?"

I answered, "Suppose there is a famine and some food is given by the government. If I am distributing that to so many people all around who are begging food but one man runs away, should I stop my distribution and run after him? or, because there are so many people here, shall I continue distributing? There is no want of people to receive the distribution—there is a whole throng, so should I stop distributing?"

Similarly everywhere there are so many souls to receive our preaching. They are needy, and leaving them we shall not go to dogmatically seek a particular section and only run after them, for that has no value. Needy persons are everywhere—there is no dearth of people to receive what we have, even if it is only a little. You have the duty to distribute devotion to the public, but there is no dearth of recipients. Everywhere on every side of you there is demand, so you can go on distributing where it is necessary and favourable—not that leaving a particular group who are demanding, you will select one particular place only and go there. Only if your energy is overflowing, then you can go. Otherwise there are so many places where you can distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so utilize yourself there—that is to make the best of a bad bargain. And if you find some evil influence, some anti-party coming to cause disturbance to your preaching of nectar, then you will oppose them but only as much as is possible within your power.

We are to follow the middle path, just as in the case of *vairagya*, renunciation, we follow *yukta-vairagya*. Too much renunciation will waste our energy, and too much indulgence is also a waste of energy, therefore we are advised to follow the middle path, and that is called *yukta-vairagya*.

naty asnatas tu yogo 'sti, na caikantam-anasnatah na cati-svapna-silasya, jagrato naiva carjjuna
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 6.16)

"Oh Arjjuna, *yoga* practice is impossible for anyone who overeats, undereats, oversleeps, or undersleeps."

The middle path has been recommended: too much of anything is to be left aside. If one attempts to live without sleep or without food, that is bad; and too much food, or too much sleep is also bad. We are advised to accept the middle path, and that will be more progressive and fruitful. So to 'make the best of a bad bargain' should be the policy. We are not to specifically invite a fight, and also we are not to only avoid it. The middle course will always be helpful for us. We are not to lose our energy, to waste it only for fighting, but it is necessary for us to give the positive thing and engage our energy there. If we can give a thing to the left side, why should we be determined to go to the right side and thereby waste our energy? Our business will be to give, to distribute the nectar, and we shall have no stubbornness to distribute nectar on the right side only. If any opposition comes, we can go to the left side and distribute there.

Distribution of nectar and saving people is our object of life and not to concentrate on, or be biased towards, a particular group. Wherever and however we get the facility, by that way we shall go. If a particular route is considered to be dangerous, than we shall go by another, neither wasting our energy nor the opportunity.

So *yukta-vairagya*, the middle course, is to make the best of a bad bargain. It means neither inviting a fight nor avoiding it, but taking the middle course. According to our capacity we will be able to face the opposition. But merely love of opposing is not necessary. We should have no prejudice for anything. Unprejudiced we shall only engage in the positive line—in that way we shall move. We should live for the positive interest, and not for the love of any negative things such as, "I love to fight with the enemies." To fight with the enemies, that is one thing, and to distribute nectar to the public at large is another. In order to do that, you must first know the proper conception and all the circumstances yourself, and only then try to give that to others. No

false representation will be helpful, so first be sure of your knowledge, then distribute it. 'Half-truth is more dangerous than a falsehood.'

In only twelve years Swami Maharaj did such a miracle. It is inconceivable. What he has done is more than a miracle. So, I say it was not his power, but inspired by some higher agency he did it. That is also his credit, that he could invite the higher help. He had such great hankering for preaching—any time and every time. What Mahaprabhu came here for, that is the best necessity of everyone. So any engagement for any purpose other than to preach the doctrine of Mahaprabhu is not only a waste of energy, but it is a loss for the whole population.—The fittest thing necessary for all time to come and for everyone is Krsna consciousness; Krsna's connection. To try to connect whoever you come across with Krsna is the highest benefit of everyone. And without that, whatever engagement we shall do will not only be a loss of energy but disservice to the people by drawing their attention to some bogus enterprise—it is bad and injurious. So only give connection with Krsna, the Infinite Lover, the beloved Absolute. Try to give everyone connection with Him.

Chapter 12

Our Greatest Wealth

If I show myself to be a soldier but always try to remain within the fort then I am not a soldier. But still, to be a soldier for Mahaprabhu, to preach His mission we must be careful. "Before going to attend a seriously diseased patient, if we are not strong but are feeling some weakness, then we are to intimate, to our Master: "This is my situation and if you think it appropriate, for the time being you may change my field of service." But we also shall have to keep in mind that we will need to become sufficiently strong in order to be able to attend to that type of serious patient. If we are preachers, the patients may be prostitutes, dacoits or wealthy men but still we shall have to approach them for the service of Krsna, and we must be bold enough and healthy enough for that duty. At the same time we must not be trespassers and on the way take tilings that are meant for Krsna, for

that will make us traitors—unfaithful servants.

*kiba va karite pare, kama krodhe sadhakere
yadi haya sadhu-janara sanga*

Narottama Dasa Thakur said, "If we have the favour of the great personages then what can such types of temptation do to us? They can't do anything. If we work under our guardian and he is very careful, very strong and very judicious then no temptation can do any harm to us." This attitude is the key to the success of life. Generally, according to our capacity we shall try to move in this way, and at the same time we shall keep in our mind that to attain to our highest position it is necessary to be able to deal with all the serious things, even the most serious, otherwise there will be some defect in us. Wholesale conversion must come within us that we are servitors and not masters. This is the case with fame also. Name and fame, *pratistha*, is the most subtle, most dangerous enemy. It is the highest enemy and at the same time it is the most subtle. *Pratistha*, to take name, fame and credit for one's own self without giving it to Gurudeva, is the greatest enemy there is and it is very difficult to detect.

Three things in particular are very dangerous for the devotees: *kanak*, *kamini* and *pratistha* —money, women and fame.

Devotee: How can we detect *pratistha* within ourselves?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That comes with the development of internal perfection and our continuous thankfulness to Gurudeva. It is necessary to understand and feel that everything comes from above: "I have nothing. I have no position and therefore my present situation always depends on the mercy of my Gurudeva. It may be withdrawn from me at any moment. Whatever I may have is not a fixed thing in me. It is not as a matter of right but is only extended grace in me. The moment it is withdrawn I am nowhere. It is all Krsna's *svarupa-sakti*. I am *tatastha-sakti* and have no capital. I am working on the capital of my Master. I have no capital of my own." We must be able to remain on such a plane of thinking and realize that, "Without His help, without His grace, I am in darkness. My fate is dark. As long as He

extends His grace in me I can see. If the light is withdrawn, the eye is helpless." We are to realize the position that it is not our birth-right. By our birth we are *tatastha-sakti*, marginal potency, and whatever we have found, it is the gracious extension of *svarupa-sakti* in us. Our Guru and the Vaisnavas are the proprietors. It is *their* wealth and property; it all belongs to them.

At the same time it never occurs that the Guru and Vaisnavas withdraw their grace from the faithful. Such cruel activity can never be seen, rather they are busy to extend their circle and they never withdraw; that is our solace, our consolation. But it is not a matter of right that we can make some demand. There must be no demand and no challenge. The challenging spirit towards the Vaisnavas must be eliminated for ever. We are living on their grace, their *Prasada*. Uddhava said to the Lord:

tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha-vaso' lankara-carccitah
ucchista-bhojino dasas, tava mayam jayema hi

"Adorned with the articles that have been offered to You, such as garlands, fragrant clothing, and ornaments, we, Your personal servitors who partake of Your holy remnants alone, will certainly be able to conquer Your illusory energy (Maya)." And Lord Krsna in *Gita*. said,

yajna-sistasinah santo, mucyante sarvva-kilbisaih
bhunjate te tv agham papa, ye pacanty atma-karanat
(*Srimad Bhagavad-gita* 3.13)

"Saintly persons who partake of the remnants of sacrifice become liberated from all the sins arising from the five kinds of violence to living beings. But those who cook for their own consumption, those sinners eat only sin."

We are entitled only to taste the remnants left by the Vaisnavas. We are to accept those remnants and continue our lives in that way without any rights or demands. This is similar to *Aryyan sanskriti*, Indian custom. Hindu law gives no rights or position to the females. The whole right is with the men and nothing with the women, but by

their affection and serving spirit the women hold the whole respect—the key to all respect. They have the respect of the son and the affection of the husband, and they enjoy like anything.

By the law of the society, externally no rights have been given to the mother, wife or daughter, yet the ladies hold a peculiar and very venerable position in the eyes of society.

Pita raksati kaumare, bhartta raksati yauvane. Here Manu explains that during early age the father will protect the females, during youth the husband will protect them, and in old age the son will protect them. Though externally having no rights, they draw respect from society more than a goddess does.

In a similar way the potency of Krsna, His servitors, hold such a position in relation to Him. They have no external right and do not care for any. They are His, but only through the power of affection and loving service they command the whole. The potency aspect of Krsna does not want any right, force or power, yet they have the subdemost power: the power of affection, the power of love, the power of service, and that is considered to be the highest power ever known to the world. Give up your legal power or any physical power; the *Sakti* (potency) is such that it does not care for that.

The respected Asutosh Mukherji was several times wanted by the government to go to England but his mother did not give permission. He therefore told them, "My mother does not allow me to go to any foreign country therefore I cannot go."

There are many examples of a mother controlling her son. Taking the feet dust of the mother, the son feels he can do anything and everything. Affection and love have such power, such value! Therefore Mahaprabhu says, "To give this and that to God is self-deception. Give love. Love of Krsna, *Prema*, is everything; it is all in all. You are spending money and giving your physical energy in so many ways, but love is the real essence of any existence, so offer that to the Lord and through that come to the plane of love that surrounds Him."

God takes the form of Krsna in the plane of love and that is the most fundamental and the most subtle plane behind all this variegated

creation. So come to that plane, try to penetrate into that plane where God is Krsna, and where the paraphernalia is Vrndavana. Anyhow try to have admission in that plane and you will find there the happiest form of life.

Mercy is more beautiful than justice. We cannot think of blaming the spirit of justice, but at the same time we cannot deny that there is mercy over justice. But one who can extend mercy over justice must have such power that he is able to give due compensation. The Lord has such power of compensation. Krsna is such an aspect of the Lord. He can give mercy through love and affection, and by any means we want to live in that environment. Mahaprabhu came to show that to be the plane for which we should strive. And Bhaktivinoda Thakur said, "In no time the intelligentsia of the world will come to understand that this is the highest conception of attainment of all humans as well as of everything else in the whole of creation. The intelligentsia cannot be misguided for long by so many other proposals of the highest attainment which are only giving partial achievement. Many things are going on in religion in the name of the highest solution of our life, but what Mahaprabhu has given very soon .will be detected by the intelligentsia of the world, and all will flock to the banner of Sri Chaitanyadeva and will sing the glory of Mahaprabhu and Krsna." What do you think? Do you think that it is very laudable and tastful? Our Srila Prabhupad began that Mission and Sripad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj has actually firmly established and propagated it widely. I am growing old and our generation is almost finished. Now you are all to participate and fully develop what they have begun.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswath Math
Kolerganj,P.O. Nebadwip, District Nadia
West Bengal, Pin 741302, India

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume Four



Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj

All Glory to Sri Guru and Gauranga

Introduction

Sri Vyasa Puja Address

by Sri Srimad B. R. Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja Nov. 9, 1982

The Lord says that, "My servant's position is also as respectable as Mine. He serves Me and he also is worthy of the same reverence and worship as I am. He is My part and parcel, a member of my family, and my family is the purest of the pure. All of My family are agents of purity and are distributing purity to the world." Purity is not only self-abnegation but the higher purity is in self-surrender. That service is not calculative nor with any motive, but it is automatic, spontaneous service: service of the beautiful, service of love divine. It is not the service of power, but it is service of beauty, love. *Satyam, sivam,*

sundaram. *Sundaram* is the most original factor ever discovered in this world. So Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and *Srimad Bhagavatam* preached about *sundaram* , which is not mere unassailable eternal existence to be adored, and not mere consciousness of the material substance which may be discovered as a wonderful thing to be adored, but *sundaram* is the fulfillment of the consciousness. The real existence of that highest substance was given exclusively by *Srimad Bhagavatam* and then by Sri Caitanyadeva and His followers. We are worshipers of the beautiful. Reality the beautiful, reality the love, reality the harmony. That is the highest quarter of the existence and we are connected internally with that and so we must aspire after that scientifically. There is a particular method and we are to follow that. The *sastra*, the scripture, is there and the living *sastra*, the *sadhu* , the saint, is there and under their guidance we can hope to attain the highest fulfillment of life. ,Die to live."

So many proposals in the name of helping are only helping us to incur debt in this world. Already one is under the pressure of a heavy burden and again in the name of help he is securing a fresh loan and so more burden is coming on his head. This is the nature of help in this world. No work can be fully pure in this world. It may be said that at least there is good-will but we say that good-will is also impure and filthy. Everything is impure and rubbish here, but with the help of the scripture and the real agent we are to come to know what is good and what is bad. Then we are to accept the good and eliminate the bad. Previously Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came distributing this conception and in the modern time our Srila Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, came and almost single-handedly began his fight against the so-called existing principle of help in the environment.

The *Vedas* say, "In the garb of religion so many materialistic things are being delivered. It is a treachery to the ordinary people." We are to know what is pure religion, what is the real recommendation of the *Vedas* which has its conclusion in *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The *Veda* is likened to a wishfulfilling tree, *kalpa-vrksa*: whatever we want it can supply that. And from that has come naturally the ripe product, the ripe fruit of the *Vedas*, and that is *Srimad Bhagavatam* . There is no

artificial color there that any scholar can come and thrust his own interpretation into the *Bhagavatam* and say, "This is *Bhagavatam's* opinion." *Bhagavatam* is not subject to the *Vedas'* or the *Upanisads'* opinions but the *Srimad Bhagavatam* has come automatically from the *Veda* tree.

One who cannot tolerate another's position is a jealous person. This *Bhagavatam* is only meant for those that are free from jealousy so that they can understand that there is only one principal Who is all in all. He is autocrat and He is all in all. He is our master and He can make or mar. Only those who have no jealousy can come to such a level as to inquire about truth. Whereas the jealous cannot admit that there is God and that the whole creation is designed and destined by Him. There is the land of the Lord and if we can enter into that plane then we can be really happy by giving and not by exerting. To sacrifice for Him will bring for us both quantity and, especially, quality. If we can have entrance into that plane we shall be able to swim in the pool of nectar. It is very much appreciable.

We can understand that it is very much appreciable, that so many from foreign lands have also come being attracted by the instructions and advice of Mahaprabhu and *Srimad Bhagavatam*. So many young people have been charmed by the beauty of the teachings of Sri Caitanyadeva, *Srimad Bhagavatam* and Their agents. That they would come to join us was already predicted by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura some one hundred years ago and our Srila Guru Maharaja began the work in a humble way. After that, one of his disciples, Sripad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, went to the West empty-handed but by the grace of Mahaprabhu, Krsna and Nityananda Prabhu he was very much successful to push this high level of advice to the West. Attracted by his earnest desire to distribute this nectar, the westerners have come in the hundreds to join the *sankirtana* party under the banner of the Gaudiya Math, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura and A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. I am sure that you will be pleased at heart to find them amongst you here. They are taking all sorts of risks in their lives in order to preach these truths to the whole of the world with all the might and resources at their command. There are men of all different types who have joined this movement

including bright scholars, doctors and businessmen. They are taking this message to every corner of the earth most skillfully and so we must feel and express our gratitude towards their divine attempt, and to their earnestness to know and distribute this sort of high order of knowledge of relief to the people at large. We appreciate their presence here and their attempt and I feel that you are all of the same opinion as myself that they have encouraged us in a very extraordinary way to search. Many Indians are encouraged by their presence. They are also very inquisitive, "What is there that so many foreigners of high grades are also coming to appreciate? There must be something to be inquired." In this way so many Indian persons who are holding high positions in the worldly educated society are also coming.

So we give our thanks to those noble persons for their attempts and we pray to our Guru and Vaisnavas that their attempts may be fulfilled by Them.

Pranama-Mantra

to Om Vishnupad Astottara-sata-sri
Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

*sri-svarupa-rayarupa-jiva-bhava sambharam
varna-dharma-nirvisesa-sarvaloka-nistaram*

*sri-sarasvati-priyan ca bhakti-sundarasrayam
sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum*

*sindhu-candra-parvatendu saka janma lilanam
suddha-dipta-raga-bhakti-gauravanusilanam*

*bindu.candra-ratna-soma-saka-locanantaram
sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum*

Sri Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Chapter One

The Four Sitzings of Srimad Bhagavatam

Question: In the beginning of *Srimad Bhagavatam* events are described of Suta Goswami speaking at Naimisaranya and this is after Vyasadeva had spoken *Bhagavatam* to Sukadeva. So how is it that Vyasadeva was aware of the events at Naimisaranya?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: So many sittings of *Bhagavatam* took place. First Narada came and gave instruction by way of a ten *sloka* outline. He told Vyasadeva; "Meditate on it and give it out to the public. Elucidate these principles. Elucidate, otherwise what you have given so far will be all fruitless." So Vyasa took only those ten *slokas*, those ten verses. He meditated and wrote the principle *Bhagavatam* in a short way. He gave, "That is revered *brahma* , the highest quarter, the Krsna conception of Godhead, and that *lila* is very sweet. That is nothing of this side in *maya* , but that plane is full of transcendental, sweet pastimes." Vyasadeva managed to call his son, Sukadeva, and in Badarikasrama he taught him: "Although my inclination was towards this non-differentiated *brahman* conception, my father managed to teach me this *lila* of *Bhagavan* Krsna. Today I shall talk about that to you in this great assembly."

So Sukadeva received Srimad Bhagavatam from Vyasadeva. Previously Narada gave it to Vyasadeva, and Vyasa composed it in elaboration and taught it to Sukadeva: this was the second recitation. The third was when Sukadeva delivered lectures with his remarks to the great assembly of scholars in Sukartala.

When Sukadeva gave lecture there was one Suta Goswami who was a very sharp hearing man, *srutidhara*. *Srutidhara* is one who having only once heard something keeps it in his memory, and Suta, having those qualities, was present in that meeting. The fourth sitting was in Naimisaranya where the *rsis*, apprehending the black march, of *Kali-yuga*, commenced and engaged themselves in a one thousand year campaign, *yajna*. Finding Suta Goswami they told, "We have got

much leisure in the evening to hear about the Absolute and we heard that you, Suta, were present in that mysterious and famous assembly where Sukadeva gave his lecture about *Bhagavatam* and you memorized it. We request that you deliver by way of lecture to us that *Bhagavatam*." Suta Goswami accepted their proposal and that was the last sitting in the form of regular evening lectures. Sixty thousand or so *rsis*, the scholars and performers of sacrifices, assembled to hear from him. It was after this sitting that Vyasadeva took the whole thing and compiled it in book form and let it loose on the public.

Question: What is that Sukartala that you mentioned just now?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Sukartala is a small district of Uttar Pradesh just opposite Vibhukuti, a little far off from the Ganges, where there was the place of Maharaja Pariksit. When Pariksit was sure to die he came to live in that place near the Ganges, and there the third assembly took place. Perhaps it was from Suka that the name Sukartala has now come, and by that name this place is known to the public.

Question: Was Vyasadeva present at Naimisaranya when Suta spoke?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: No, he was not present in the meeting, but he got information. He was a *yogi*. Vyasadeva was such a *yogi* that he could understand and feel whatever is happening anywhere. In this way the whole battle story in Mahabharata has been described by him. How it is possible? Not only that but he was a *yogi* of such higher class that he could transfer his *yoga-sakti* to Sanjaya who, inspired by that potency, could also feel that battle. He could observe so many things simultaneously: what one is saying to another, what weapon one is throwing to another, all these things Sanjaya could see simultaneously and he is relating the whole thing to Dhrtarastra by the grace of Vyasadeva. Vyasadeva is able to see many things simultaneously in his *yoga* -developed consciousness.

Once one gentleman told me that Einstein in his last days was asked by his wife, "What invention are you searching now?" He replied: "If I am successful in this campaign of my research then you will be able to

see me wherever I am. Wherever I shall be you shall be able to see and feel me. That plane I am going to try to invent." That was Einstein's last tendency according to one gentleman, though I don't know how far it is true.

Many devotees are also said to realize such a position that from a separate place they can detect when a dog is entering within a particular temple in Vrndavana. He is feeling, "Oh, a dog is entering there." When our plane of consciousness, our conscious seat, is not disturbed by any self-produced thought, when it is clear, then when any wave carrying any news strikes it, it can feel that, "This is happening somewhere else and the wave has come to touch the aerial of my consciousness." When our conscious seat is very clear any wave that arises to touch it, any fact that arises in our plane of thinking, that cannot but be an actual fact. But when self-produced prejudices have covered the conscious seat then we cannot detect such things the plane of our consciousness cannot be read. But when that is cleared, any incident happening anywhere sends some wave to every "receiver" and each can understand, "Oh, such thing is happening!" Useless thoughts and false thoughts do not arise in his mind. Whatever is happening is sending some wave, his mind is so clear that he detects that event. He reads his mind, he feels it and he says, "Oh, this is happening here and that is happening there." It may be considered something like that.

But this is a kind of *siddhi*, mystic power. A true Vaisnava avoids all these things, but automatically it may come to someone and sometimes they may disclose this fact otherwise they avoid all these things. They do not want miracles. They are eager to find out the miracle of the center, the central miracle. They are busy to search for the miracle of miracles, and so these side issues they neglect. They are all-attentive to find out the main problem. Their cent-per-cent energy is engaged for that, concentrated, without caring for these things.

Question: Srila Sridhara Maharaja, when Sukadeva was asked to speak *Srimad Bhagavatam* he was in the presence of his *guru*, Vyasadeva, and *param-guru*, Narada. So how is it that he took the exalted seat of the *vyasasana* in the presence of his *guru* and *param-*

guru?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Sukadeva was not asked to speak *Bhagavatam*, only Pariksit Maharaja prayed, "What should be the duty of a man who is surely going to die very soon? How should I utilize my energy that it may help me after death? Certain death is approaching towards me and so how can I utilize my time best?"

So many *rsis*, authorities of different departments, were recommending to him differently, and he was perplexed. He told, "You give some unanimous verdict to me. I have no time so please you give some unanimous instruction." At that time by chance Sukadeva arrived there at the meeting. Sukadeva was a man of fable; many had heard about him, about this peculiar realized soul. "He is a boy of sixteen but he has got no feeling about this world which is so charming to all of us. We are trying our hardest, our best, to get out of the entanglement of this charming world but we find that we fail at every step. However, that boy, Sukadeva, has crossed the line of *maya* and always is in continuous conception of the conscious world. He is quite ignoring these material things and he does not even find the necessity of a cloth around his waist. Even he has got no distinction in his mental eye as to whether one is a woman or a man. He is so highly and firmly established in pure spiritual conception that even the beautiful girls do not feel any necessity to cover the parts their of body."

He was like a fable to the gathered sages. So when Sukadeva appeared they all rose in honor of him. Sukadeva is not caring for anything there and when he entered, all the *rsis* told to Pariksit Maharaja: "Maharaja, you are very fortunate: this *mahatma*, who we all seek to have *darshan* of, has come. You please ask your question to him, and we are all eager to hear something from his lips." So they all unanimously put Sukadeva in the presidential chair. They all took their seats and Pariksit asked him, "I am just approaching certain death so what is my duty? How should my duty be couched in order that I can have my highest benefit in the least span of time?"

Sukadeva began to answer and everyone there in pin-drop silence

began to listen to his words. His words were coming unquestionably as the absolute truth and were unanimously accepted by all. Present in that assembly were all the big scholars who had come to give some consolation to Pariksit Maharaja, "You are such a good Maharaja with good administration. You are unparalleled as well as a lover, respecter and protector of the brahminical *yajna*, faith, etc. Despite all these qualifications you have been thrown a curse from that same side of the *brahmana* section, and that is a very lamentable thing." In this way almost all the leaders of all different schools of philosophy came to give consolation to Maharaja Pariksit. It was in that well-represented assembly that Sukadeva was to speak.

Narada and Vyasadeva knew well that, "What we are trying to inaugurate, which seemed to be a very narrow and bigoted thing, when Sukadeva will speak this *Bhagavatam* he will give it in a very extensive way and with the widest color."

Narada expressed, "I gave ten poems as ten outlines to Vyasadeva and he elaborately taught that to Sukadeva. Sukadeva has got some extensive credit and honor amongst all the types of scholars. Coming in that broad view and percolated by his *brahma* conception we are eager to see how this elaborated *Srimad Bhagavatam* shall be delivered to this world retaining its transcendental characteristic. In order to do away with any mundane misconception it must pass through Sukadeva otherwise people may think this to be mundane. He has got the broadest conception of view and his qualification is admitted from all sides."

Narada and Vyasadeva were present and eagerly waiting. Happily they tasted how through *brahma-jnana*, through the widest touch, this Krsna- *lila*, which seems to be of very limited and narrow things passes through to be widely accepted.

All these gentlemen for seven days attended this meeting and they all listened with such eagerness.

Sukadeva told, "From my father, from my dear affectionate father I have learned these things." And giving warning to the audience he told, "You all know that I have no bigoted conception about religion.

The broadest conception of religion I possess and I am famous for that. I have got contact with the *brahma*. *Brahma* means the biggest, the greatest plane: the higher, widest plane. I am already settled in that consciousness so what I say don't take it as mundane happenings of this limited world, but it is coming from the other side. That is beyond *Brahmaloka* and has attracted me. I have got no charm for anything of this mundane world. I am well established in the transcendental world. I shall give delivery to you all of what attracted me and what I have noted and studied, and that is fully transcendental. With this warning I give delivery of all these things, of Krsna- *lila*. You should take it that Krsna's pastimes are broader, wider, higher and deeper things in the transcendental world. You must take it like that." Now and again giving this warning Sukadeva is delivering the whole thing, and Narada and Vyasadeva are reflecting: "Yes, we are successful!"

In his introduction to *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Vyasadeva has written there, "Originally this *Srimad Bhagavatam* is a very good thing, but still its beauty is enhanced by the commentary that has come from the mouth of Sukadeva. The *Bhagavat* knowledge modified and ornamented by the knowledge of Sukadeva has got a wider view and that universal truth will be easy for all sections of the religious school to accept."

So, knowingly it was that the *guru* and *param-guru* of Sukadeva were present there. They knew the future and could understand that this recitation would occur, and also out of sympathy for Maharaja Pariksit they came. They did not come by chance.

Chapter Two

The Free Flow of The Absolute

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: I must feel that I am unsatisfied with the environment of this world: life, death, torture and all these things, *janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi*. If one is really a sincere seeker of a happy life, then he must try with his utmost endeavor to get freed from this environment and to find another place: home. Back to God, back to

home. And we are told from ancient times that we have got a home and that that home is under the cooling shade of the holy feet of our Lord.

Practically we must take into our program and in our daily schedule, wholesale, how to get out of this nasty colony and go back to our home, sweet home. And why is it sweet? We are to discuss that with all our intellect. Although intellect is not qualified to know about that, but still in the negative way also we can calculate that the positive is there. In that plane they are eager to take us in. They are honest. So we want to live in that plane as our country because they are honest. There it is infinite and no population will be suppressed there.

This plane here is not worth living in, so we must search for a place worth living in, and in the quest for that land we may pass lives after lives. In this search there is no loss because where we are at present is undesirable, and if we are sincere in this feeling then to search for what is desirable is not madness. We may pass lives after lives in search of a sweet home and there will be no waste of energy in that endeavor. This is not unreasonable, rather we find that this is finely reasonable.

Sastra and *yukti*. First is the *sastra*, revealed scriptures, the positive contribution. Then next, and subservient, is reason, *yukti*. Logic is subservient, and the positive extension from the world of truth is the real thing. That is the main thing and logic will be subservient: by logic of this domain we cannot know anything about the transcendental realm.

Logic may be applied here but the logic of chemistry may not work in the logic of theology wholesale. Everything has got its own logic. The transcendental world has got its own logic but this mundane logic may help us partially, as an analogy.

To understand about the five planes of knowledge is infinite. Every unit is infinite. Infinite minus infinite, remaining is infinite! So the infinite world is such that we are always in a relative position in the infinite. The infinite can never be finished. Everywhere there is center, nowhere there is circumference.

Mahaprabhu Himself says, "I am hankering for the truth, I have not got it." Truth is so wonderful, so wonderful an attainment that Mahaprabhu, the highest, the Infinite Personified, He comes to teach us and He also says that, "I am only near the verge." Similarly Newton told, "I am collecting a few pebbles from the sea-shore, the ocean of knowledge is extended before my eyes. I know more than you, because you, you fool, you say that I have finished knowledge, but it can never be finished, only it can be touched, touched in a point." Newton told like that about the scientific knowledge of this world. So, what about the infinite knowledge, how it should be! With what aspiration and patience and hope we are to approach that world! If Newton in the science of this mundane world can say like that, then we who always speak of the higher infinite, what audacity do we have to think, that by impatiently passing a few minutes or a few days or by stepping forward a few yards, we shall be able to know the Infinite! We are traitors to ourselves, we are not approaching the Infinite! We should not have so much courage, and so much sincere hope for the best to get it, wanting only an easy result. We must be prepared. We are out for the Infinite, and we really must want to utilize ourselves and not for *our* satisfaction. "Die to live," Hegel told. "Ideal reality" is the name of his philosophy. Really, the ideal is real: ideal realism. Everything begins with idea and then it takes shape, it materializes.

"He is for Himself", Hegel told, "Everything is for Himself, and we are for Him."

We are for Him, we are to search for our master and not for a servant, not an order-supplier or a canvasser, but master. And the master says, "Prepare yourself for My service to satisfy Me; for My satisfaction come to be available to the complete degree. Now that you have come within, you say that you will be allowed to steal something and go away? No! All rights reserved. All rights reserved: it is not very easy to have rights, to establish rights here in My plane. I am such a master? I am an autocrat. Because I am omniscient, I am an autocrat. You are vulnerable and I am the guardian, the strong guardian.

"Try to put trust in My universal guardianship first. By understanding that I am your guardian you will find peace within you. I am your

well-wisher.

*bhoktaram yajna-tapasam, sarva-loka-mahesvaram
suhrdam sarva-bhutanam, jnatva mam santim rcchati
(Bhagavad-gita, 5.29)*

"I am the center of distribution of goodness, I am over all: if you can think in such a way, then you can find peace within you wherever you may be. I am everything but I am your real well-wisher at the same time. I have no apprehension from anyone, whoever he is and whatever position he may hold."

Question: How are we to understand that Krsna is an autocrat, despot, liar, *and* our well-wisher?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: He is an autocrat because law comes from Him. The autocrat is above law, law emanates from Him. When there are many there is law. When there is only one, there is no necessity of law. Are you satisfied?

Question: Yes. Then, He is a despot?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Despot, but Absolute Good! If there would be any check in His despotism then the world would be the loser, the environment would be the loser. Goodness must have its full-fledged flow. Is it bad? Can there be any objection to that?

Goodness must have its freedom to flow anywhere and everywhere. "The Absolute Good", we say, then what can we lose by giving Him autocracy? Should the autocracy be with the ignorant and the fools? Should the fools and the mischievous have autocracy? No! The Absolute Good must have full autocracy. Not that law will go to bind His hand for then we will be the loser.

Question: Then, He is a liar?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, liar, to entice us because we cannot understand the whole truth, the Absolute Truth. So in order to entice

us gradually, to draw us forward, He has become a liar. If He is all-goodness then everything emanating from Him cannot but be good. Defect can only be found in other quarters. He is the owner. Everything belongs to Him. We are encroachers. He is not an encroacher although He shows sometimes in that way. But that is His play, *lila*, and everything belongs to Him. His lying is good. Whatever He says, is so: "Let there be water" and there was water, "Let there be light" and there was light With such potential power at the center, can any lying be there?

Question: If He is all these things; despot, autocrat and liar, then how can we understand that He is also our ever well-wisher?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Why in this world has He given you freedom? Because free choice is necessary for feeling happiness, otherwise He is one whole, He is everywhere, with no separate individual position. If you are to conceive any separate interest, separate individuality, then freedom is indispensable. Free cooperation can give you real happiness, but if freedom is snatched from you, you become a stone. Is that desirable? Is there any dearth of stones? Then?

Endowed with freedom, free choice to choose the good and dismiss the bad. Then should it be thought that everyone will be bad, so that then no free choice will be given to anything? Is this desirable?

So realize all these things within yourself and try to adjust with the center. It is not that we are all right and we must trace some defect in Him: we are not to foster that attitude. But *He* is all-good and the defect is in us. By conferring free choice within us He has not done wrong. We are to find that out. If there is not freedom of conception in us we cannot have the position of enjoying happiness.

Question: Then, "*aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam ...*"

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: From so low you are going to so high! *Aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam* . What do you want to say there?

Question: Is it just a manufacturing of our own mentality? Is it just our own conception that He has abandoned me? Or that He is here or

He is not here? Or that He is with me or He is not with me?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: He is always with you, but still He is not with you at all. He is always being in the background and He is not in the positive foreground. I cannot find Him because finding is of infinite character. He is infinite and my position is very meager, so I can never be satisfied.

He is with me in the background as the infinite character, but I only have my meager conception therefore just how much can I get of Him? But I know the fact that He is bigger and bigger whereas I am finer and finer. So satisfaction and dissatisfaction are both contained: it cannot but be. The infinite character is in the background and the finite character is before me. Because I have got small existence, how can I take part of Him? What I can have in my possession of Him, that is very meager: the background says " This is nothing," So many others are also there. So many are holding higher positions, and that is also a relativity: relative life. Parts are always within the laws of relativity, including ourselves. In this material plane we are unsatisfied. If I have got one state then I want to conquer the whole world, then I want to conquer the whole solar system: there is no end. Even in connection with the physical infinite we aspire to hold a higher position, and in the spiritual plane it is also such.

There is also the realm of the type of satisfaction of losing one's personality and entering into deep, sound sleep. That is found in Brahmaloka and Viraja. On one side of that we get good, and on the other we get bad. The property for exploitation is infinite, and the realm of service to the master, competition, that is also infinite.- To have an individual position necessarily means to be in the environment of infinite, Good or bad. Healthy or diseased.

Question: What is Brahmaloka?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Brahmaloka is where we lose our material ego, material individuality, but do not get our spiritual individuality. Brahmaloka is the marginal position. It is no-man's-land. The other side is in touch with the other realm and this side is in touch with this

plane: something like that. It is the border, the margin between the two. On one side is consciousness, and on the other side is matter. One side is light and one side is darkness. Just as in the evening, light and darkness are combined.

Question: Are Sankara and Buddha citizens of no-man's-land?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. One is on this side, nearing the land of exploitation and the other is nearing the land of dedication: Brahmaloka is a little higher than Viraja. Viraja is the watery characteristic of *prakrti*. Whereas Brahmaloka is light, *purusa* .

Tat lingam bhagavan sambhur . In the *Brahma-samhita* it is told that a ray of light is coming to this watery substance. This watery substance is compared to *prakrti* .*Prakrti* means this external potency, the potency on which the misconception arises and from which it is born. There some movement is created and the ray within is sown amongst the misconceived things without. There is a free combination and this world emerges from that common material, *mahat-tattva* .

*mama yonir mahad-brahma, tasmin garbham dadhamyaham
sambhavah sarva-bhutanam, tato bhavati bharata*
(Bhagavad-gita, 14.3)

"O Bharata, material nature, known as *pradhana* , is the womb into which I cast the seed (in the form of the individual soul which is born of the marginal potency) From that place, all beings headed by Lord Brahma are generated."

Aham bija-pradah pita: "I am the seed-bestowing father." *Tat lingam bhagavan sambhur*: "And Sambhu is My sense that gives birth." That may be taken as Sambhu, Siva; the part of the Supreme that is coming within this *prakrti* and moving it, producing this world in the negative side.

The world of luster must be scrutinized and analyzed and we shall find that so many units are there. So many souls are there but all are serving units, and I also can be enlisted and allowed to enter there amongst them. In Vaikuntha, the life of the plane of dedication, we can be newborn there and have our position.

Question: Is that the fourth plane and fifth plane of attaining knowledge?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is the third plane. The third plane Sankara recommended as the marginal position, and the fourth plane Sri Ramanujacarya recommended as the power-controlling, calculative service of the Lord in awe and reverence. Then the next higher and most all-embracing solid circle is Goloka. Goloka means something like a football: a four right-angled solid circle where there is no crookedness. There we find that, and that is the deepest plane spreading all through, all pervading. That is Goloka. It is the all-pervading, all-embracing, and finest plane. That is the plane of love and beauty and automatic service. Automatic, not calculative. That is the plane of Krsna: the most universal, the most capturing, the widest and the finest. Beauty is reigning there; the queen of love is managing there by Her potency,

The potency there is *ahaituki-apratihata*, causeless and continuous. There is *Svayam-Bhagavan* and *Mahabhava*. the highest conception of negative and the highest conception of positive, combined, of the highest quality. And that is love and beauty: it is their reign, their kingdom. It has been found out, and it is given to us by *Bhagavatam* and Mahaprabhu, that beauty is controlling. Love is controlling: that land is such. If we are tempted by that, we are to try for that. Only the attraction which originates from that plane can take us there. Agents from that plane come here, float on the surface, and give us an injection so that we can gradually move towards that direction. They give the injection of prospect. Such prospects there are! Will you come to take a certificate to enter into that plane?

It is from that plane, really from that plane, that the sound of the holy name emanates. By following that sound we can be led there but if an imitation sound comes it may take us to some other plane and finish there. The sound, has got so much depth. Like the homeopathic pill, apparently so many globules are one and. the same but the potency within is all-important.

Vaikuntha nam grahana: not mundane sound, but we are to differentiate according to the depth of meaning in the sound. The word contains what depth of potency within? What depth of good will and knowledge? That very fine thing within the sound will exert itself ultimately and not the sound vibration only. The sound containing the *bhava* , the meaning, that is everything and that is very important.

Question: The ninth offense against the holy name is to preach the glories of the holy name to the faithless. Is it an offense to give the holy name or a conception of the spiritual realm to the Sankarites, the Saivites and other impersonalists?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: The field must be favorable for the seed to grow, otherwise good seed cast onto the stone will be useless. *Sraddha*, the *sisya*, and the *guru*, each must be proper and those symptoms have been given in the scripture. The healthy *sisya* attitude (disciple attitude) must be there and also the field must be cultivated in a certain way. The soil and the seed, they both must be proper, then the crops will grow.

Question: You mentioned once that the name can become counterfeit like shooting a gun using a blank bullet. Could you explain that please?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: If there is only sound it is something like many globules of homeopathic pills without any medicine: mere globes. Mere sound, but nothing good within, will do the work of globules of sugar only, but not of medicine. Do you follow? The globules made of sugar, but having no medicine within, will have what effect? If we take that sort of globule of homeopathy without any medicine within, what will be the result? No effect. Similarly the mere letters of the name and not the name itself, will not be able to produce anything good. *Namaksara bahiraya bate* is the cover-sound; the sound without any real meaning within it. And because the real purpose and the real good is not behind the sound it will produce false effect.

You are sending letters with inquiry. Are all the points finished?

Question: No! In the last letter I wrote there is a question about something I think Narada Muni said. How can we understand that the demon can cultivate more intensity than the devotee'?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is easy to get more intensity in that section of lower purpose. That may be easily granted, but that intensity is of less quality. That takes them only to the verge, that Brahmaloka circle.

Rupa Goswami has harmonized it in his explanation.

*yad arinam priyanam ca, prapyam ekam ivoditam
tad brahma-krsnayoraikyat, kiranarkopama-jusoh*
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, 1.2.278)

Just as there is the sun and its ray, there is similarly Krsna and Brahmaloka, the ray of His domain. The *asuras*, they get their final shelter in Brahmaloka, *kirana* ; the world of luster. And the devotees, they enter into the transcendental cosmic area according to their choice and their innate quality. The gradation is there in His family and in His paraphernalia.

A maidservant enters a room by a door and a newlywed wife also enters by the same door but each occupies a far, far different position from the other.

*kamad dvesad bhayat snehad yatha bhaktyasvare manah
avesya tad-agham hitva bahavas tad-gatim gatah*
(Bhagavatam, 7.1.30)

It is easy to capture more intensity in the lower quality, but in the higher order it is difficult to attain. So, easily the lower section get their sanction but it is hard for the devotee who wants to enter into the harem of Krsna amongst His internal servants: that is a little difficult. It is common sense.

The oneness of Krsna is not all one and the same. One is on the outskirts of the compound and another is at the very center of the compound. Difference is there: this is to be discriminated and Rupa

Goswami has given the solution. The solution of originality of harmony has been given by Rupa Goswami in *Laghu-bhagavatamrta* which is most critical. There it is given: *sevonmukhe hi jihvadau*, to take the name or do any service must have that one quality present to be named as devotion: the serving tendency must be there, otherwise the external show is not the real thing. "I am taking the name, a hundred crores of times" or all these things, it is all lip-deep and that won't fetch any higher value. But the depth must be considered. The intensity must be reckoned and that will lead us to get Krsna. According to that reckoning we may get to the outskirts of Krsna's domain or we may be allowed to enter into His confidential realm; this sort of consideration is there. So this is the way to harmonize things, good and bad. It is not one and the same, because it is, after all, a discriminating, differentiated plane, not a static hazy one. Krsna means differentiation. When Krsna is at the side of Srimati Radharani He is fullest, and when Krsna is at the side of other *gopis* He is one degree less.

In so many ways His attitude or His presence is measured by the devotees. How much intensity? How much love? There is also differentiation there in Vrndavana: in many, ways there is always differentiated character.

Question: Sometimes we feel the intensity very strongly...

Srila Sridhara Maharaj: What to speak of us, we are to understand these principles first. To attain to that position is imaginary and a story-like thing; like a fable. First let us enter into the area.

But we need not be discouraged; grace is there! Grace has got no limit. There is no fear of being bankrupt about Krsna. There is no question of Krsna being bankrupt there! Infinite! But to our faith it is difficult, very difficult, to get that, but His grace is there. Grace is not conditional for it may come to any place. No, one is sufficiently low that he cannot get His grace. Grace is free, it can embrace anyone. The most fallen may be graced and one who is puffed up with his own qualities may be neglected.

prema marta nityananda krpa-avatara

uttama, adhama, kichu ne kare vicara
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Adi 5.208)

Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami, the author of *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, says, "Nityananda Prabhu is mad in His distribution. in His magnanimity. He does not stoop so low as to consider that, 'This one is qualified, this one is not.' Sometimes the flood comes and inundates everyone: His movement is such." Sri Kaviraja Goswami continues, 'Only that chance captured me. It was not by any consideration of my capacity or my fitness, but by some causeless inundation the flood came and captured me: the flood from Nityananda Prabhu, by His grace. This is my position. Shamelessly I am giving an announcement that I have got a drop of the grace of Nityananda otherwise I would be faithless. Faithless! I have got Rupa, I have got Sanatana: that is to say that I have got appreciation for these stalwarts, these devotees. That I have got this and that, I cannot deny, and what I am giving to you in this scripture is not possible without grace. It is high. I can never deny that this; that what I am giving here is high. What is given through me in this book, *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* ; is of the highest order. If I don't say so then I would be faithless and unthankful. But it is not mine, it is extended to me by the higher authorities by their causeless mercy. It has captured me. I have been selected as their instrument, as their means. I feel that what is there is of a very pure and high type but I cannot claim it to be my own, it is someone else's property. It is resting in me, it can be withdrawn at any moment. It is so uncertain, but still it *is*, I can't deny, and it is the most beautiful thing, that also I can't deny."

Grace means independence. Grace means separate independence of the giver.

Chapter Three

Truth by Installments

Question: How do we reconcile the fact that in some *sastras* it says that Siva is supreme?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Siva is a type who is inquiring after something but Visnu is a type who has everything within. Siva is searching.

The *sastra* says differently for different sections according to their capability of catching the truth. In the primary literature it may be said that the sun is fixed and the planets are moving but in higher astronomy it may be said that the sun is also moving, with all the planets also moving around it. But to the children the whole truth may not be said. The truth is given partially, and by installments. *Sastra* has adopted this policy of giving things by installments in order that it will be acceptable accordingly by the different sections. Then when they will reach to that standard the *sastra* will come to say, "This is not the end, my boy. You will have to go further." This policy has been adopted in the *sastra* by the givers of the revealed truth.

*loke vyavayamisa-madya-seva
nitya hi jantor na hi tatra codana
vyavasthitis tesu vivaha-yajna
sura-grahair asu nivrttir ista
(Bhagavatam, 11.5.11)*

Partially, by installments, the truth is being distributed to them because they cannot accept the whole truth. They cannot understand the whole truth at once. The scripture advises that, "If you want to be united with the ladies, then marry and in that way go on. If you want to take fish and meat, then you dedicate it to a certain deity and in society you take it partially under the direction of a particular company who will make such arrangements. Your merit will be given to that animal whose body you are taking, but go on in contact with that company and take meat." The advice is meant like that.

Similarly: "If you want to take wine, then first offer it to such-and-such god and then take it." But it is not that, "You do not want it but I am forcing it on you." Rather, "Because you cannot imagine your existence without the help of these things I am giving some provision to you under some restriction. Then again I will come and take you up to the further, higher advice: 'Now take this!'"

Then, presently the *sastra* tells, "Already for fifty years you have been trying to enjoy, now come to the life of renunciation: give up everything. Come and devote yourself exclusively in the search for the future life in a scientific way." In this way the progressive steps are given. Human life itself is gradually progressing: first there is student life, then household life, to work, then the third life is for retirement, and the fourth life, *sannyasa*, is for giving up everything and going on independently. In this way there is classification in the human life.

In the section of the Puranas known as the *Saiva* Puranas it tells that Siva is supreme. The Puranas are divided into three. In all there are eighteen in number: six are *sattvik*, the upper division, six are *rajasik*, the middle division; and six are *tamasik*, the lower division. This classification is mentioned in the Puranas. In *Gaudiya-kanthahar* you will find mention of all these things: the classification of the Puranas. Some are meant for the lower, some for the middle and some for the higher sections of society. For this purpose the Puranas are divided into three groups of six. *Vedārtha-purāṇat*: the Puranas are supplementary to the meanings of the Vedas, the higher revelation scriptures. The Puranas are called Puranas because they make the meaning of the *Veda* full. According to the degree and capacity of the people, *sastra* has approached in different levels.

Question: So can we say that the Puranas are giving a lower conception?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Some Puranas are giving the lower or minimum conception: "The minimum is that you do this." The *Manu-samhita* says: "I am giving a list of fishes by name: 'Eat these particular types of fish but do not take these other species.' That does not mean that without fish if you go on then that will be bad. But because you cannot do without taking these things, because it is inconceivable for you to go on with your life without taking these things, I am giving the advice, 'That type will create some disease, that one will create some mischief, that one even more mischief, therefore the less mischievous things you should take.' But my underlying meaning is that I shall call you after some time, 'Go up!'. That indomitable spirit is within you to get all these lower things, so I must

at least advise you to do something. (*Pravrtti-esa bhutanam*)"

The Upanisads make the analogy of riding on a horse. The horse is running towards a particular direction and, although the rider pulls on the reins, the horse won't come back. Then he is allowed to go at his free-will for some time and then again the rider draws on the reins. In this way, after some attempts, the horse will come back on course: it can be turned. In the Upanisads it is mentioned that our ego is running like the horse. This body is a chariot and the senses are like horses taking me towards their particular wrong directions, But I shall try to take them, to alter their course to some other direction. They may not care for me so what to do but let them go a little ahead for some time. But I shall try again and again and eventually I shall see that the horse is responding to my command.

The indomitable tendency towards this exploitation is here (*pravrttir-esa bhutanam*). But what to do except give it all up and go to the other side beyond indifference and abnegation (*nivrttis tu mahaphala*) . And that is proper adjustment.

*yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra, loko 'yam karma-bandhanah
tad-artham karma kaunteya, mukta-sangah samacara*
(Bhagavad-gita, 3.9)

Everything should be connected with the center otherwise you will be responsible for exploitation and thereby get reaction. But if you can connect everything according to the scripture, according to the rules to deal with the center, then you are relieved from your local responsibility, You must work in the central intensity and the center will make adjustment.

Question: Is the *varnasrama-dharma* system given in the Puranas?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, it is in the Puranas.

Question: Is it given in the *sattvik sastra* but not in the *rajasik* or *tamasik sastra* ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: In each of the *tamasik*, *rajasik* and *sattvik*

scriptures *varnasrama-dharma* is both included and classified. But *sattvik* is also not *nirguna*, but the *nirguna* campaign may be begun from any post of *varnasrama*. A *sudra* may come to have direct connection with the center whereas a *brahmana* may not accept and he will have to turn again to go downwards. It is revolving like this, like a wheel going up, and coming down. A *brahmana* is not sure to be a *brahmana* always. After this birth he may go down again to the lowest position and then again come back up (*abrahma bhuvanal lokah, punar avartino*). This *sattva-guna*, *rajo-guna* and *tamo-guna* are interchanging their positions always, but *nirguna* has permanent value. That *nirguna* life may be begun from any position. A *sudra* may begin that *nirguna* life, a *brahmana* also may: anyone may do or anyone may not do. Those who do not will revolve in this *guna-maya*, going up and coming down. Exploiting means getting loan and becoming heavy. That heaviness takes him down. Then, in the downward position he is being exploited and thereby the loan becomes cleared: he is made light and goes up. In this way he is coming and going: exploiting and being exploited. It is a vicious circle. To get *nirguna* is to get out of that circle.

tasyaiva hetoh prayateta kovido
na labhyate yad bhramatam upary adhah
tal labhyate duhkhave anyatah sukham
kalena sarvatra gabhira-ramhase
(Bhagavatam, 1.5.18)

"Persons who are actually intelligent and philosophically inclined should endeavor only for that purposeful end which is not obtainable even by wandering from the topmost planes down to the lowest planet. As far as happiness derived from sense enjoyment is concerned, it can be obtained automatically in course of time, just as in course of time we obtain miseries even though we do not desire them."

By the great force of time and space it is revolving. But only those who can acquire some *sukrti*, who have some tendency to serve in connection with the *nirguna* plane, they will survive. Gradually they will make themselves free from this vicious circle: free from that force of going up and down, up and down.

Question: I understand that in the *varnasrama-dharma* system even a *sudra* must follow regulative principles.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: By that he may attain the *rajasik* plane and gradually to the *sattvik* plane: But this is all *guna-maya*. *Nirguna* is something else.

A *brahmana* may have some facility, but in spite of that he may not connect with *nirguna*. He may go to Brahmaloka but he will remain within this material plane. The connection with *nirguna* is independent of this *varnasrama*. There is *asura-varnasrama* and *daiva-varnasrama*; the classification of two *varnasramas*. Where there is recognition of the highest, *nirguna*, that is called *daiva-varnasrama*. And where there is consideration of the flesh in this *guna-mayi-jagat*: the good and bad within the misconceived realm, the standard of misconception, that is called *asura-varnasrama*.

From the standpoint of the absolute consideration when *varnasrama* is connected with *nirguna*, then that is really helpful, otherwise not.

Question: Can we say that there is some facility for eating meat within the *varnasrama* system?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, but that is *saguna*. *Saguna*, it is within the mundane nature. We take the flesh of the beast but some *mantram*, some regulation, some deity, some particular company, association; all these things are involved. And what will that do? We are using his flesh, and the soul of the beast will get something from our merit. So, it is not proper, but it is not such a brutal violence. It is modified violence and the soul of the animal will be compensated in the next life according to the method in which he is killed. But those who are taking advantage of his flesh are not devotees. They are ordinary men and they will get ordinary *sattvik* or *rajasik* result. There is no touch of devotion proper there. No touch of *nirguna*.

But in the Vaisnava section, according to *sastra* the vegetables can be offered to Narayana. Those vegetables offered to Narayana will be elevated automatically. And those who are giving, who are offering,

and, for the service are taking that *prasadam*, for them there is no harm. They will be elevated by taking that *prasadam*. So in the Vaisnava conception both the eater and the eaten, all are going up because they are coming in connection with that highest good-will. But that is not the case with other 'goodness'.

'dvaite' bhadrabhadra-jnana, saba - manodharma'

'ei bhala, ei manda', - ei sabe 'bhrama'

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Antya 4.176)

In the world of misconception the plane is misconceived, so what real benefit, good or bad, may be there? Ultimately all is false, as in a dream. So whether it is a good dream or a bad dream, there is not much difference there. In such a plane of unreality, to consider some thing to be good and another thing to be bad is all based on falsity, misconception.

Question: If an animal is killed must that soul come again in the same species?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Not always. The results of his previous actions will come forward. After the marriage of Devaki to Vasudeva, Kamsa, as a charioteer, is taking Devaki and Vasudeva to her father-in-law's house. At that time some sound came from the sky saying, "You are relishing this marriage, but the eighth son of your sister will be your killer!" And suddenly Kamsa jumped and took his sister by the hair and was about to behead her. Then Vasudeva came to oppose him; "What are you doing? You are a hero, and you are killing your sister? Being afraid for your life you stoop so low!" In this way on that occasion there was some talk and in course of that Vasudeva said, "Before one dies, birth begins."

Birth, rebirth, begins before one's death. Why! How is it possible? The next birth begins before his death because the past *karmas* come to take their satisfaction. Each one comes with its demands. All tendencies come to get the next chance, the first chance. It is automatically decided in some computer-like way, and when the body is left the subtle body captures the soul and takes it. He may go

anywhere and everywhere as the consequence of his previous actions. In the shape of idea the consequences come to take possession.

So after a human birth one may go down to be a tree. Even by living in accordance with the *varnasrama-dharma* system we also find that some *deva* is coming to be a stone or a tree in his next life; all these things are happening. So when one dies it may be possible, but it is not sure, that a *brahmana* will again be a *brahmana* in his next birth. If he has done some previous bad action then that may take him to the worst position, whereas a *candala* who is finishing his lowest form of life may come to be a *brahmana* at once. According to *karma*, and the intensity and priority of the *karma*, the results have their effects.

Chapter Four

With Sincerity to Safety

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Pure means God-interested. In one's innate nature God's interest is present. Only God's interest is the innate tendency and when that is uncovered we can see everything as it is. There everything is doing the service of the Absolute and everything is all right. The only anomaly arises when we want to see the Absolute as my servant or I want to non-cooperate with Him (*bhuki-mukti-sprha*). These are two kinds of misconceptions but really everything is meant for serving Him and I am also a servant included within that jurisdiction. I am a servant. My duty is to use myself cent-per-cent to serve Him. Service is the truth. Service, not of the nation or society or land or country, but service of the Absolute: that is truth. Only misconception has come to deviate us from that vision and so cause our suffering. It is something like disease. We are attacked by a disease of exploiting tendency or renouncing tendency. The duty of every *jiva* soul is to be an inseparable organic unit to serve and to work for the interest of the organic whole. That is the basic idea.

Question: Does each unit have an eternal relationship with the whole which is not the same as that of another unit?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: They are individuals, but in consonance. There is some sympathetic relation between them. There are groups also according to the nature of service: *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* and *madhurya*. There are so many groups and they are sympathetic. Sometimes there also may be fighting with the opposition, but that is also service!

Question: Can you explain further of what you mentioned recently, that in the devotee's quest to become pure he must go through numerous situations where he is accepting something higher and rejecting something lower: eliminating the lower conception and accepting the higher conception?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Those are different stages of that misunderstanding, different strata. *Sadhana* means progress which means eliminating something and inviting something higher. In this way the process is there and that may be quick in a certain case and slow in another. It may be slow or rapid but we are to pass through different stages according to the intensity of illusion.

Question: What is the determining factor as to whether we pass through such a stage slowly or quickly?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: That will depend upon the *sukrti* and the *sat-sanga*. There will be some conscious help and some previous underground help. *Ajnata-sukrti* is when unconsciously unknown benefit has come to me. Whereas *jnata-sukrti* is when consciously some benefit comes through the association of the *sadhu*, the saint. And that *sadhu* also may be of different types.

Question: I don't understand. The *sadhu* may be of different types?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: There are different types of *sadhus*. We have freedom of cooperation and association with a particular section and the outcome of that depends also on the quality of whom we associate with.

Question: So spiritual life is one where we are accepting a new concept and eliminating old concepts?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: There is classification of misconception: *Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah* and *Satya*. There is so much gradation within the plane of misconception. And within that there are so many subdivisions such as insects, trees, animals, etc. But at the same time we shall think that a tree might have advanced in the *nirguna* whereas a man might not. Misconception may be so hopelessly peculiar in a man that it will take time to cure him. At the same time, the mental system of a tree or an animal may be more advanced towards service, though its present situation is very lamentable.

Question: Does the acceptance and elimination of concepts include *sadhu-sanga* , that we accept and eliminate there also?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. In *sadhu-sanga* there are so many considerations: the type of *sadhu*, the cooperating tendency, also the backing of previous *sukrti*. There are many things to be taken into calculation.

*adhistanam tatha karta, karanam ca prthag-vidham
vividhas ca prthak cesta, daivam caivatra pancamam*
(Bhagavad-gita, 18.14)

With the help of these five factors, all actions are effected: "The body, ego (in the form of the knot of spirit and matter), the separate senses, the different endeavors, and destiny, or the intervention of the Supreme Universal Controller."

It is not that just one incident is the cause but there are so many circumstantial things coming together that cause a particular event. Any event is the combination of many things: his free-will, his previous background, his present association, his nature: all these things have got their contribution for his progress. Circumstance can contribute much. It is not limited only to the free-will of the man who wants progress.

Question: What about *Vaisnava aparadha*, offenses to the devotees ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: If that is underground that will vehemently oppose his progress. In a particular circumstance many things may be more or less important that will arrest or help his progress.

Question: One cannot say which factor is more important because each situation is different?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is generally told that when one has come to such a position that he accepts the Vaisnava as all in all then the ordinary duties to the worldly environment will lose their importance. At that stage the importance should be given to the finer circumstances relating to where I am really wanting to enter into. The sympathy or apathy of those who are in power will have much effect, whereas the sympathy and apathy of those in a lower position will be of less-value. That is natural common sense. I may want progress, but if the higher officials are non-sympathetic then that will be a great hindrance. But if the lower people who are under me have some complaint then that will not matter much. So Vaisnava and Visnu will be given the highest consideration and I must take care not to commit any offense and not to incur any displeasure from Them. Our extra attention should be given to that.

Question: Is the guru-disciple relationship above this acceptance and elimination process?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Sometimes we may see this happen but that is the most unfortunate thing ever one may have to forego. If any wrong is found in whom I want to depend foremost then that will be a great misfortune and setback. The greatest setback is to eliminate guru. But to be sympathetic with our gurudeva and after his departure if we take help of the closer association then that is not to dismiss the guru. Rather, that will help us to serve more our gurudeva. After the departure of guru I shall try to get the help of those who are of higher type. Therefore if I could get help from any of his friends, then of

course that is not bad. Rather that is good because I am getting impetus to make my progress more quickly, and my progress will not be checked for want of any favorable advice about the ways and means.

The danger arises when guru is alive and for any reason I am to leave him. That is of course a very dangerous thing and there also we find the relative consideration and the absolute consideration going side by side. When they are going side by side, the absolute consideration must get the upper hand. We may be misguided and so it is easy to change the guru from non- *Vaisnava* to *Vaisnava*, from *saguna* to *nirguna* . But in the *nirguna-viveka*, in the same plane, if we are to change guru during the lifetime of guru then that we must consider as a grave and serious thing. Sometimes such a disaster may fall on some disciple.

There are also the so-called *Vaisnava* gurus who have left the proper line but who profess themselves to be in the *Vaisnava* school. They came perhaps with some sincerity but became influenced by bad association and so they changed their faith. These are very complicated things, but differentiation is possible. And when it is clearly differentiated that such an unfortunate situation exists, then the disciple must take certain steps. It is possible also that, broken-hearted, one may take the risk of giving up the possibility of making any progress in this life. Without progress, broken-hearted, he lives thinking, "My choice has been wrong and my attempt in this life has been thwarted and that is my misfortune. However, at least seeking the help of the Supreme Lord, I shall have some hope that in my next life I may find that real thread of progress."

But there may be someone of strong understanding who can change his path from here to there. Especially this may be so if any incidental ignorance had covered him for the time being and that has now passed away so that he can see clearly what is what. He may consider, "I have purchased a through-ticket but when making some progress I have come to understand that there are some hindrances on the line. Therefore, from this juncture I can accept another train on another line in order to go where there is no danger." If it becomes clear that ahead

there is some danger, then although a ticket was purchased to go through on this line the necessity then arises to get down from the train at a junction and accept another line to reach the goal. It is quite possible this consideration may arise if things occur in such way.

Alternatively, someone may consider that he has purchased a ticket and therefore he must go on along that line. But the absolute consideration is that, "I want to go to that destination, and I am going for that purpose. So, if on the way I am to find that there is some difficulty then I am to change my course." This is common sense.

*partha naiveha namutra, vinasas tasya vidyate
na hi kalyana-krt kascid, durgatim tata gacchati*
(Bhagavad-gita, 6.40)

For one who is sincere in his activity he need not be afraid of anything because the Lord is the guide. Through gurudeva also the inner guide is He. By His direction all these things are being done. The final touch of hand is with the Supreme.

There is also the consideration of association, *sanga*. Suppose I have purchased a ticket and am going smoothly towards the destination but some *asat-sanga*, some bad association, comes to me. Some mischief monger or some ignorant person may say, "No, no, there is danger ahead so let us get down." I may be influenced by that, falsely. This also may happen that by bad association sometimes Someone may be led to reject a good guru.

Also it may happen that I have purchased my ticket but there comes some doubt, I am perplexed and get down. But ultimately I see that I have done wrong: that I have committed a great wrong. That also may be. Anyhow, our sincere hankering after the truth will come to our rescue, and that sincerity of hankering depends again on the past *sukrti*. The type and the quality of help that was injected into me in my unconscious stage will come to help me always. From the background that will come to dictate to me, "Do this, do this!" Sincerity is necessary.

Any event is a combination of many things. But those that are sincere, that are eager to help their own self really, they cannot be misguided for long. That should be our solace, our consolation. "If I do not like to be a party to deceive myself then none can deceive me in this world." That fairness of mind one should have, because the vigilant eye of the Absolute is always there. We must have such confidence and such faith that the vigilant eye of the Supreme is everywhere. I may not see that, but He is my best friend and only I want to come to Him and He knows it. So, to Whom I am going, He is looking at everything although I may not. The Absolute is the absolute possibility. The finite is to go to meet the Infinite! It is the most audacious, the most impossible thing, and we are going to make it possible by our inner urge. Our inner urge, that is everything.

Question: So the calculating mentality may not be our best friend?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It may not be of great help. Of course we cannot avoid calculation when we are in a certain stage. But still we should know that the calculative mentality may not be of much help ultimately. Prayer is more powerful to seek the help of the highest to whom I am trying to go. If I seek His help, then He will send some agent to me. If I should get such an agent on my side along the way, then I will be more secure in my progress. Prayer, prayer and *saranagati*. Prayer reaches to Him only when we surrender.

But calculation may be of the nature of self-analysis: "Here I have nothing, I have no power, so how can I be lifted? My knowledge and my judgment are futile and have got no power. My free will, my judgment, my everything is so meager. So how can it come in contact and make some progress regarding the infinite? This is impossible!" In this way self-analysis will take us to surrender.

Surrender and prayer will be of primary importance to any spiritual student. *Saranagati* means surrender. As much as we make surrender towards Him our prayer will be genuine. When I shall I see myself as clearly helpless then only will my prayer be substantial and then the help will come accordingly.

On the whole there is only one most important factor. *sadhu-sanga*.

So many things are all interdependent but first importance is to be given to *sadhu-sanga*. But *sadhu-sanga* is also affected by the results of so many previous events. So many things are all interdependent but still some points have been given more stress. More importance has been given to firstly *sadhu-sanga*, then *sastra*, then *saranagati*, then prayer. Though many things are there, a complex and interdependent interhelp, but still if we are to select some principle thing for our help the first thing will be *sadhu-sanga*, association with those more advanced than myself, and next importance will be given to the *sastra*, the advices of the great *sadhus*. With these two we shall take practical steps in *saranagati*. *Saranagati* is real when it is sincere. And sincerity means, "I am helpless. By self-analysis I am helpless." As much as I consider myself to be helpless my prayer to the Lord will be accordingly intense, and the help from that side will come to that degree.

Sanga means serving attitude, not physical contact but serving. Higher things can be contacted only through the relationship of serving tendency, not otherwise.

Question: Therefore is prayer a more benedicting activity?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Prayer also should be pure. "O Lord give me my bread!" is also a prayer. And another type of prayer is, "Please save me, I do not know what is my real interest. Please enlighten me." There are so many different types of prayer and how we pray is determined by our association and our spiritual advice.

Question: Is praying for the revelation of the Absolute more important than glorification of the Absolute?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. "Please You reveal within me what truth is, who am I, where am I, what is my goal of life and how to reach there. Why am I suffering? I do not know how to get out of this miserable life, so please help me. I do not know, but only I can guess that You are goodness, ecstasy and happiness. I want you. I am much tired of my present situation, I cannot tolerate it any longer. Please take me up."

Question: Should that type of prayer be given more importance and stressed more than the glorification of the Absolute?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: The prayer to the highest degree that we find is: "I want Your connection. You may utilize me. You may think me to be Yours and keeping me in Your connection utilize me according to Your sweet will. I have no particular claim nor aspiration that I must attain this or that, but only I want to be Your faithful servant and so You please utilize me in any way You like. Only that inseparable connection with You I want. I am Your slave: I want to be Your slave. Your connection I want: Your sincere connection, and You know best what connection that is. I do not know what is what, but You know what is best. Only consider me as Your own and utilize me." That should be the nature of our prayer.

Question: Should we have a desperate mood?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Desperate? That will depend on the particular disciple. As much sure a conception he gets of his high prospect he becomes desperate to that degree. Surrender means to be desperate, "Whatever may come let it come, but I surrender to You. I have got such confidence in you. I am surrendering to You, and if any revolting forces of the environment come to attack me then I am to tolerate that."

An example is Prahlada Maharaja who received so many tortures even from his so-called near relative, his father. There are several similar examples. If you are *saranagata*, surrendered, to Him then you may have to suffer many things because of that and if you don't become desperate then you will have to come back. With a desperate mentality you are to tolerate all the tortures that will come against you and still you won't budge an inch from your path of progress. That must be. We must be prepared for any injury in any event. Anything may come, known or unknown, supposed or unsuspected. Anything may come but we are to remain strong in our position. Fixing our eye on Him, it is worth suffering from all types of pains. To stand because, "I am standing for the Truth," will be my solace.

Even in political matters we find that when one is made captive he must be prepared for any sort of torture. Perhaps for earning money, the spy is also working by wandering in the enemy's land, but, if detected, he may have to face all kinds of torture. No risk, no gain! If for the Truth, if for my endeavor to meet the Truth, so many opposing forces revolt against me, then what to do? I shall stand with my head erect: "I am not doing anything wrong." At the same time, like Christ, one should pray, "O Father, they know not what they do, forgive them. They do not know what wrong things they are doing to me. Forgive them."

Prahlada Maharaja advises that whatever adverse circumstances may come to disturb us we should try to not only see them as opposing and undesirable but we are required to see them as quite befitting: "It *should* come and is coming through the will of my good, well-wishing Lord. Very kindly He is sending these apparently unfavorable things to me but here is His grace." We shall try to read positive sympathy in the pain and not only negative opposition. One thing to note is that nothing can come without His sanction, so it is coming to me with His sanction. There can be no spirit of retaliation in Him, therefore the pain has come for some purpose: to purify me. This positive end is there. He is trying to finish the bad consequences of my previous actions. "I would otherwise have had to undergo the bad consequences of my actions for a long time to come but perhaps He is making that intense in order to be finished within a very short time. Therefore it is *His* grace." If with this attitude we can face this danger that surrounds us then very easily we are released from all such opposing forces.

When the mother is punishing her child, affection is in the background. There is no spirit of retaliation, rather, there is the spirit of affection: she wants to correct him. But when the child takes the attitude, "Yes. More punishment is required, Mother. I have done so many misdeeds, more punishment is necessary for me." Then the mother will release him very soon; "Oh, he has understood that he did wrong so he should be released now." The result of punishment is reached and so the punishment should be withdrawn.

So whenever the opposing environment comes to pain us, we should

see with such a vision that, "It is the benevolence of the Lord that He has sent this suffering to me, to correct me, to release me very soon perhaps. I am inviting you, "Yes, you come. You come. You are my friend. In the garb of enemy you are my friend. You have come to release me very soon, so I welcome you. You are coming because without my Lord's sanction nothing can happen. So when you have come, you have come surely for my benefit, so I welcome you." If with this attitude you can embrace unfavorable circumstances then very soon you will get liberation from the clutches of *maya*.

At the same time it is necessary to show one's gratitude to the Lord, "How kind You are. You have managed to clear my debt from my previous life in so short a time. You are so gracious. So I show my obeisances to You, my Lord. You are so gracious to me. You are trying to finish the reactions of the long-standing misdeeds of my past life which could take birth after birth, infinitely, to clear. But that has been finished within a few hours, so I bow down so faithfully. My faithful obeisances to You, my Lord." With this attitude he gets relief immediately. That is the key to success.

Question: What should be the conception of the devotee when the guru is chastising him? Should he understand that to be for his benefit?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. Mahaprabhu says that when the guru is chastising he is considering the disciple to be his own: he has got much affection. But when he is indifferent then he has kept the disciple at a respectable distance and has not accepted him closely. When the guru is punishing then that is a great fortune. One can think, "The vigilant eye of gurudeva is over me and he cannot tolerate anything wrong in me. So that is very rare, a great fortune, a great prospect of my life that his vigilant eye is there so that nothing wrong can attack me and take me down. He is there." That the guru is giving punishment presupposes that his guardian's eye is watching over the disciple. So that should be considered a great fortune.

In the last sloka of his *Siksastakam* prayers Mahaprabhu also says how the standard of attachment should be of the devotee towards the Lord.

Here, of course, it is mentioned about Kṛṣṇa but we will find this similar relationship between disciple and guru.

*aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam
adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va
yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato
mat-prana-nathas tu sa eve naparah
(Siksastakam 8)*

"Kṛṣṇa may adore me but, although I think I am holding fast His holy feet, He may also throw me away or trample me down. Furthermore, the next alternative may come that He may be indifferent. He is not coming to punish me, but He may be indifferent: He doesn't care for me. I am nothing to Him. He has eliminated me from His camp and that is more dangerous. He may also be embracing others, showing His affection to others while ignoring me. What one day I expected to have from Him, the others are enjoying and I am debarred from that. All this show may take place before my very eyes but still I have no other alternative than to hold fast to His feet, to hold His holy legs very fast. I have no other alternative because He is all in all to me."

This sort of adherence to Him we shall try to maintain. "I have no other alternative but His favor. He may show His favor, He may not." In different stages He may deal with me in different ways. He may show His apathy to me but still I have no other alternative. I am to tolerate all the apathetic eventualities. That is the nature of the tie between the man and the Master. That tie is invulnerable, is inseparable, is eternal and, if cut, that separation may not even be imagined: such closer and natural connection we have got with the Absolute Good.

We cannot even conceive of anything other than our connection with Him, and that is the eternal conception. We are to go on in the eternal plane and we are to find out our eternal contact: the finite's connection with the Infinite. The man and the Master. The Lord and the servant. In this way it is inconceivable, but inconceivably true. That sort of connection with the Supreme we shall try to find out, and that is the greatest importance of our existence.

Separate existence is not possible. That connection with Him is there, only we forget that. That is the trouble. And in the process of forgetfulness and in the degree of forgetfulness everything becomes an anomaly. All the anomalies can be confined in this single misunderstanding. The whole anomaly exists only by this misunderstanding.

Chapter Five

Highest Dedication, Highest Gain

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Selflessness means to admit that the Lord is all in all. Even the existence can be effaced by His sweet will. Although we are told that the soul is eternal, His will is the Absolute Will and He can efface me if He wants. The Master can murder the slave. *Marobi rakhobi-jo iccha tohara*, "You can keep me or You can do away with me, this is Your constitutional right. I am fully dependent. You can make or mar with my fortune: anything You like." As much as you will be able to realize your position of helplessness, so much you will enrich yourself from the real standpoint and you will acquire a position there. Vanity will not be allowed there, but just the opposite is required: full humility. Humility has got value there because one should always think oneself to be the negative and not the positive. To have no rights, but all rights only in His sweet will, is *prema*, love. His grace is our existence in that aspect of reality.

The *sakti*, the female, has got her importance in a particular way. It is not that she will go to imitate the right of the male, for that will be her failure. Similarly, the male has got his own particular way of attitude. There is the predominating and the predominated. If we want to assert our predominating self then we must have to come in connection with *maya*, the illusory energy where we are *purusa*, enjoyer. But if we want to approach the spiritual realm, then we are not to be *purusa*, but we are to be of female type, dependent type, *sakti*. In relation to Him we are *sakti*, and in relation to *maya* we are *saktimam*, *purusa*. In

maya we are exploiters, enjoyers, whereas there we are to be enjoyed. If we seek our relationship with the upper existence then we are to be enjoyed, we are to be handled: subjective existence is there on that side. And here in the lower existence we have come to exploit, to assert, and therefore we are in connection with *maya* and are suffering from the reaction. Here we are *purusa*, and there, in the relativity of the higher, we are *sakti*, potency. Here in the illusory world we can assert that we are *purusa*, that we are enjoyers, but this is false and reactionary. So, try to develop the attitude of your potency characteristic. As much as you will be able to do that you will have value in the higher realm. *Pranipatena, pariprasnena, sevaya*. By submission you may be allowed to enter into that domain, otherwise not. *Seva*, service, means that you have to be utilized by them. If you will let yourself be utilized for the interest of the higher land, the higher plane, only then will you be allowed to enter there. No exploitation for the *jiva* soul is possible in that land, the country of Paramatma, and above, the land of Krsna.

Question: What about the endeavor of the *mayavadis*, the impersonalists, to understand the Infinite by knowledge (*jnana*) ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: They cannot enter into that domain. They are showing their feats only here within this mundane world up to Satyaloka. Then in Brahmaloka they merge and are finished there. Their idea of "so'ham "; "I am a part of the highest entity", retains them in Brahmaloka and they can never pass upwards through there towards Vaikuntha. Whereas with the mood of "*daso 'ham* ," "I am a servant of that highest entity", you will be allowed to enter into the higher realm. *nirmatsaranam satam moksabhisandhir api nirastah*.

Question: What is the endeavor of the practitioner, the *sadhaka*, in calculative devotional service, *vaidhi-bhakti* ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: He is to follow that program which is recommended in the sastra and by the *sadhu* and gradually he will find himself to be in the proper soil. He will find that he is gaining some ground and he will thereby receive encouragement to continue his attempt towards that upper realm. He will get some reliable taste, *ruci*.

Up to *ruci* he is to undergo some *sadhana*, some program as recommended by the *sadhu* and the *sastra*, and by that he will get help.

Up until just before *apana-dasa*, the stage of wholehearted exclusive acceptance, he is to take the trouble of *sadhana*. On reaching *apana-dasa*, self-realization will begin and then he himself will stand guarantee for his own activities. He will directly feel, "O, I am realizing a novel type of ecstasy", and he won't be taken away from that position.

The main thing is that we can acquire higher things by service. Sacrifice and have: pay. Pay for it. That does not mean paying in terms of money and other things, but paying in terms of your own self: surrender and have. Give and get. As you can give, so you can get a similar thing.

*ye yatha mam prapadyante, tams tathaiva bhajamy aham
mama vartmanuvartante, manusyah partha sarvasah*
(Bhagavad-gita 4.11)

"Because there is none beyond Me, they are praying to Me for some trifling things and I also am giving trifle in return, but it will be finished and then again they will be in want. But this is like playing. However, for someone who is serious, who wants Me, he shall also have to pay for that. That price is his whole self, however little it may be. He is to give himself wholly and he will get Me wholly. As he gives, so he gets. Come out with your small goods, your little capital, and you will get hugely in return."

Question: But I am bankrupt!

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is a good sign. If one is bankrupt here, then he will seek some shelter. If one is really bankrupt then he must sincerely seek a shelter.

Question: Maharaja, I would like to arrange a loan from you!

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: A loan! This is all loan. I am also in loan:

we are continuing the business in loan from gurudeva. It is a business on loan. The business in the negative side is all on loan.

*yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa
amara ajnaya guru haya tare' ei desa*
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 7.128)

"Whomever you find, talk with him only about Krsna. Try to save him from the desert of mortality. I am giving you backing. I command you. Don't be afraid; take the position of guru, the giver, and give it to everyone." It is the order of Mahaprabhu and He tells that He is the capitalist (*amara ajnaya*). He takes the risk of the position of a capitalist.

In *maya*, illusion, it is difficult for us to digest the truth that, "I am small." We don't like to digest this, to accept this: and that is the rub. Our inner evil tendency is to capture the right of others, but we are to understand what is freedom. Here we really are accustomed to think that we can encroach over the freedom of others of the environment. That is the disease. Alternatively, the reactionary tendency is to think, "I shall commit suicide, that is, let us enter the tomb, *samadhi*. If I cannot exercise my freedom on the environment outside, then rather I shall enter the tomb, the grave, but I won't accept slavery, the serving attitude to the environment.." We are frightened to become a servant: "I want to be an exploiting unit, but not a serving unit, that I shall give my freedom to another superior hand." It is there that we shrink away and that is the inner defect. By freedom we understand that we have freedom to exercise right over the environment. But why should we not accept service for the environment? Why? We think that we shall be reduced to the minimum position. But to do for others, to become a servant, is healthy for us and there we can thrive. We can thrive by serving the environment, and especially the Lord of the whole. We think that if we render service then we are dying. That temperament, false temperament, has grown within us, and that is a foreign element which has covered the *jiva* proper. It is a bitter pill to swallow.

So what is service proper? Hegel's philosophy is "Die to Live" dissolve your ego as it is at present. Dissolve it mercilessly: die. Die

means to dissolve, mercilessly. Throw yourself into the fire and you will come out with a bright self. Learn to die as you are: that mental concocted body, that concocted energy. Take the name of the Lord and die. *Bhakativinoda aj apane bhulila*. Forget yourself as you are at present and you will find your proper self there that does not die. Death is ordained for our existence so give to the death that part of you that is ordained to die, and the eternal part of you will remain. But Mahaprabhu has discouraged the physical death. He told Sanatana Goswami,

*"sanatana, deha-tyage krsna yadi paiye
koti-deha ksaneke tabe chadite pariye"*
(Chaitanya charitamrita, Antya 4.55)

"I am ready to die millions and crores of times in a second if that would give me Krsna, but that dying is nothing." This physical death is *tamasik*, it is a very much lower bait. Not only physical death, but real death, the wholesale death, is necessary. Then also I may only get that *tatastha*, borderline stage. But Mahaprabhu says, "Die or not die, go on cultivating Krsna consciousness with the company of a *sadhu*. Go on with the company of a devotee of Krsna. Try to accumulate that internal wealth by whatever means it is possible."

The internal capital can be had only from the *sadhu*. Wherever you can get it and with whatever price you must pay, try to secure that innermost wealth. Not mere physical death or mental death has the reach to take you to that higher stage. You are to dive deep into Krsna consciousness. Wherever and whenever you find someone with such strong attachment for Krsna you must try to secure it from him at any price and that will be the best utilization of your life and energy. You are to purchase the higher thing and that is also at the sacrifice of the higher type of substance within you. You are to have innermost hankering and the transaction will be by the surrendering of your innermost existence. The encasements: the physical encasements and mental encasements of different types are many: *Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satya*. There are so many varieties and types of physical and mental encasements. The many subtle encasements from gross to finer do not end only in Viraja and Brahmaloaka but even

consciousness has its gross portion in Vaikuntha. But more subtle within you is that Krsna consciousness where the dedication is intense to its highest capacity, and that is dedication to the Autocrat. Dedication there is to the Autocrat, not to a constitutional king where there is justice, but dedication to Krsna, to that Autocrat: anything can happen! The highest degree of dedication is necessary there. The gain is also similar: it is of the highest type. As much as you can risk, so much you can expect to gain. That is, Mahaprabhu gives the direction: "Don't be a miser, but surrender yourself to the Autocrat, the Absolute Good, and you will be the best gainer!" That is His recommendation. So don't be too calculative and don't be a miser. If you find a proper place then give yourself totally (*atmaniksepa*).

We have come to the proper place to offer our service, and Krsna is the highest bidder. He is the highest bidder in the auction and He will pay most, He will pay so much that none can match His bid. He is the highest capitalist. But He is whimsical and He is prodigal! Krsna is only known and knowable by the higher type of love and affection.

bhaktyaham ekaya grahyah

"By *bhakti* alone I can be approached. Not otherwise. Exclusive devotion is necessary for you to come to Me: there is no other way."

*naham vedair na tapasa, na danena na cejyaya
sakya evam vidho drastum, drstavān asi yān mama*
(Bhagavad-gita, 11.53)

"In no way am I approachable except by exclusive devotion."

We are not satisfied by ordinary things which are available in nature. We have come to try for our prospect of something so high, so rare, so real. Krsna tells Arjuna:

*hato va prapsyasi svargam, jitva va bhoksyase mahim
tasmad uttistha kaunteya, yuddhaya kṛta niscayah*
(Bhagavad-gita, 2.37)

"If killed in battle you will attain heaven, or by gaining victory you will enjoy the Earth. Therefore. O Arjuna, being confident of success, rise for battle." For him to give up the fight would be ruinous.

Our campaign is so adventurous! If we are successful we have got the highest thing, but if unsuccessful then our prospect and our whole life is gone. Gone! With this risk we have come to search for the most precious thing: we must remember this and not go back.

We are to proceed with the search and inquiry, for if He is known then everything is known. With this temptation we have come.

*yasmin jnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati
yasmin prapte sarvam idam praptam bhavati
tad vijijnasasva tad eva brahma*

Try to have experience about the root of everything, then everything will be at your command and in your hand. *Krsnanusandhana*: search for Sri Krsna. What is that *brahma*, that Paramatma, and all these stale things? Krsna is the very gist of them: Krsna consciousness is necessary. Everything is His. He has the monopoly. So, search after Krsna: He is such. He is an autocrat, but He is a thief and He is a cheat!

Mahaprabhu one day in Navadvipa was taking the name, " *Gopi, Gopi, Gopi* ." One gentleman who was from the so-called educated class of that time objected saying "O Pandit, O Nimai Pandit, why do You take the name of " *Gopi, Gopi, Gopi* "? That recommendation has not been found in any *sastra* but we have found the name of Krsna in some scriptures and there it is told that some sort of good effect may be expected by chanting that. So You may take the name of Krsna, but why do you take the name of " *Gopi, Gopi, Gopi*?" It is out of all the scriptures. Are You mad? What do You do wasting Your time? You are a brilliant scholar but what is Your degradation, Your deplorable degradation?"

Mahaprabhu was in a mood: "Who will take the name of Krsna? He is a traitor! Just see how He has treated the gopis! With so much sincere love they approached Him, but then He was so cruel that He left them

and went away leaving them crying. Who will take the name of Krsna? You have come to canvass Me for the party of Krsna and so I shall teach you a lesson!" And Mahaprabhu went to beat that gentleman with a stick.

That man thought Mahaprabhu to be stark mad. He thought Nimai Pandit to be finished, totally mad, and ran away. Returning to his own group he told, "Nimai Pandit came to strike me with a bamboo stick. Now we must have to teach Him a good lesson. Mahaprabhu said, "Don't take the name of Krsna, He is very cruel, a treacherer. He gives hope to His servitors, then flies away. So don't go that side. We shall rather worship the *gopis* who can give but cannot come back. They can approach to us but they do not know to come back, to retrace. We must worship them!"

The foremost *gopi* is Radharani. She is the highest giver, the highest dedicator. None can venture to come beside Her except Vrajendranandana. She is *Mahabhava-svarupini* . Sacrifice at its zenith is there: the highest standard ever is eternally represented there. Nowhere else is there such sacrifice, self-giving, self-surrendering. It is beyond all standards ever known to the world of scriptures.

Laksmidevi has no place near Krsna, and similarly Narayana also cannot approach towards Radharani, nor even Dvarakesa, Mathuresa nor even Gopesa, what to speak of others.

It may seem that all the *gopis* were of equal rank in the *rasa* dance, but some fine jealousy arose in the mind of Radharani, and after showing Her superiority in chanting and dancing, ect. She suddenly disappeared. She conquered the common *gopis* and after defeating them She disappeared suddenly. Krsna suddenly found Himself vacant. All the source of His energy was coming from that one point and the dance was taking place. But when that very vitality was taken away He found Himself vacant. He searched after Her but could not find Her. He then stealthily left the company of all the *gopis* in search of Srimati Radharani. *Radha madhaya hrdaye tatyaya brajasundari*. Jayadeva says that so many *gopis* are on one side. but they are outweighed by Radharani. They are all abandoned and Krsna goes out to search for Her. This is also admitted in Mahaprabhu's discussions

with Ramananda Raya where it is told that there is a categorical difference between the quality of the loving service of the *gopis* and that of Radharani.

I composed one verse that tells that at every point in *Srimad Bhagavatam* there is the presence of Srimati Radharani because She is the goal there.

*yad amiya-mahima srirbhagavatyah kathayam
pratipadam anubhutam capy alabdhvabhidheya
tad akhila-rasa-murti-syama-lilavalambam
madhura-rasa-dhi-radha-padapadmam prapadye*

She is the conclusion to be established in *Bhagavatam* by so many descriptions of events, so many stories of devotion etc. The highest aim of *Bhagavatam* is to establish *Radha-dasyam*, service to Radharani, and everything in *Bhagavatam* is preparatory towards that end. But still Her name is not mentioned anywhere in *Bhagavatam*. Everywhere in *Srimad Bhagavatam* every word is used only to prove Her noblest position, but still no name is expressively given there for Her. Krsna is *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*: He is the combination of all sorts of ecstasies, and the main support of that *akhila-rasamrta-murtih* is Srimati Radhika. She is the only support of that *lila* of Syama: the sole support, the fountain of *madhura-rasa* (Divine Consorhood). I surrender myself to the Holy Feet of that Srimati Radharani who is the only support, the gist, the all in all of the whole life of *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*: of He who consists in Himself of all sorts of high *rasas*, ecstasies. She is His only support and I surrender myself to Her Holy Feet.

All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga

The Guardian of Devotion

A Chronicle of a Transcendental Relationship

His Divine Grace
Snila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj
Founder-Acharya of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Snila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj and
Snila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad

Forward

Sri Chaitanya-caritamṛta, the post-graduate study for Gaudiya Vaisnavas begins with the invocation *vande gurun*, “I offer my respectful obeisances unto the spiritual master.” Therein, Snila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswami reveals that the fully blossoming spiritual conception comes to embrace a plurality of *gurus*.

The scriptures in general present a very broad and universal conception of Sri Guru, laying stress on the spiritual substance – that divine current of nectar that flows down to this plane from the highest domain through the inspiration that is found in the heart of a real Vaisnava. To deny divine revelation through another agent in the name of being chaste to one’s guru can be offensive and even suicidal.

As *guru* is the functioning principle of Divinity revealing Himself in this world, according to our different stages of realizations, he may appear in different forms. The chastity of a disciple is demonstrated in recognizing the divine presence of Sri Guru wherever it is found, and bowing his head at the lotus feet of the agent through whom Divinity is so kindly revealing Himself.

The true chastity of the Vraja *gopis* was shown in their answering the

flute-call of Sri Krsna in the dead of night, although apparently abandoning their husbands to do so (*ya nisa sarva-bhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami*). So while some are sleeping in the bodily conception of Sri Guru, others are awakening to the inner dimension of his divine personality. His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja writes in *Sri Guru and His Grace*, “We must not identify our *guru* with the appearance we perceive with our physical senses. Our inner identification of him will be clarified according to the growth of our vision. When our vision increases and takes shape from material to transcendental, his look will also change accordingly. Otherwise, what we see will be based on a material conception. And to force the material conception onto Divinity is a crime, it is ignorance, it is erroneous. We have to free ourselves from the snare of identifying reality with the physical form presented to our senses. By eliminating the external conception, we have to enter into the internal, and that will be all-important to a progressive disciple, if we want to go to the inner world of substance.”

In proportion to the depth and intensity of our inner hankering for a connection with Divinity, our conception of guru will expand. In separation from Sri Krsna, the *gopis* began approaching even the trees and enquiring, “Where is Krsna?” Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura writes, “The reflected form of the lotus feet of Sri Guru in different receptacles constantly reveals many new matters for our instruction.” For those whose divine eye is awakened, they will find traces of Divinity everywhere and in everything.

It is our hope that the readers of this small booklet will approach the contents with an attitude of humble submission and an open heart. And we pray that their attachment to the lotus feet of Sri Guru may be increased.

Bhakti Sudhira Goswami



Editor's Note: His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj is affectionately addressed by his disciples as "Srila Prabhupad," and His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj is known to his disciples as "Srila Guru Maharaj." However, since they both refer to their spiritual master, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad, as "Guru Maharaj" and "Prabhupad" throughout the text, in order to avoid ambiguity we have referred to them by their sannyas names.

Siksa Guru

“Our relationship is very intimate...”

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj and Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj first met sometime in the year 1930 in Allahabad, India. In a taped conversation recorded in a 1973 meeting at Srila Sridhar Maharaj's Math at Nabadwip Dham, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj recalls: "So, we are very fortunate to hear His Divine Grace, Om Vishnupad Paramahansa Parivrajakarya Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj. By age and by experience, in both ways, he is senior to me. I was fortunate to have his association since a very long time, perhaps in 1930, something like that. At that time, he did not accept *sannyas*; he just left home, and as a *vanaprastha*, in his white dress, he went to Allahabad.

"Maharaj [To Srila Sridhar Maharaj] I think you remember the incident when you went to Allahabad? On that auspicious occasion, we were connected. There is a long story, it will take time, but I had the opportunity of associating with Sridhar Maharaj for several years. Krishna and Prabhupad liked him to prepare me."

"Sridhar Maharaj lived in my house for many years, so naturally, we had very intimate talks and he was my good advisor. I took his advices, instructions, very seriously because from the very beginning I know that he is a pure Vaishnava, a pure devotee, and I wanted to associate with him and tried to help him also. Our relationship is very intimate."

Herein, we find the history of a transcendental relationship between these two pure devotees of the Lord. Addressing Srila Sridhar Maharaj as "His Divine Grace" and Om Vishnupad -- forms of address for one regarded as a spiritual master -- Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj has transcended the norms of social etiquette and superficial formality. Intimately associating together for a concentrated period of over five years, often for five to seven hours daily, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj considered that "Krishna and Prabhupad liked him to prepare me" for his future expansive missionary activities in the Western world. While remembering their intimate talks, specifically in regard to *Bhagavad-gita*, Srila Sridhar Maharaj recalls the depth in penetration of their discussions. "Once while discussing the verse *dadami buddhiyam tam yena mam upayanti te* ["I give them the understanding by which they can come to Me" Bhagavad Gita 10.10] I submitted to him that here, *upayanti* is indicative of *parakiya rasa* [paramour relationship] On this point he agreed with me, saying, 'Yes, at this point there cannot be anything but the *parakiya rasa* of Vraja. The conclusion of *Bhagavad-gita* must come to this."

Recognizing Srila Sridhar Maharaj as "a pure Vaishnava, a pure devotee" since the beginning of their relationship, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj most highly valued his instructions and advice. He would often consult with him regarding the spiritual significance of

his failing business and family relationships.

An example of how Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj tried to help Srila Sridhar Maharaj in his preaching work is seen in his appreciating Srila Sridhar Maharaj's uncanny ability for extracting the essence of the scriptures. He helped to finance the publication of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's original Sanskrit-Bengali work entitled *Prapanna-jivanamrta: The Nectar of Surrender*. The book, as well as containing original Sanskrit verses composed by Srila Sridhar Maharaj, is a compilation of verses from various Vaishnava scriptures such as *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and includes excerpts from the works of Rupa Goswami. It is divided according to the six divisions of surrender.

Constantly associating, whether in Allahabad, Calcutta, or other parts of India, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj and Srila Sridhar Maharaj's relationship continually developed. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj continues to recall their meeting:

"In my householder life I had opened an office in Bombay for our business. The Bombay Gaudiya Math was established by Sridhar Maharaj and myself. We made two parties for begging, collecting alms. Sridhar Maharaj, myself, and Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaj. So, I took them to my chemist friends and I collected about five hundred rupees. Sridhar Maharaj would speak, I would introduce, and Goswami Maharaj would canvass."

In the *Srila Prabhupad-lilamrta*, Satsvarup Das Goswami writes: "Abhay would often accompany Sridhar Maharaj and his assistants at preaching programs, where he would play the *mrdanga*. And when Sridhar Maharaj fell ill, Abhay led the other devotees on preaching engagements, performing *kirtan*, playing *mrdanga*, and giving lectures on the *Bhagavatam*."

While still in Bombay, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj and Sridhar Maharaj were the receiving party for a Gaudiya Math *sannyas* upon his return from Europe. Although dismayed by his changed appearance which was missing the *tridanda* of a Gaudiya *sannyasi*, the *sikha* of a Vaishnava, as well as the traditional robes, they still

eagerly inquired in regard to the preaching field in the West. The *sannyasi* remarked, "They ask questions that cannot be answered." Concerned, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj inquired further as to the nature of those questions. One after another Srila Sridhar Maharaj answered them all. At last, the *sannyasi* was left dumbfounded and Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami boldly declared, "Today, Europe has been defeated by Asia!"

During the lifetime of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad, Srila Sridhar Maharaj once composed a poem describing the ontological positions of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and the line of disciplic succession stemming from Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad was so pleased with the poem's ontological depth and its happy style that he remarked: "Bhaktivinoda Thakur has written this through him. Now I am satisfied that although I may go, at least one man remains behind who can represent my conclusions." In further appreciation of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's writings, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad informed the editors of the Gaudiya Math's periodicals, "If you include articles written by Sridhar Maharaj, the quality of your publications will be greatly improved."

After the disappearance of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad, the Gaudiya Math gradually diverged. With full knowledge of the events surrounding the disintegration of the Gaudiya Math, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami told his disciples in the same 1973 conversation, "Our relationship is very intimate. After the breakdown of the Gaudiya Math, I wanted to organize another organization, making Sridhar Maharaj the head."

Reciprocating the appreciation, Srila Sridhar Maharaj advised the leaders of the Gaudiya Sangha to confer the title "Bhaktivedanta" upon the then Abhay Charan. Later, his *sannyas-guru*, Sripad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Maharaj, one of the senior-most disciples of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur, and the first *sannyas*-disciple of Srila Sridhar Maharaj, gave *sannyas* to Abhay Charan, retaining the title "Bhaktivedanta," and conferring the *sannyas* name "Swami."

Additionally, when Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj returned to India in October of 1967, after his successful preaching initiative in America, he stayed with Srila Sridhar Maharaj in Nabadwip, and observed his Vyasa Puja celebration. At that time, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj wrote a letter to a disciple saying, "Yesterday, we have all come to Nabadwip Dham. This place is an establishment of one of my Godbrothers. It is a very nice and extensive place, and my Godbrother B.R. Sridhar Maharaj has spared one entire house for our stay. He has also agreed to cooperate with our society. We shall observe his birthday celebration, and the *brahmacaris* shall learn how to celebrate the spiritual master's birthday." Shortly afterwards, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj asked Srila Sridhar Maharaj to be the president of his newly formed society – the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

During the Vyasa Puja celebration, one of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj's disciples saw Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj and Srila Sridhar Maharaj fully absorbed in a deep discussion in Bengali. The disciple inquired from Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj what was the nature of their talk, and he replied, "If I were to tell you, you would faint. Sridhar Maharaj has very high realizations."

That Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj continually regarded Sridhar Maharaj as his advisor throughout his life is clear in the following letter written by him to one of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's disciples, Sripad Govinda Maharaj. Concerned about his failing health, he had written Sridhar Maharaj asking whether he should continue living in the United States or return to India to live his last days in Vrindavan. After receiving Srila Sridhar Maharaj's reply, he wrote: "What Sripad Sridhar Maharaj has directed, I take it on my head. He is my always well-wisher. After the departure of Prabhupad it is appropriate that I should accept his direction. I got direction from him that I shall live in this country forever."

Sometimes it is said that one's preaching contribution can be judged according to the number of temples established, devotees converted, and books published and distributed. Srila Sridhar Maharaj travelled and preached extensively all over India, personally accompanying

Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur for many years. Nearly fifty years ago, he established the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math on the banks of the Ganges in Nabadwip Dham, which is now a thriving institution. His followers have established temples in major cities throughout the world. His Sanskrit and Bengali writings have been appreciated by both scholars and devotees for their originality, depth of realization, and happy poetic style. Published and widely distributed throughout the world, they are now available in English , Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, German, French, and are being translated into other languages.

Throughout his life, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj always maintained the highest respect and confidence in Srila Sridhar Maharaj. He considered that whenever it was not possible for his disciples to proceed directly under his guidance, that they should take direction from Srila Sridhar Maharaj. He once wrote in a letter to one of his students: "Because you are my disciple, and I think, a sincere soul, it is my duty to refer you to someone who is competent to act as a *siksha-guru*. For spiritual advancement of life, we must go to someone who is actually practicing spiritual life. So, if you are actually serious to take instructions from a *siksha-guru*, I can refer you to the one who is the most highly competent of all my godbrothers. This is B.R. Sridhar Maharaj, whom I consider to be even my *siksha-guru*, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have by his association. So, if you are serious about the advancement of your spiritual life, I will advise you to go to Sridhar Maharaj. It will be very good for your spiritual benefit, and I will feel that you are safe. When I was in India with the others, we lived with Sridhar Maharaj. You can also make arrangements for your other Godbrothers to go there in the future. So, live peacefully with Sridhar Maharaj, and thereby you will be spiritually enlightened."

In this passage, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj describes Srila Sridhar Maharaj as "the most competent of all my Godbrothers," "someone competent to act as *siksha-guru*," and in an astounding statement, he declares, "I consider Sridhar Maharaj to be my Siksha Guru, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have from his association"!

What Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj means by *siksha-guru* is best explained in his own words. In his purports to the *Adi-lila* of *Chaitanya caritamrta*, he states: "One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Krishna. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami states that there are two kinds of instructing spiritual masters. One is the liberated person fully absorbed in meditation in devotional service and the other is he who invokes the disciple's spiritual consciousness by means of relevant instructions. There is no difference between the shelter-giving Supreme Lord and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. If one foolishly discriminates between them, he commits an offense in the discharge of devotional service." (*Chaitanya-caritamrta – Adi-lila* 1.47)

Although it may be said that Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj encouraged his godbrothers in general, no one anywhere can produce a similar statement of endorsement. The fact is that Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj possessed the highest respect and appreciation for Sridhar Maharaj, and Srila Sridhar Maharaj is unparalleled in his understanding and admiration of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, as evinced in the following eulogy:

"So our Swami Maharaj has done a miracle! Thakur Bhaktivinoda conceived and Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur began to translate this conception into action. And we find that through Swami Maharaj, in his last days, it has been fulfilled to such a great extent. We are happy, we are glad, we are proud!"

In response to this, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj with great humility, his voice choked with emotion, tearfully replied, "So, by *guru* and Vaishnava, whatever position I have got it is by *guru's* mercy and the blessings of the Vaishnavas. Otherwise, how I may have? So, I wish that Sridhar Maharaj may bestow his blessings as he was doing always, and may *guru maharaj* help me so I can do some service. By his grace it has become successful. I have no credit. I do not know how things are happening, because I am not at all qualified: *chadiya vaisnava seva, nistara payeche keba*. [Without serving an ideal Vaishnava, who can be delivered from the clutches of *maya*?]"

And after the disappearance of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, Srila Sridhar Maharaj declared: "I consider him to be *saktyavesa avatara*, and it is confirmed in his writings on his spiritual journey through the Atlantic. How he landed there in America, and the nature of his beginning the movement, his intense degree of dedication to Krishna and dependence, and how much he made himself empty of any other desire than the order of his *gurudev* - quite empty that Krishna came down to help him, and it is corroborated that Krishna worked on his behalf. In his poem, *Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Krishna*, we find him pleading with Krishna, "My dear Brother, Your good fortune will come to You only when Srimati Radharani becomes pleased with You." Seeing his *gurudeva* Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati as Radharani's delegation and his order as Her divine service, he humbly submitted that he did not feel himself worthy or fit to discharge the divine service, so he enlisted Krishna in the service of his *guru*. He had completely dedicated himself to the purpose, he was so earnest in his prayer to Krishna that he may discharge the duty that he has been given by his *guru maharaj*, that divine force, power, came down to help him. Otherwise, it is impossible. It is not a thing of the ordinary level that anyone will do, but the highest thing has been taken down to the lowest position so extensively. It cannot but be the divine power, embodied and in a great intensity and magnitude! So, *saktyavesa-avatara*, I cannot but take him to be so."

With such appreciation, there should be little doubt why Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj had implicit faith in Srila Sridhar Maharaj. He had even heard directly from Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad of the exceptional qualifications of Srila Sridhar Maharaj. In their last known recorded meeting in 1977, just prior to Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami's leaving this mortal world, we find him imploring Srila Sridhar Maharaj to take up residence at his temple in Sridham Mayapur.

The conversation that ensues is a transcript of their taped conversation of March 1977.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami : I do not know for how long I will be

able to carry on. So, I came to see Sridhar Maharaj.

Devotee: If you all go away, then the world will become dark.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: [to Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami] It is so wonderful that the will of the Lord becomes manifest through someone.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami: I want very much, Maharaj, that you come and stay at Mayapur. Because Prabhupad always desired that you preach. He told me quite a few times, "Why don't you pull him out?" [They both laugh.] You know, I also tried to some extent before, but somehow or other it did not work out. Now, why don't you come and stay at Mayapur? Srila Prabhupad told me also, "Sridhar Maharaj is one of the finest preachers." I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Mayapur, people are coming from all over the world. Why don't you come and stay there? If you just agree, then whatever kind of building you want, I will arrange it for you. They are trying to build a house for me. So both of us will stay there. And whenever you want, you can come here to your Math.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Yes, as long as I am alive to fulfill Prabhupad's desire.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami: This is my earnest desire. Since you could not go around the world and preach, at least stay there and people will come to you. I shall make that arrangement. If you stay, then it will be helpful to me also. Sometimes I need to consult with someone but there is no one. There is no one that I can consult. I feel this deficiency very greatly.

Devotee: If he stays in Mayapur, then, all kinds of people will get to hear from him.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami: Yes, that's right.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Yes, people from all kinds of cultural backgrounds will come there.

Bhaktivedanta Swami : Yes, and they are already coming. And in that house I will make arrangements for an elevator so that you won't have to go through the difficulty of walking up and down the stairs. You won't even have to move a step yourself. I'll make arrangements for a car and a lift. My disciples are telling me that they will build a house for me. So, both of us will stay in that house. Most of the time I am travelling around, so if you are there, then they can get some guidance. So, Maharaj, *please*, give me the order and I will make all the arrangements for you. That Planetarium [The "Temple of Understanding"] also will be built under your direction. My idea is to combine the Indian culture and the American money – the lame man and the blind man policy. I tell them also that this will be very beneficial for the world.

Here, in their final meeting, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj prophetically refers to his imminent disappearance and reveals that it is in this connection that he has come to see Sridhar Maharaj. In friendly jesting, they discuss Srila Sridhar Maharaj's reticence regarding large-scale preaching work. Of himself, Srila Sridhar Maharaj has remarked, "I did not want to become a big person. That is not my nature. I did not want to move around with many people. I am just satisfied with whatever I have. My spiritual thinking is my life. The conclusions of the scriptures, the advices of the *mahajanas*, to relish them and practice them and to discuss them in a small confidential circle, that is the main goal of my life." In the Ninth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, quoting Dhruva Maharaj, writes: "'My dear Lord, I am fully satisfied with whatever you have given me. I have nothing else to ask from You, for I am fully satisfied to be engaged in Your service.' This is the mentality of a pure devotee who does not want anything material or spiritual from the Personality of Godhead. Our Krishna Consciousness Movement is therefore called *krsna- bhavanamrta-sangha*, the association of persons who are simply interested in thoughts of Krishna."

Bhaktivedanta Swami testifies to his having personally heard Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad mark the high qualifications of Srila

Sridhar Maharaj, whom he had once requested to go to the West. In this regard, Srila Sridhar Maharaj once remarked, "My *guru maharaj* wanted me to go to the West for preaching, but I don't consider myself a fit person to preach in the West. Because, you see, I can't follow your intonation. So, [laughing] I must listen clearly, then I shall tell. So, in this way, I told that *if you order, I must go*, but I don't think that I am fit to preach in the West. Anyhow, it was stopped, and Goswami Maharaj was sent to the West." When Srila Sridhar Maharaj had been selected, one of his godbrothers came to him and revealed the reason why Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad had chosen him to preach in the West. This godbrother explained, "Do you know why Prabhupad wanted you to be sent to the West? He said, 'Because he can't be converted.'"

And just twenty-four hours before his departure from this mortal world, Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad called for his beloved disciple Srila Sridhar Maharaj, and asked him to sing the song of Narottama Das Thakur: *Sri-rupa-manjari-pada* [the lotus feet of Rupa Manjari are my treasure]. Srila Sridhar Maharaj recalls: "So I did, hesitatingly. My nature is always hesitating, pushing back. Then, Kunja Babu asked me to stop. I was not a good singer, so as soon as he suggested, I stopped. Then, Kunja Babu asked Puri Maharaj of Kalna, 'You sing.' So he began. Then, Srila Prabhupad was a little disturbed. 'I don't like to hear the sweet tune of the song,' he said. Then, he stopped, and I had to begin again with *sri rupa manjari pada, sei mora sampada*. He wanted me to sing that song. That is the fulfillment of life of everyone of us, to be *rupanuga* - followers of Sri Rupa."

Senior godbrothers who witnessed this exchange have described it as a "mystic transmission" in which Srila Sridhar Maharaj was given admittance into the eternal entourage of Sri Rupa Manjari. Srila Sridhar Maharaj's humble vision, however, is that he was posted as the gatekeeper, the guardian of devotion (*bhakti-rakshak*), to protect the storehouse of conclusive truths about the full-fledged theistic conception of Sri Krishna, as given by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Further expressing his appreciation for Srila Sridhar Maharaj's "high

realizations" in Krishna consciousness, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj says: "I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Mayapur, people are coming from all over the world. Why don't you stay there?" Sometimes it is wondered why Srila Sridhar Maharaj apparently did not take up Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami's offer. Srila Sridhar Maharaj explains: "I said, 'Of course I shall try to help you. Sometimes I shall go and stay there with you.' But I really did not think at the time that I shall survive him."

Finally, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj refers to "that planetarium." Srila Sridhar Maharaj is very fond of Sanatan Goswami's most famous work, the *Brhad-bhagavatamrtam*, in which devotees, devotional service, and Krishna are described very scientifically. On the basis of this transcendental literature, Srila Sridhar Maharaj had contemplated an elaborate preaching exhibition, showing graphically, with the use of dioramas depicting the varieties of material and spiritual planetary systems, how the ultimate spiritual destination is Krishna's own abode, Goloka Vrindavan. Due to insufficient funds, Srila Sridhar Maharaj humbly submitted his idea to Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, who approved, saying, "It will be built under your direction."

And just prior to his departure from this mortal world, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj advised his senior disciples that in his absence, when the necessity arose to consult higher authority, that they should consult Srila Sridhar Maharaj. In conclusion, we humbly submit that the transcendental relationship between Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj and Srila Sridhar Maharaj be viewed and respected in terms of their eternal spiritual positions, and long-standing appreciation and affection for one another.

Since the departure of His Divine Grace A.C. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, the "Guardian of Devotion," His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj, has repeatedly protected the teachings of the disciplic succession from perversion and misrepresentation as he has done for more than half a century, and has come to be recognized as a *jagad-guru*, or world-acharya.

Prabhupada Pranama

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

Although outwardly he was like a lion, inwardly he was very very sweet, yet it could be traced only in his internal sweetness. Outwardly, the way of love was worshipped by him with grandeur, and awe and reverence, but his object was the simple and beautiful, divine love of Vrindavana, and his temperament in establishing that in the world was just like a lion's. After his departure I described his life in one *sloka*. If he were living today, I think he would say, that Srila Sridhar Maharaj has imprisoned me in a cage of poetry.

*nikhila-bhuvana-maya-chinnavichinna-karttri
vibudha-bahula-mrgya-mrgya-mukti-mohana-dhatti
sithilita-vidhi-raga-radhya-radhesa-dhani
vilasatu hrdis nityam bhaktisiddhanta-vani*

With his first step, he vigorously cut asunder the whole plane of exploitation, and with his second, he has put a stop to all the calculation, liberated stages. With his third step, he has minimized the hardness and stiffness of the rules and regulations of calculative devotional service, by a touch of the divine love: crossing Vaikuntha, he has given us the worship of Radha Govinda.

Calculation, the rules and regulations, awe, reverence, all these things are minimized, checked, slackened with the softness of Vrindavana within, and, and with the hardness of a devastator without, he created havoc in the materialistic world, fighting with one and all. Singlehandedly fighting against the whole world, and cutting asunder everything – that was his external attitude. And his second attitude was to put a stop to all scholarly researchers and doctorates of different departments, and to stop their boasting research; and third, to minimize, to slack the grandeur of the worship of Narayana. He caused the domain of love to descend into this plane with the service of Radha-Govinda, establishing the flow of divine love from the heart

as all in all. With that we come to serve our object of worship, and he represented the service of Radha-Govinda as the highest attainment. That was his history. The real existence of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupad is in *bhaktisiddhanta-vani*, his divine teachings. May that *bhaktisiddhanta-vani* dance eternally within the core of your heart.

Brahma-gayatri

The meaning of the *brahma-gayatri-mantra* must bring us to the conclusion of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The *gayatri-mantra* and the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* are one and the same. It is the very gist of the *Vedanta-sutra*. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the elaborate commentary of *gayatri* (*artho'yam brahmasutranam, bharatartha-vinirnayah, gayatri-bhasya-rupau' sau, vedarthah parivrmhitah*). The meaning of the *gayatri-mantra* must be in the line of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. If we analyze how this is possible, we shall uncover the steps between the *gayatri-mantra* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

What is the meaning of *gayatri*? The word *gayatri* is a combination of two Sanskrit words: *ganat* (what is sung), *trayate* (gives deliverance). This means, “a kind of song by which we can get our salvation, relief, emancipation.” *Gayatri* is known as *Veda-mata*, the mother of the *Vedas*. And *Gayatri* has produced the whole *Veda*. If we examine the Vedic conclusion from its most condensed aphorism to its most extensive expression, we shall find that it begins with *omkara*: the Vedic syllable *Om*. That truth is expressed as the *gayatri-mantra*, then it appears in the form of the *Vedas*, and then as the *Vedanta-sutra*. Finally, the Vedic conclusion is given its fullest expression in Vedic knowledge progresses in this line, the *gayatri-mantra* must contain within it the meaning of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, that is, that the Krsna conception of Godhead is the highest.

This must be the meaning of the *gayatri-mantra*, but the problem is how to extract *Srimad-Bhagavatam* – the Krsna conception – from within the womb of *gayatri*. I heard that Jiva Goswami has given such an interpretation, but I could not find where it is written. I heard that

he has given the meaning of *gayatri* leading to Krsna consciousness. Anyhow, the tendency awakened in me to draw the meaning to the Krsna conception. The general meaning of *gayatri* is “that song which grants liberation.” Now, liberation must have some positive meaning. Liberation means not freedom from the negative side, but positive attainment. This is the definition given in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*: *muktir hitvanyatha rupam svarupena vyavasthitih* – until and unless we attain the highest possible positive position, *mukti*, salvation, has not been effected. Mere withdrawal from the negative plane cannot be called liberation. Hegel has said that the object of our life is self-determination. We must determine our normal function in the organic whole – not mere emancipation from the negative side, but participation in a positive function in the domain of service. This is considered to be the highest attainment of life. This is the meaning of *gayatri*.

The word *gayatri* comes from two Sanskrit roots: *ganat*, and *trayate*. *Trayate* means positive attainment to the final stage (*sva-rupena vyavasthitih*). And *ganat* means not mere sound, but musical sound. That musical sound which grants us the highest positive deliverance indicates the *sankirtana* of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the flute-song of Sri Krsna.

The purport of the *brahma-gayatri-mantra* is as follows. The first word is *Om*. *Om* is the seed *mantra* which contains everything within it. *Bhur* is where we are - Bhu-loka – the world of our experience. *Buvah* is the world of mental acquisition. It is the support, the background of our experience. Our present position of experience is the effect of our mental acquisition. It is the support, the background of our experience. Our present position of experience is the effect of our mental acquisition. That we are here in the world of experience is no accident; we have acquired this position by our previous *karma*. The physical sphere, this present world of experience, is only the product, the outcome of our previous mental impulses. And the subtle world of previous *karma*, the mental sphere, is known as Bhuvahloka.

The next word in the mantra is *svah*. Above Bhuvahloka is Svah-loka. The mental world (Bhuvahloka) means acceptance and rejection: what

to do and what not to do – “I like this, I don’t like that.” Svah-loka, however, is the plane of decision, the world of intelligence (Buddhiloka). Our intelligence tells us, “You may like this, but don’t do that, for then you will be the loser.” That plane, the plane of reason, is known as Svah-loka. In this way, this material world is composed of three general layers, *bhur*, the physical world, *bhuvah*, the mental world, and *svah*, the intellectual world.

Of course a more detailed analysis will reveal seven layers: Bhur, Bhuvah, Svah, Maha, Jana, Tapa, and Satyaloka. This has been dealt with in detail by Sanatana Goswami in his *Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam*. Here these seven strata have been summarized in three planes of existence: physical, mental, and intellectual. And these three planes of experience have been summarized in a word, *tat*.

The next word in the *brahma-gayatri* is *savitur*. *Savitur* generally means *surya*, the sun. And the sun means, figuratively, that which shows or illuminates, that by which we can see. The three gross and subtle strata within this world are shown to us by a particular thing, *savitur*. What is that? The soul. Actually, the world is not shown to us by the sun, but by the soul. What really gives us perception and allows us to see gross things? It is not actually the sun that helps us see; we see with the help of the soul. This is found in *Bhagavad-gita* (*yatha prakasyaty ekah krtsnam lokam imam ravih*). The soul expresses this world to us just as the sun does. The sun can show colour to our eyes, but the ear can reveal the sound world, and the hand can reveal the touch world. So, really in the centre is the soul. It is the soul who gives light to this world, who gives us an understanding of the environment, the world of perception. All perception is possible only because of the soul. Here, the word *savitur*, which generally means “sun”, can only mean soul, for the soul, like the sun shows us everything.

All seven strata of our existence – represented by *bhur*, the physical plane, *bhuvah*, the mental plane, and *svah*, the intellectual plane – have here been reduced to one entity: *tat* – “that”. “That” is shown by the “sun” which in this context indicates the soul. Here, “soul” means “individual soul.” The individual soul is the cause of his world. Not

that the mind is in the world, but the world is in the mind. Berkeley has said that the world is in the mind. Here it is being expressed that everything is seen with the help of the sun. If there is no sun, everything is dark – nothing can be seen. So without light, nothing can be seen. And in a higher sense, “light” means the soul. The soul is the subject and the soul’s object is the seven planes of experience within this world.

The next word in the *gayatri-mantra* is *varenyam*. *Varenyam* means *puja*: worshipable, venerable. This indicates that although within this plane – the objective world – the soul is the subject, there is another domain which is to be venerated and worshipped by the soul. That is the Supersoul area.

That worshipable plane of transcendental existence is known as *bhargo*. *Bhargo* means the supersubjective area, the area of the Supersoul. This is mentioned in the first verse of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*: *dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhimahi*. Srila Vyasadeva says that here he is going to deal with another world whose pristine glory is so great that by its own ray, all misconceptions are brushed aside. The subject is the soul, and its object is all these worlds of experience. And the supersubject is the venerable area which is superior to the subject, the soul, that is the supersubjective area.

The world *bhargo* means “more subtle than the soul” and “holding a more important position than the soul.” So this means the Supersoul, the Paramatma. In general, of course, the word *bhargo* ordinarily means light. Just as an x-ray can show us what the ordinary eye cannot see, *bhargo* is *svarupa-sakti* – higher, more powerful light that can reveal the soul. And that energy – *bhargo* – belongs to whom? It belongs to *deva*. What is the meaning of the word *deva*? *Deva* means, “who is beautiful and playful,” that is, Sri Krsna: reality the beautiful. He is not a non-differentiated substance, but is full of lila, pastimes. *Deva* means pastimes and beauty combined, and this means Krsna.

His domain is *bhargo*, brilliant, and it is *varenyam*, to be venerated by the *jiva* soul. What is the nature of that *svarupa-sakti*? That is the *vaibhava*, the extension of Srimati Radharani. She holds the full

service responsibility and the energy to serve Krsna. *Bhargo* is no less than the *vaibhava*, the extended body of Srimati Radharani which contains everything for the service of Krsna. *Bhargo* represents Mahabhava, the predominated moiety, and Deva, Krsna, is Rasaraja, the predominating moiety.

In the *gayatri-mantra*, we are requested, *bhargo devasya dhimahi*: “Come meditate.” What sort of meditation is possible in that plane of dedication? Not abstract meditation, but service cultivation, *krsnanusilanam*. *Dhimahi* means to participate in the spontaneous flow, the current of devotion in Vrndavana. And what will be the result? (*dhiyo yo nah pracodayat*). The capacity of our cultivation will be increased. As we serve, a greater capacity and willingness to serve will be given to us in remuneration just as interest is added to capital in the bank. (*‘dasa’ kari’ vetana more deha prema-dhana*). In this way, our dedicating principle will be increased again and again. *Dhimahi* means *aradhana*, worship. It cannot but be explained in terms of *aradhana*, *puja*, *seva* – worship, adoration, loving service. “*Dhi*” is derived from the word *buddhi*, which generally means that which we cultivate with the help of our intelligence. But here, “*dhi*” is a reference to that venerable intelligence which descends into this plane to help us cultivate service. So, *dhimahi* does not mean abstract meditation, but devotional service. This is the underlying meaning of the *gayatri-mantra*.

Gayatri, the song for deliverance, also means *sankirtana*. *Kirtana* is also sung, and it also improves us towards the highest goal. The *sankirtana* of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu also reinstates us in our highest serving position. So *brahma-gayatri* in connection with Mahaprabhu comes to mean *krsna-kirtana*. Then it reaches Vrndavana and the flute-*kirtana*. And when we enter Vrndavana, we shall find that the sweet sound of Krsna’s flute helps to engage all the Lord’s servants in their respective duties. When the flute is sounded, the *gopis* and others are adjusted in their respective duties. At night, the *gopis*, hearing the sound of the flute, will run to the Yamuna thinking, “Oh, Krsna is there.” And when Yasoda hears the song of Krsna’s flute, she thinks, “My son is there. He is coming home soon.” In this way, the sound of the flute engages all the servants of the Lord

in their respective positions and inspires them to be mindful of their service.

In my commentary on the *gayatri-mantra*, I have written, *dhiraradhanam eva nanyad-iti-tad radha-padam dhimahi*: All other services are represented fully in Radhika. Like branches they are all part of Her. *Madhurya rasa* is the chief or *mukhya rasa*, the combination of all *rasas*. Srimati Radharani is Mahabhava – She represents the entire serving attitude.

The flute-song of Sri Krsna, expressed as the *gayatri-mantra*, is reminding us and engaging us in our service. And what is our service? Our service must be to surrender ourselves in the service of Srimati Radharani – to accept the suggestion of Radharani. The *gayatri-mantra* will excite us to be mindful about Srimati Radharani's lotus feet, to obey Her orders. She is mainly representing the whole serving area. So to try to engage ourselves in Her service, under Her order – to accept Her direction and to obey Her – that is the service of Sri Radha. In this way, the meaning of the *gayatri-mantra* has been drawn to *radha-dasyam*, self-determination (*sva-rupena vyavasthitih*).

In the meantime, the partial representations in *vatsalya* and *sakhya rasa* are also part and parcel of the original mellow of conjugal love, *madhurya rasa*. The *vatsalya rasa* devotee will serve Nanda and Yasoda, the *sakhya rasa* devotee will serve Sridhama and Sudhama, but ultimately, the whole system in one conception is included in Radharani.

Radha-dasyam, the service of Srimati Radharani is the ultimate meaning to be extracted from the *gayatri-mantra*. That is the supreme end of our life. It cannot but be so. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the ultimate, or full-fledged, theism to be extracted from the *Vedas*, *Upanisads*, and so many other scriptures. All the revealed truth rises to its acme, to its highest position, in the conception given by *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. And *Srimad-Bhagavatam* teaches us that the highest realization, self-determination, is to be found in the service of Srimati Radharani, that under Her guidance we may serve Sri Krsna. We must directly put all our energy at Her disposal and devote ourselves to Her

service. She actually knows how to serve Krsna. We aspire for a direct connection with Her service.

What is the meaning of the purport of *bhargo*? *Bhargo vai vrsabhyanuja-atma-vibhava-eka-aradhana-sri-puram*. *Bhanu* means the sun, or “who shows us by light.” Radharani is the daughter of Vrsa”Bhanu.” So I selected the word “*bhanu*.” To represent Her personal extended self, I given the word “*vaibhava*.” *Vaibhava* means “what comes out as resourcefulness” or “extended self” *Prabhava* is the central representation, and *vaibhava* is the outer extension. The very gist of *svarupa-sakti* is Srimati Radharani and the whole *svarupa-sakti* is Her extended self. The town of Her beautiful service, that is, the country, abode of Her beautiful service – the whole *svarupa-sakti*.

Just as rays of light extend from the sun, the whole internal potency is an extension of Mahabhava, Sri Radhika. She has developed Herself into such a beautiful area of brilliance, of internal energy, and thereby She serves Her Lord. All these necessary things have sprung from Her. To help Her in serving Her Lord, they all come out. When the entire internal energy is condensed in a concise form, it is Mahabhava, Radharani. And when Radharani wants to serve, She extends Herself in limitless different ways. And with some contribution from Baladeva and Yogamaya, the whole spiritual world, including Vrndavana, Mathura, And Vaikuntha, evolves to assist Srimati Radharani in the service of Sri Krsna.

In this way, I have drawn out *radha-dasyam* as the meaning of the *gayatri-mantra* and have tried to represent it in Sanskrit verse.

All Glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

Heart and Halo

by

His Divine Grace
Swāmī B.R. Śrīdhar

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Sevāte-President-Āchārya
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Compiled by
Swāmī B. S. Tridaṇḍī

Edited by
Śrīpad B. P. Janārdan Mahārāj

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His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj



His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj



Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
Śrī Dhām Nabadwīp



Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundarjīu
Nabadwīp Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

Foreward

It is a privilege and a great fortune once again to be able to present more nectarean words from the lips of His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj to the English-speaking public. It is hoped that these words will find their way into the hearts of all good souls, as well as enliven the practitioners on the path of *bhakti*. Some people like to read a book out of curiosity, others with keen interest but a critical eye, whilst others again intend to profit by the fruit of their study, and it is this class we mainly appeal to in the present work. The successful reception worldwide of our previous publication *The Golden Staircase* has encouraged us in this attempt. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj writes in his *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam* (1.8):

**yakthoktā rūpa-pādena, nīcenotpādite 'nale
hemnaḥ śuddhis tathaivātra, virahārtti-hṛtiḥ satām**

“As Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmīpād has in his humility expressed that gold can be purified with fire lit by a barbarian, similarly the pure devotee’s grief born

of separation from the Lord may also be dispelled by this book.”

The words of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja are already living in the hearts and homes of many, many people in the world today, in the form of books, and audio and video cassettes. The sweet vibration of his *kīrtana* in the form of *Hari-kathā* continues to expand to the limits of the universe. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was once described as a “man of eternal mind”—such was the feeling of those persons fortunate enough to hear him speak about the spiritual world. The preciseness of his representation of *siddhānta* (devotional conclusions), the clarity of his theological and ontological analysis, the startling effectiveness and simplicity of his analogies, along with the extraordinary combination of gravity and, at times, child-like simplicity, marked him as truly unique. One felt he was the most genuine person one could ever meet. His own Guru- Mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura referred to him as “a man of substance.” Small wonder then that devotees from far and wide would seek him out for his reliable and final judgment on any matter of importance. Even many of those who were placed in ‘opposition’ to him eventually could not help but

FOREWARD

be charmed. When he himself once inquired from one such gentleman as to why, even while maintaining this frame of mind, he still continued to visit him regularly, the man replied: “Because of your deep intelligence, sound common sense and disinterested nature.”

The present selection is from informal talks recorded at the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh between 1982–85. The title of the book *Heart and Halo* is Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj’s own sweet expression to describe the *bhāva* and *kānti* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the supreme predominated moiety, consort of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna. Once when His Divine Grace was searching for a fitting expression to describe Her inner and outer qualities, the devotees attending his talk at the time attempted to provide suitable expressions: “mood and luster,” “feeling and effulgence,” and several other such versions were put forward, but each time Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj shook his head, unsatisfied. Suddenly, with a smile lighting up his countenance, he looked up and said sweetly: “Heart and Halo.”

Especially we offer our daṇḍavat prāṇams to His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, the beloved successor of Śrīla

HEART AND HALO

Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and present President-Āchārya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, worldwide. Under his shelter, affection and inspiration, a new generation of devotees are blossoming. May this generation go forth into the world carrying the eternal message of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj to all corners.

We would like to personally express our gratitude to all those who have helped this work through its various stages to completion, especially: Śrīpad B. A. Sagar Mahārāj, Śrīpad B. P. Janārdana Mahārāj, Śrīpad B.C. Pārvaṭa Mahārāj, Śrī Śrūtaśrava Prabhu, Śrī Sārvabhāvana Prabhu, Śrī Navadvīpa Prabhu, Śrī Jagad-bandhu Prabhu, Śrī Aditi-nanda Prabhu, Śrī Lalitā Charaṇa Prabhu, Śrī Naraḥari Prabhu, Śrīmatī Swarnangi devī dāśī, Śrīmatī Anupamā devī dāśī, Śrīmatī Sītā devī dāśī, Śrīmatī Tilaka devī dāśī and Śrīmatī Dikṣavati devī dāśī.

We apologize if any mistakes of any kind remain in this work despite every effort to eradicate them.

Hare Krishna

Swāmī B. S. Tridandī

Saphala Ekadāśī

December 18, 1995

PART ONE

The Soul
And The
Supreme Shelter

HEART AND HALO

The Key Is In Your Own Hand

There is consciousness of the higher, the subjective world, and consciousness of the lower, objective world. Connection with the lower objective world binds us with misery, and relationship with the superior consciousness lifts us up, gives us real fortune. One result is from dedication, and another is from enjoyment. In a word: enjoyment is bad, and devotion is good. On the side of devotion is the Lord, and on that of enjoyment, misery. “There are so many things to be enjoyed”: this is fascination with hell, with reaction.

**bhaktis tvayi sthiratarā bhagavan yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrṭiḥ
mukṭiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate 'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratikṣāḥ**

(Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta 107)

In his *Krishna-karṇāmṛta*, Bilvamangala Thākura says: “*bhaktis tvayi sthiratarā bhagavan yadi syāt*, My Lord, if my dedication, my veneration to You is permanent, is in a settled stage, *daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrtiḥ*, and if it reaches to such a height that we can find *divya-kiśora-mūrttiḥ*, a young pair engaged in that highest pastime—if we can reach so far, to find out the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple, if we can reach to this extent—then we will find, *muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate ’smān*, oh, the facility of liberation, emancipation, with folded palms will come to serve us in any way we like. And, *dharmmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ srāmaya-pratikṣāḥ*: *dharma*, the results of dutifulness; *artha*, moneymaking; and *kāma*, the objects of sense perception—they are all ready and waiting outside, and whenever a call comes they will come in front of us, ‘What do you want, my master, my lord?’ That will be our position: *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* will wait outside, and whenever we call them they will present themselves: ‘What do you want me to do?’ And *mukti*, liberation, will be always moving around us with folded palms doing service of different types, if in our fortune we can rise up to such a height as to find that Divine Couple engaged in happy pastimes.”

Bilvamaṅgala Thākura showed in his life a peculiar example: how from the house of the prostitute he went straight to Vṛndāvan and got the grace of the Supreme Entity; how in his life he was so much engrossed in, almost swallowed by, sensualism of the lowest type; and from that position, in a single life he could raise himself to the highest stage of realization of the Beautiful.

Mahāprabhu took two books from South India; one was *Brahma-saṁhitā*, and the other was *Krishna-karnāmṛta*. *Krishna-karnāmṛta* is about the pastimes of Vṛndāvan, and *Brahma-saṁhitā* shows the ontological basis of the Absolute, how the Lord of Vṛndāvan is the highest conception of Reality.

Krishna-līlā is not a matter of history. In history events occur, they happen once and can't reoccur at any time. It is an eternal flow in which what is going on in the past never comes again. There is an expression "history repeats itself," but that is in the similar nature of the event, not the actual fact; history repeats its nature, but what is gone, is gone. Once it has gone, it has gone forever. But in *Krishna-līlā*, in the eternal world, it is not so. It may present the same thing every time, at every second; thus it is called *nitya-līlā*, 'eternal pastimes'—crossing the

limitation, the jurisdiction of history. In history, what is past is dead. But the pastimes of the Lord are eternal, *nitya*, always present. Every *līlā* is eternally present; He can show Himself in His eternal forms simultaneously. So in His past, present and future, all events are simultaneously occurring. When He enters the arena of Kāṁsa, different groups are seeing Him in different ways. What is seen by one section of people is seen differently by another, according to their own nature. Even the blind can see Him if He wills. If He wills to show Himself to anyone, though blind one can see Him clearly, because these eyes of flesh are not necessary to see Him. By His willpower alone He can reveal Himself to any person. That was the case with Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the *Kuru-śabha*. Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, “For the time being, my Lord, restore my eyesight so that I can see Your wonderful form which the others are seeing and praising. You can do anything, so only for the time being remove my blindness.”

“It is not necessary to remove your blindness, Dhṛtarāṣṭra! I say ‘You see Me’ and you will see Me.” And by His order, Dhṛtarāṣṭra saw! His order, His wish is everything. His simple will is everything, the cause of all existence.

THE KEY IS IN YOUR OWN HAND

The Kurus wanted to see Draupadī naked, but Draupadī's appeal reached Him and He sanctioned cloth, and that cloth became infinite, of infinite character. As much cloth as they removed, so much cloth remained. It is the will, the *vicāra*, which is everything. Such great potency of such high quality is in the Prime Cause. We are accustomed to think: "This is good, this is bad," and "this is possible, this is impossible." We are accustomed to such considerations within our rules of thought. But these rules do not apply in His case. All of our experience will fail to occupy even a very negligible part of His Kingdom.

He is wonderful. In the example of Vamanāvatāra it is told of His 'wonderful stride,' *adbutkrama*. With one stride He covered the whole earth, and with the next He captured the whole of heaven. He then needed a place to put His third step, but where? He is *adbutkrāma*, He of wonderful stride; all His steps are wonderful. He is wonder, the source of all wonder to our tiny brain. He is here, He is also everywhere. With His full representation He is everywhere; yet He is nowhere! Everything is in Him, and nothing is in Him! Krishna said, "Try to understand My peculiar position, Arjuna." He is the Mystery of all mysteries. Even our own soul is astonishing to our worldly experience:

**āścaryavat paśyati kaścīd enam
āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ
āścaryavac cainam anyāḥ śrṇoti
śrutvāpy enam veda na caiva kaścit**

(Bhagavad-gītā 2.29)

We do not even know the extraordinary nature of our own self. It is of a very high order, but our attention is focused towards so many mortal things; we have been introduced to, and captured by, the meanest aspect of the world. This is the consequence of the mood of enjoyment. We want to enjoy, we want to exploit. A good exploiter is a king to us! But exploitation in itself is degrading, very mean and low. It takes us to the lowest position and makes us victims of a great reaction.

Exploitation and enjoyment: we are in the midst of them and do not know anything but enjoyment. We want to understand anything and everything in terms of enjoyment; we are in such a filthy, degraded position. Only, ‘enjoyment, enjoyment’—that is exploitation. But to exploit is the meanest type of nature, it is hateful, and we must get out of the clutches of that ghost of exploitation. And there is another ghost: renunciation, idleness. But the noble thing is dedication, a dedicated life.

THE KEY IS IN YOUR OWN HAND

There are two ghosts, one of renunciation and the other of exploitation, and we have to get out of that nightmare, that mania, which is based on our tendency of measuring things to be good and bad. In exploitation there is division into regular and irregular, or *dharma* and *adharma*.

And then renunciation. So many great stalwarts of that conception recommend a complete cessation of the dynamic life. A dead stop! But that should not be the prospect of any conscious man. A dead stop to life: is that any goal of life for the saner section?

A life of nobility, a life of dedication—and not only ordinary dedication for the environment, but dedication for the highest good—is the highest form of life. In the lower stage that dedication is calculative; in the higher stage, spontaneous, automatic. And really, there is joy. Joy is there in quality and quantity; in every way, real life is there. Life is there, and here is the worst shadow, the perverted reflection. And we are told, *uddhared ātmanātmānam*, the key is in our own hand, the freedom by which we can associate with anything, good or bad, and reap the result accordingly.

Ultimately, we are told that the key is in our own hand; none else is to be blamed for our present

condition. But there is always the possibility of noble help being extended to us, and we must accept that. Our past actions also influence us a great deal—whether they were good, bad, or of the eternal aspiration, *sukṛti*. But ultimately the possibility of free action is not taken away from us at any stage; even if we are reduced to the level of taking birth as a tree, there also, the freedom is within. It is hard to think that a tree has got independence, free will, but it is there, in a suppressed position. Freedom is within us also, and we may try as far as possible to understand how it is so, but our freedom is also covered by so many conditions that we may think we are not free but are forced by circumstances. But still, we are free for our selection of any path, good or bad. Our existence is very small and so our freedom is also small and meager, but it is there. Though almost negligible, it exists.

Journey to the Center

Generally, if all our activity is stopped by unfavorable weather, we think “This is very bad!” We are men of action, men who exploit the environment and nature for gathering some energy. We are always trying to collect some energy for our use. That is our nature. The very nature of those who live in this mortal world is to collect more and more energy and wealth that can be utilized in a time of need. If there is any hindrance to that end we think it is a very bad circumstance, in opposition to the object of our life. But to remind us about the importance of our inner wealth, we are advised that the outer nature cannot do us so much harm as can our internal nature, that is, our apathy to collect more wealth for the inner existence, the inner self. Be mindful of that!

Losing things of this mortal world is not bad; it is all coming and going. The body itself, the center of all this activity, will also vanish. Then what is the necessity of collecting so much energy for the bodily

connection? So, awaken your soul, the real person within; search him out and try to help him. That is possible only with help from the *sadhu*.

The day in which we do not find any saint, or have any discussion about the real purpose of life, the inner life, the inner substance, that day we are the loser. Be conscious of that. In all respects, in any way possible, mind your own lesson, mind your own interest, find your own self. Be unmindful towards the external world and circumstances and dive deep into the reality, the inner world. Find your inner self and the inner world where you live, where your inner self is living. Try to find your Home, to go back to God, back to Home. Your energy must be utilized for going Home, and not for wandering in the other land, the land of death. Try to avoid the land of death at any cost; always try to find the eternal soil, that soil to which you belong. Try to understand what is your Home and why it is your Home. Home comfort: what does it mean? It means our birth-place—the place where we are born.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* we find this verse:

**satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ**

**taj-joṣaṇād āśvapavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25)

“In the association of pure devotees, discussions about Me are very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. Such talks, which are full of spiritual potency, are a source of sweetness, and by such cultivation the path of liberation from worldly life quickly opens. Then gradually one attains firm faith, which in due course develops into taste, and then real love for Me.”

This was spoken by the incarnation of the Lord, Śrī Kapiladeva, to his mother, Devahūti, in response to her inquiry as to what is the real goal of life and how to attain it. It came about in this way. Devahūti was married to the sage, Kardama-ṛṣi. After passing some years in the enjoyment of married life, Devahūti conceived a child in her womb from the ṛṣi. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says: *prajānaś cāsmi kandarpaḥ*, “Of Cupids, I am He who ensures progeny.” And elsewhere it is said, *prajānāya na rataye*, married life is not meant for enjoyment, but for the purpose of producing good progeny. So, when the objective of their marriage was achieved, the ṛṣi proposed that he retire from

married life. He told Devahūti, “You have a child in your womb and it is not an ordinary child; the Lord Himself is coming. So I am going to live alone for my own higher purpose of life.” Then Devahūti said, “I have such a good partner; I am fortunate to have a saint like you as my husband, but I did not take advantage of your noble personality to learn anything about *brahma*, about the Lord, about my inner life’s necessity and its fulfillment. I did not inquire about that. I was only busy to serve you, to satisfy your desires. Though I had such a noble companion, I did not utilize my fortune. Now I pray that you may stay for some time and teach me, help me in spiritual life, and then you may go.”

Kardama-ṛṣi said, “You will get help from your son. It is the Lord Himself who is coming, not an ordinary child. Remember this, and in time you will receive that spiritual help from Him. So I won’t stay; I shall go now.” He departed, but soon the child appeared and He was brought up by Devahūti. Because of her great motherly affection, however, as her son grew, she gradually forgot what her husband had revealed: that He was not an ordinary child.

In the course of time, when the boy had grown and was one day absorbed, Devahūti was reminded, “Oh, the mood of my child does not seem to be ordinary.” She could understand that He was engaged in deep thought, and considered: “His father foretold that the Lord would appear through me, and now I see it is true. My son’s mood does not seem to be worldly, but it is from above. His mind is absorbed in transcendental thought.”

She then slowly approached Him: “Child, your father told me that You are not an ordinary boy of this world. You are divine. I wanted some spiritual advice from him, but he told me that You would advise me. For so long I did not heed that, but today Your mood is encouraging me; it is reminding me of those words of Your father and encouraging me to approach You for spiritual advice. Be pleased to advise me about what is spiritual truth. Who am I? What is this world? How can I find the proper direction of life? Who is the owner of this world, and what is my duty towards Him? You are not an ordinary boy, so I want to know all these things from You, my child.” Then from the lips of her son came this verse, given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

**satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśvapavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25)

Lord Kapila said, *satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido*, “Talks about Me which are full of potency can only be found coming from the lips of My devotees. Not only lip-deep words, but words that have got depth, spirit, power, that represent Reality come from the lips of My real devotee. Such words are not shallow, but are surcharged with spirit, with life, and can enliven us. *Bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ*, they satisfy both our ear and our heart and give a taste of spiritual joy, *rasāyanāḥ*. Their words are surcharged with the ecstasy of the spiritual world, and color our ear, our mind, and our heart—physically, mentally, and also on the plane of our soul. *Taj-joṣaṇād*, by hearing from the real source, from that real *sadhu*, *āśvapavarga-vartmani*, we are led towards relief from this worldly life. By a gradual process, we attain these things: *śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*, first, *śraddhā*, ever increasing faith; then *rati*, slight taste; then we get real love, *bhakti*.

By *anukramiṣyati*, a gradual process, we are taken towards the higher domain.”

In this way the boy began to advise His mother, Devahūti. This Devahūti-nandana, Kapila, was the son of Kardama-ṛṣi, but there was another Kapila whose *sāṅkhya* philosophy does not recognize God; it only analyzes the material elements, gradually eliminating everything of spiritual substance. So there are two Kapilas, both of whom gave *sāṅkhya* philosophy*: the divine son of Kardama-ṛṣi (Kardama Kapila) and the other, Sāṅkhyaka Kapila. Kapila, the son of Kardama and Devahūti, gave what is known as *sāṅkhya*, but He has given recognition to the Supreme Lord, Īśvara, whereas the atheist Kapila claimed *Īśvara-asiddhe*, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this world. That is his conclusion. The *nyāyikas* (logicians) say that there must be One who has created this world. This world has been created, so there must be someone who has done it. Their highest conclusion is that there must be a creator, and He is God, Īśvara. But the atheistic Kapila says, “No, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this material world: *Īśvara-asiddhe*. His finding, his

**sāṅkhya*: to enumerate or count.

conclusion, is that there is no necessity of a creator; automatically everything exists. Only two things are necessary: first, a particle of spirit, and second, matter. Matter and spirit combined, *śiva* and *śakti*, have created this world. There are so many spiritual particles, like specks of sand or dust, and by their combination with matter this world is going on automatically.

Once, while at the Madras Maṭh, I met a gentleman from Madhupur who was a follower of this school of thought. He was an educated Bengali gentleman, and I asked him, “What have you got from your guru, that Kapila?”

He said “So many souls are there, *yata jīva*, and everyone is a *śiva*, independent of this matter.”

I said, “You are satisfied with this explanation?”

“Yes, I am satisfied: *pāśa baddhaḥ bhavet jīvaḥ*, *pāśa muktaḥ sadā śivaḥ* (the soul while conditioned is *jīva*, when liberated is *śiva*).”

I told him: “Where your philosophy ends, our philosophy, that of the *Bhāgavata* school, begins.”

“How is it so?” that gentleman asked.

“You will have to explain where these *śivas* exist. There are so many *śivas*, like particles of spiritual dust; but should we not think they must be living in

some position, and that there must exist some relationship between them? There are so many, and some sort of relationship must be there between them, and they must also stay somewhere, in some position, some plane. And how are they harmonized together, or are they each an independent unit, all fighting with one another? If not, then what is their nature? The *Bhāgavata* has come to explain about the *mukta-jīvas*, the liberated souls. These souls, who were once diseased, are now free from that disease. In their healthy condition, what do they do? What is their position, their characteristic, their nature, their object, their pastimes? We have to know that. So, *Bhāgavatam* has given us an explanation.”

Devarṣi Nārada asked Vyāsadeva, “Explain what is the normal, natural condition of the liberated souls who are not diseased.” And that has been given. There is a Center, and all function in connection with Him and are all harmonized together.

In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says:

**yat sāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate stānam
tad yogair api gamyate
ekaṁ sāṅkhyam ca yogam ca
yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 5.5)

“He has true vision who can see that the *sāṅkhya* and yoga systems are one and the same.” One person is trying to reach the ultimate goal by external elimination, and the other by internal elimination: “this is body, this is mind, this is soul (*ātma*), then super-soul (*paramātmā*),” and onwards. The search is all within. The process of elimination is within. And by that he is trying to reach the core. And the other, by elimination of the elements of the external world (earth, water, fire, air, ether) is trying to understand the Origin.

That is *sāṅkhya*: *neti, neti, neti*, “This is not it, this is not it; this is dependent, this is also dependent; this is not original, nor this, nor this. All are effects. Then what is the Cause?” To inquire through the external process is *sāṅkhya*, and the internal process is through yoga—*prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, *samādhi*.* So by elimination of the effect we come in contact with the cause; from the gross we start towards the subtle, and we reach more and more subtle planes in the causal direction.

This is the process in both *sāṅkhya* and yoga. But in the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

* breath-control, withdrawing the senses from their objects, concentration, meditation, full absorption and trance.

Śukadeva Goswāmī, who is speaking to Parikṣit Mahārāj, begins his talk by saying that these two, *sāṅkhya* and yoga, and also *sva-dharma pariniṣṭhayā* (fulfilling one's Vedic duty), can all give us liberation, but there is something more:

**etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyām sva-dharma-pariniṣṭhayā
janma lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.6)

He says, *etāvān*, so far, by these processes, we are told our liberation may be achieved: by *sāṅkhya*, external elimination; by yoga, internal elimination; and also by *sva-dharma pariniṣṭayā*, discharging one's duty as it is recommended in the Veda. To perform whatever is one's respective duty as it is recommended, without any special aim or object, is *niṣkāma* (action free from personal desire). Because it has been advised by the *sāstra* as my duty in my present position, I am doing it, but in a disinterested way, without any special end. As a *brāhmaṇa*, I am told, "You must do these things," so I am doing them. As a *kṣatriya*, my duty is to keep the peace and control the evil-doers; that is my duty and I am doing it. As a *vaiśya*, I am advised to do such and such. Because it is advised in the *sāstra*, I

am doing my respective duty in a disinterested way, that is, without any special aim or interest. All these three processes—*sāṅkhya*, yoga and Vedic duty—lead us to liberation (*mukti*). But, *janma lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa smṛtiḥ*, after we get relief from the external bondage, the fulfillment of life is in remembering our Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Creator, and our relationship with Him. We must get out of the net we are entangled in, and after getting release from this entanglement we must search out our proper relationship with the Prime Cause. Who are we in our relationship with Him? Here the *Bhāgavata* begins:

**etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyām sva-dharma-pariniṣṭhayaḥ
janma lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ**
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.6)

Janma-lābhaḥ means fulfillment of our existence, our birth; *lābhaḥ* means the gain, the fulfillment, the end. What is that? *Ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*, our connection, our reconnection with the Center, the all-harmonizing Center, that should be our goal, and the *Bhāgavatam* comes to tell us this. So many other *śāstras* come to give us release from this external bondage; but with internal progress, after

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crossing the marginal plane, we get admission into the *paravyoma*, the special area, *Vaikunṭha*. That is, we get the visa: ‘*virajā*’, ‘*brahmaloka*’ *bhedi*’ ‘*para-vyoma*’ *pāya*. We catch the flow of the current going towards the Center; that is the visa. *Sāṅkhya*, yoga and *sva-dharma pariniṣṭhaya* can give us the passport to get out of the land where we are living, but after that, if we want to attain something, then a visa is necessary.

HEART AND HALO

The Real Judgment of Love

According to Indian medical authorities, in the body is air, bile and mucus, which correspond to air, fire, and water, three elements in the ether that influence the earth. Earth is mainly influenced by water, and water by heat, heat by air, and all are fighting, struggling within ether. This is the nature of the material world. Then there is the mental world, the manifestation of the mental energy: “I want this, I do not want that; I like this, I don’t like that.” And, the intelligence gives direction to the mind: “Don’t take this, take that.” But it is all within the *ahañkāra*, material ego. Above that is the soul, who experiences everything, good or bad. He is called *puruṣa*:

puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānām, bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate

(Bhagavad-gītā 13.21)

“It is established that it is the conditioned living being, *puruṣa* himself who is the responsible cause

of the feelings of joy and sorrow which he experiences in this world.”

This is the difference between spirit and matter. Matter, called *prakṛti*, is energy, but the soul, *puruṣa*, experiences good and bad; he is the person who feels good or bad, sorrow or happiness. He is of one substance, and that which is felt is of another:

kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve, hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.21)

“Certainly in this impermanent world all movement occurs through the inherent quality of the predominated material nature, *prakṛti*, which is responsible for both cause (the force of the senses) and effect (the material body).”

So all the activity we find here, all movement, is due to that material energy, and the feeler of everything, the knower, the conceiver, is the soul. The soul is like the eye, an eye seeing anything and everything.

In *sāṅkhya* philosophy, this *prakṛti-puruṣa* relationship has been compared to that of a blind man and a crippled man. A crippled man may ride on the shoulder of a blind man. He who is moving (*prakṛti*), is blind; and he who is crippled, who is on

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his shoulder (*puruṣa*), has got eyes to see and can guide. The soul is ‘crippled’; he cannot move, but he can see. The blind man is the commander of the energy, who can move here and there; he can carry, but he is blind. In this way, soul is the knower, the feeler, the subjective existence, and the energetic aspect is that of the force, *prakṛti*. So, there is force and consciousness.

We are so much engrossed with force; we only require the force, the energy, and we have forgotten that we are the feeler of that force! That “feeler” is astonishing; if we try to understand our own self, we will be dumfounded: “Oh, what is this? I am of such a nature! I have nothing to do with this world of mortality; I can live independently of this mortal world? Is it so?”

Then we will be able to understand further, that there is Supersoul. In the material world there are so many different planes: the world of heat, that of water, of air. Everything is evolving from a more subtle plane down to gross things, like stone or wood. Just as there is development in this direction in the material world, so in the subjective world there is also development, but upwards, from the soul to Supersoul, to Super-Supersoul; in this way

there is development and it is infinite. And we are *tatastha*, marginal; our soul is in the marginal position, between higher and lower, between the subtle side and the gross side. The upper side is eternal, it is *sat-cit-ānandam*, eternal, conscious and happy; and here: *asat*, *acit*, *nirānanda*. It is *asat*, flickering, every minute it is dying; and *acit*, unconscious; and *nirānanda*, with no feeling of joy or happiness. These are the respective natures of *this* world, and of *that* world. And if we want to have association with that world, we are told that in the highest position there is infinite beauty, love, and ecstasy. That world can come down to us, and we can be taken in as one of the Lord's own family members. We can live as a family member with the highest Entity of that world! Mahāprabhu told us it is possible, but only through affection, and not by knowledge or any mystic realization. By affection and love we can attract Him in such a way that we can be given recognition as a family member, a position very near to Him—to such an extent it is possible.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says:

tato mām tattvato jñātvā, viśate tad anantaram

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55)

THE REAL JUDGMENT OF LOVE

“After realizing My proper position, they enter there; that is, into My own special jurisdiction, into My family.” And the *Bhāgavatam* says:

mamātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.29.34)

“They get such high recognition which qualifies them to live with Me eternally, as My own. If they selflessly come forward to satisfy Me, leaving aside everything, *ananya bhajana*, if they want Me alone and nothing else, then such is their future prospect.”

marttyo yadā tyakta-samasta-karmā

niveditātmā vicikīrṣito me

tadāmṛtatvaṁ pratipadyamāno

mamātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.29.34)

Sanātana Goswāmī has analyzed what is the proper meaning of this expression *ātma-bhūyāya*: “My own,” they become “My own.” What is the meaning of “own”? He says it means to enter into His family; and “family” means there is gradation: the servant; the friends and their associates, the filial affection group; the guardian group; and then the highest group, that of consorhood.

There is one story I heard from my godbrother Vaikānasa Mahārāj, who was a *brāhmaṇa* scholar of Orissa, about an incident which occurred in recent history, in connection with the Jagannātha Temple at Puri, where it was customary that no *khechurānna* (*kitri*) used to be offered to the Lord.

Once there was a raid by the Mohammedans on Orissa, and one of the girls of the royal family was abducted for the pleasure of the Mohammedan general, by his soldiers. He later left the state, but that girl was left on the outskirts of some village or town, and there she gave birth to a child who was a great devotee. It was a very peculiar thing; the girl was also a devotee, but somehow she had to undergo such a horrible experience. She gave birth to a child and he lived on the outskirts of that town. When he grew up he used to cook *kitri*, that is, rice and beans cooked together, boiled into a half-liquid consistency, and he used to offer that to Jagannātha from afar. By dint of his devotion, Jagannātha had to go there and accept that *kitri* offering.

One day the boy was perhaps late in his offering; Jagannātha took the *kitri* but the time was then late for the temple offering, so He had to run back to install Himself in His position in the temple, and a

particle of that *kitri* was on His lips. The *pāṇḍās*, the *pujāris* (the priestly class) noticed: “What is this? How has this happened? We can detect this is not the proper offering to Jagannātha; then how is it here on His lips?” So it was referred to the leader of the *pāṇḍās* and he also searched, but he could not ascertain the cause. Then it was taken to the king and he also investigated it, “Who has taken this food and smeared it on the mouth of Jagannātha?”

Finally the priest who had been in charge at the time of the offering of food in the temple was apprehended: “You are responsible! You were in charge of the temple at the time of Jagannātha’s offering, then how has this impure thing come in His mouth? You must explain or you will be punished.” The man was innocent and he said, “I do not know anything; I do not know anything!”

Then, when he was about to be punished, Jagannātha came in a dream to the king as well as to the leading priest: “That man is innocent; don’t disturb him. On the outskirts of the town is My devotee. He offered that food to Me, and I ate it, but the time was late and I had to hurry back to occupy My position in the temple, so My mouth was not cleansed. This is the name of that boy. He is living there; he is My devotee,

and I have taken this food there.” And it was as a result of the Mohammedan’s exploitation of the princess that this devotee appeared. So, *Krishna-bhakti*, devotion to Krishna, does not care for the formality of purity or impurity by any worldly considerations; it is independent.

Krishna-bhakti is so powerful and does not care for anything. Jagannātha accepted the offering of that boy who was considered to have the worst fate, a cursed fate. The princess was taken by the Mohammedan, and her issue came in the form of that boy, so he was the “curse of the cursed.” But his offering attracted Jagannātha so much.

So, love is wonderfully above everything, surpassing all. Mahāprabhu asked us to accept the path of love, which means giving one’s heart, one’s self. It is so powerful, nothing else can attract Krishna. He is very greedy to eat this love, this *prema*. He lives on *prema*. He is the Lord of love. That love has its inner existence; it is the inner existence of all of us. He is Love personified, and there is a tinge within us also; and like ‘birds of a feather,’ love likes love.

Once Mahāprabhu, at the time when He had conquered and captured the Kazi, was leading the *saṅkīrtana* party and was feeling very tired. He came

to Śrīdhara Paṇḍita, the poor *brāhmaṇa* who used to sell plantains in the market to somehow meagerly earn his livelihood. Śrīdhara Paṇḍita had a well, and nearby an iron pot which he used for drawing water. Mahāprabhu began to drink water from the well with that pot, which had been left outside. All the devotees objected, “What are You doing? This pot is always kept outside and is very dirty. We are bringing a clean pot for Your drinking water!” Mahāprabhu ignored them and continued drinking water from that iron pot. He commented, “This is the pot of My devotee Śrīdhara; it is purer than anything.”

In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says:

**api cet sudurācāro, bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ, samyag vyavasito hi saḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30)

“If a person is an unalloyed devotee who worships Me exclusively, having abandoned all other pursuits based on exploitation and renunciation, even if he commits some abominable action, he is to be considered saintly. He is cent-per-cent pure, because his endeavors are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed in that resolve.”

This is because one who has really surrendered to Krishna is accepted by Him as His own, and such a

surrendered soul should never be considered impure, a transgressor. So, what is *bhajana*? It is a transaction of the heart, not of any formality. In Krishna devotion, Krishna-*bhakti*, the only consideration is the dedication of the heart. Krishna wants that, and not any external formality of the civilized or non-civilized world. In the case of Lord Rāmachandra also, we see that although in the highest consideration He is the director of moral laws, *nīti*, He could not contain Himself when offered something with devotion by an ‘untouchable’ lady. And that was after she had first taken it herself, after she had taken some sweet. Whatever remained that she considered most tasteful, she kept for Rāma, and He accepted it.

There is another incident that happened in Vidura’s house. While Vidura was out collecting alms, Krishna suddenly appeared as a guest at his house. Vidura’s wife received Him, but there was nothing to offer, only some bananas. So after seating Him nicely she gave Him that, but she was offering the banana peels to Krishna and discarding the fruit on the ground. She was so bewildered, overwhelmed by the joy of finding that Krishna was suddenly present in her house, that she was discarding the fruit and giving Him the peels, and He was eating them.

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At that very moment Nārada and Vidura arrived. Vidura exclaimed: “What are you doing? You are leaving the fruit and giving the peels to my Lord!” But Nārada came to her relief: “She is bewildered, but He who is eating is not at all disturbed! One might think that He would say, ‘Oh, give me the fruit. Why are you giving Me the peels?’ But He is eating without any concern.” Then Krishna answered, “I am eating neither the fruit nor the peels, but I am eating that which is devotion! I am accepting her devotion. Neither the peel nor the fruit can satisfy Me; I need neither the one nor the other, but I live on devotion, Nārada.”

**patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam,
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam,
aśnāmi prayatātmanah**

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.26)

The Lord says, “I accept all those foodstuffs that are offered; but actually it is not the food itself that I take, rather it is the purpose behind that offering, the ideal. It is the very spirit of the thing I am concerned with and never the outward show. I am living in the inner world, so with food also it is the inner substance with which I am concerned, not the

external appearance.” Therefore it is said, *bhāva-grāhī-janārdanaḥ*, “Lord Janārdana (Krishna) sees the mood of devotion.” Devotion does not care for the ordinary rules and regulations of this material world. Still, in our lower condition we are advised to go on with *arcaṇa*, and depending on our stage of realization, what we think to be pure we offer, and what is impure we reject. In the preliminary stage this is necessary for our fortune, but as we advance these external considerations are eliminated and the internal ones are given more and more importance.

There is another story which illustrates this. Vrajen Sil was a big scholar of Bengal, a scholar of philosophy so extraordinary that once after he had delivered a lecture at the World Conference of Philosophy in Rome, the president of the meeting told him, “I took you to be Aristotle!” He was respected as Aristotle, he was such a learned man. He had been a student of Scottish Church College in Calcutta and once was taking an examination there. While in the examination hall, he was given the questions and paper, and began to write his answers. Many questions were there, but he became so engrossed in answering one particular question that he forgot everything else. So deeply engaged

was he in answering this single question that he spent the whole time on it and ignored all the others. When the bell rang and the examination time had expired he was perplexed as to what to do? He had only dealt with one question; but he left his paper and went away.

He was the brightest student of the college, but was thinking that his name could not possibly be on the list of successful candidates because he had only answered one question out of perhaps five or six. But still he was stealthily coming to see if the list of successful candidates had been posted. Then one day he found that his name had appeared at the head of that list. He was perplexed: “How is this? I only dealt with one question and I am at the head of the list; how is it possible?” So he asked the professor, “Sir, I had answered only one question; how then is it possible that you have given me first place?”

“Oh Mr. Sil, your answer is on the level of a research scholar, not an ordinary student, so I gave you first place!”

So, this is like *rāga-marga* where the formal things are all ignored and the substance drawn out. Although normally Mr. Sil should have placed amongst the lowest of those candidates who failed, the Professor

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was a judge of a bold type and thought, “Oh, his answer to just one question is of such high quality; this student can never be considered to be a failure.” Rather, he was given the highest position.

So, love is such: it does not care for any formality in its real judgment.

PART TWO

The Way Home

HEART AND HALO

Delusion, Divinity and the Real Devotee

Devotee: Mahārāj, if a devotee falls down and becomes disconnected, is that worse than if he becomes a *sahajiyā*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Which is better, a poor man or a thief? One had money and lost it; the other is imitating that he is wealthy, by committing wrong. One who is disconnected may be reconnected again soon; but *sahajiyā* means either that he had a real connection with the truth, became disconnected, then chose a wrong path, or that already he is engaged in the wrong path. So which is the better position: not to get the real thing, or to get the wrong thing? Which is superior?

In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* it is mentioned that in *tamo-guṇa*, the lowest position, one thinks ‘A’ to be ‘B’. In *rajo-guṇa*, there is doubt whether *this* is real, or *that* is real. He cannot ascertain what is true; but to think that ‘A’ is ‘B,’ and ‘B’ is ‘A’—that is

the worst kind of error. They are misguided; *sahajiyā* means misguided. They are accepting matter as consciousness, so their position is more detrimental than that of those who have nothing, or who have lost their connection with the real thing. In a similar way, the conclusion of the *māyāvādī* section who think that ‘merging’ into formless *brahma* is the highest end, is more dangerous, because “a half truth is worse than a lie.”

**se du’yer madhye viṣayī tabu bhālo
māyāvādī saṅga nāhi māgi kona kāla**

(*Śaraṇāgati* 27.3)

Association with those who are out-and-out sense enjoyers can never be so detrimental to one’s spiritual welfare as is the company of an impersonalist.

If one man admits “I have no money,” and another, who really has no money, shows some counterfeit currency and claims “this is money,” then his condition is worse because he is engaged in falsehood.

So to become a *sahajiyā* is worse. He is deceived, his attention is captured by, engrossed in, a wrong conception. One person had some conception for some time and became disconnected, but he may

again easily reestablish his connection, but the other has become captivated by a wrong conception, so to convince him of the truth is more difficult because his mind is possessed and captured by that prejudice. The first person has no engagement; the engagement he had is gone. But the second has mistaken one thing for another. He has taken matter to be divine, and that is worse.

Once, in my childhood, I heard this example from my teacher in school. He said that in America there is a school of music, and if anyone had some knowledge of music, to attend that school he had to pay double the normal fee, but those who had no musical knowledge only had to pay the standard fee. That is because they do not know anything, so they can be taught easily; but the others who had some knowledge of music had to pay double, because everything which they had previously learned would first have to be forgotten, and only then would they be allowed to start learning in the proper way. They had to be taught first to forget their previous prejudices, their misconceptions of musical science, so for them there was a double charge. It is something like that. In one case, no *bhakti*, no devotion; and in the other, in the name of devotion, some non-devotional

thing has captured the man. That is imitation, and worse, it is offensive. Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura said it is *vancanam*, to ridicule the devotees—Mahāprabhu, Rūpa, Sanātana—it is to ridicule them because it confuses what is *prema* and what is *kāma*. They are at opposite ends; and to accept *kāma* in the name of *prema* is not only heinous and injurious to oneself, but it contaminates the whole atmosphere. So Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

**kāme preme dekho bhāi, lakṣaṇete bheda nāi,
tabu kāma ‘prema’ nāhi hoy,
tumi ta’ barile kāma, mithyā tāhe ‘prema’-nāma
āropile kise śubha hoy**

**keno mana, kāmere nācāo prema prāya
carma-māṁsamaya-kāma, jaḍa-sukha abirāma,
jaḍa-biṣayete sadā dhāy**

(*Kalyāṇa Kalpataru* 18-19)

“Just give your attention to this, my brother: lust and love, their symptoms may appear as similar; still, lust is not love. But you have accepted lust in place of love, and if you give the certificate, that ‘this is *prema*,’ by this mistake you only cheat yourself. By mistaking one thing for another

in this way, you will never get anything auspicious. Lust is concerned with flesh and blood, but love is in the highest position of spiritual existence.”

So they are opposites, like the South Pole and the North Pole. One is concerned with this body, the other, with the Supersoul; a great gulf lies between them! There is the ocean of dedication, and the highest point of that dedication is *gopī-prema*. It only exists where Krishna is, and here there is only imitation.

koṭi-mukta-madhye ‘durlabha’ eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta

(*Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.148*)

“Out of many millions of liberated persons, a pure devotee of Krishna is very difficult to find.” We must consider all these things. Such dedication is possible only in the highest position of spiritual existence, the conscious area which is all-spiritual, and is not in any way concerned with flesh and blood. It is not concerned with the body.

The most heinous thing is that one will play the part of Krishna and a lady will play the part of a *gopī* and they will unite, and in that way they will enjoy. To think *this* to be *that*, it is impossible. Any ordinary moral man will hate this. What to speak of the higher devotees, even an ordinary moral man will hate it.

HEART AND HALO

The steps are shown to us:

**adau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ**

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ 1.4.15)

In the beginning is faith, then association with devotees, engagement in service, purging of faults, attainment of steadiness in devotion, spiritual taste, firm attachment, transcendental emotion and pure love of Krishna. These are the steps.

And from another standpoint:

vaikuṇṭhera pṛthivy-ādi sakala cinmaya

(Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 5.53)

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuṇṭha are all spiritual.”

We must always remember this: “I am the offspring of *taṭastha-śakti*, the marginal potency; that is where I was born, and I must go through *svarūpa-śakti*, which is higher than me. There the soil is of higher stuff than that of which I myself am made. The earth, the air, the water, the trees, birds, everything there is superior to me. And I am to enter there? It is not a small thing, not an easy thing. It is not within the power of the person who wants to go there to enter, rather it is completely

dependent on the grace of his superiors: *guru-kṛpā*, *vaiṣṇava-kṛpā*.

We have to walk there on our head, not on our feet. All are guru; the soil is guru, the entire paraphernalia is guru, superior. I am made of a lower stuff, and that plane is of higher substance, so it is impossible to enter there at my sweet will. To approach that direction as far as *mukti*, liberation, may be easy, but thereafter we can only be drawn by their grace; it is not a matter of right that anyone can enter that realm. It is only the wholesale, cent-per-cent grace of a child of that soil which can take us there. Just as in court there is a guarantor, someone who stands as a guarantee for the subject, so some agent of that soil must take responsibility for me, and at his risk, I can go. Vaiṣṇava and guru, children of that soil, they will take the risk and bring me there. So without their grace, *vaiṣṇava-kṛpā*, *guru-kṛpā*, *bhāgavata-kṛpā*, we cannot enter there.

No right—all grace. That grace can take me there. From our side, we have no right. I am a child of the marginal potency, but there the whole substance, everything, is made of a higher stuff than my own existence. I have my existence as a person, and there they are also all persons, but all there are of an existence superior to me. How then can this person stand

on the head of those? Only for their service; otherwise, it is inconceivable and impossible. Even to accept this principle is most difficult, what to speak of entering there:

**bahūnām janmanām ante, jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti, sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ**

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.19)

“After many births, one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me (Vāsudeva) realizing that it is I who am both the source and substance of all that be. Such a great soul is extremely rare.”

And *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states:

**muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahā-mune**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.14.5)

“O great sage, out of many millions of souls who are liberated and free from ignorance, and out of many millions of *siddhas* who have nearly attained perfection, there is hardly one pure devotee of Nārāyaṇa. Only such a devotee is completely satisfied and peaceful.”

It is easy to think of, but hard to attain! No right can be established there; it is not as a matter of right that we can go there, so the ‘right-seeker’ will be

totally frustrated. We must be prepared for “all risk, no gain.” But if somehow we can reach there, it will be “all gain, no risk!”

So to become a Vaiṣṇava proper is almost impossible. It is only as a matter of grace from that level that we can go there; there is nothing we can do from our side. Only with complete surrender, complete self-forgetfulness, complete dedication to the interest of that place, can we hope to be taken there:

**vaikuṇṭhera prṭhivy-ādi sakala cinmaya
māyika bhūtera tathi janma nāhi haya**

(Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 5.53)

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuṇṭha are all spiritual. Material elements are not found there.”

Uddhava is a devotee of such quality that he prays: “If I can be a creeper there, I shall consider my fortune to have reached its highest extent.” In Vṛndāvan the creeper is such a valuable thing that Uddhava—about whom the Lord says, “You are My most favorite devotee; I love you even more than My own Self”—he is aspiring to take such a birth that will give him that position there. This is not mere hyperbole. When Uddhava is aspiring

to be a shrub, to be some grass there, then how are we to prepare ourselves, that we shall walk over that place? I shall have to walk over the head of Uddhava? So, how much higher a conception must that place be?

And the *sahajiyās*—ridiculous! By imitation, here in the plane of flesh and blood, they think they will achieve that. They are the worst enemies, because by imitating in this way not only are they themselves going to hell but they are attracting so many others there also. They are not conscious of the facts, of what is what. So they have got their hated position in society; the general society has got hate for them, those ‘*bābājīs*.’

But we have to put faith in our *Guru Mahārāj* who said, “It is my misfortune. I could not find a single Vaiṣṇava in this *Vraja-maṇḍala*.” Pressing his hand to his forehead he said, “It is my misfortune that I could not find a single Vaiṣṇava in this great, holy place of *Vraja-maṇḍala*.” That was his conclusion.

And after he had performed *Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā*, he said about one *bābājī* who was generally recognized as the best of the *sahajiyā* ‘Vaiṣṇavas,’ as their leader: “He is a *kaniṣṭha*

adhikārī. He may be considered as a beginner, to have admission into the infant-class.” That man was considered unanimously as a *siddha-bābājī*, to have attained the highest position among them, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura said, “He has got admission into the primary class.” In writing, in the *Gauḍīya-patrikā* newspaper, he stated this. And we are trained accordingly, and consciously, not with blind faith. He explained to us what is what; we tried to follow his directions, and we have also come to such conclusions.

Step by step we must approach the highest point. It is not mental concoction, imitation. Imitation is the worst. It is hateful, filthy. If in the name of that higher love we represent this fleshy connection with the body and the mind—then that is the most hateful thing. We must try to avoid it with our utmost will and energy.

Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī describes: *vaikuṇṭhara prṭhivy-ādi sakala cinmaya*, that the elements of that Vaikuṇṭha world are all-spiritual and the scientific survey of that land is possible to our soul’s eye. We must understand that, how it is true. And for that we must first understand what is the *tatastha* region: what is *virāja*, what is *brahmaloka*.

HEART AND HALO

But we are in such a material position that we cannot even understand this lower process:

**indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur, indriyebhyaḥ param manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir, buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ**

(Bhagavad-gītā 3.42)

What is our soul? We can't follow, we can't understand what our own soul is! There is the world; we conceive it, we perceive it through our senses, so they are higher. The mind receives experience of the world through the senses, above the mind is the faculty of judgment within us, and above that is the soul proper. And then we approach the Supersoul area; through *virāja*, *brahmaloka*, eventually we reach *Vaikuṇṭha*. There are so many layers to cross, but who is to cross, our own soul, we cannot even find him! We are far away from that conception, in a hopeless position, and we say that the highest conception of the *Paramātmā*-world is in our fist! That is foolish.

First we must feel our own soul, what is our real existence and identity in the spiritual position; then that soul will have to go higher and higher; by crossing more and more valuable planes he must go up. But first he must feel his own identity.

So, the *sahajiyās*, the imitationists, should be considered as the enemy. Like Quisling*, they are *jana-śatru*, the enemy who has sprung up at home, the enemy within. This kind of imitation is the worst. Ordinary imitation may be bad, but imitation of the highest reality is completely repugnant and must be rejected because what is Supreme is being exploited in such a low, mean way. *That* is *sahajiyā*.

We cannot see our own soul! That is our position. Absorbed in this gross matter of exploitation, we cannot even know what is our mind, of what substance it is made. Then, how can one understand what is the intelligence, *buddhi*, the faculty of judgment with us; or beyond that, the soul; or ultimately, the realm of the Supersoul? But we are living in this mundane world and imagining: “I have got the Lord of my dreams!”

*Quisling was an influential Norwegian army officer during the Second World War who was in league with the enemy, the Nazi occupational force.

HEART AND HALO

Transcendental Knowledge

Sometimes we may be misguided to believe that we must not study the devotional books, thinking: “To analyze, to know, that is not part of devotion. That is not necessary; it is knowledge, *jñāna*, and that is anti-devotion.” Thinking in this way we will go on taking the Holy Name, and wherever there is some explanation being given about the devotional school, we will try to avoid it. But that is not always best, because by hearing from the proper source we get the kind of knowledge that gives us impetus to go on in our *sādhana*.

In *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* Śrīla Krishnadās Kavirāja Goswāmī says: *siddhānta baliyā*, we should discuss the *siddhānta* (perfect conclusions of devotion). Sanātana Goswāmī is the *āchārya* of *siddhānta*.

One may say, “What is the necessity of knowing *siddhānta*, what is what? I shall go on chanting the Name and wherever there is any class being given to explain *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* or *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* I shall avoid it. That is all knowledge: *jñāne*

prayāsam udapāśya. “One should totally abandon the unnecessary endeavor of gaining knowledge by discussing empirical philosophical truths.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.3)

But the *jñāna* mentioned in this verse does not describe that sort of knowledge which gives us a real conception of what is the devotee, and what is God. That ‘knowledge’ appears similar to *jñāna* externally, but if it is coming from a genuine source; it is of another type, another substance.

The warning about *jñāna* is given because *anyone* may give *any* kind of interpretation of the revealed scriptures. It is not that we should try to know anything and everything, that whatever anyone will say, we will run there to learn something. But when there is any revelation coming through a real agent who is higher than us, we should be very earnest to hear; that will consolidate our position and help us to go on, to progress in our *sādhana*.

We should not reject as ‘knowledge’ that *siddhānta*: who is Krishna and how He is *Svayam Bhagavān*; who is Nārāyaṇa; where are the twenty-four layers of misconception*; where is Vaikuṇṭha,

* twenty-four elements by which the *baddha-jīva* (conditioned soul) is covered.

Goloka; who is Baladeva; what are all the different *rasas*. If I say, “Oh, no, this is all *jñāna*; dismiss it, and take the Name,” that is foolishness. It should be considered as indolence, or idleness. We should invite that knowledge which will enhance our faith more profoundly. One should welcome such discussions. The Lord Himself says:

**mad cittā mad-gata-prāṇā, bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām nityam, tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca**
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.9)

“The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss always enlightening one another and conversing about Me.”

So, in the association of the *sādhus*, to discuss about Him from different standpoints is not ‘knowledge’ to be abandoned; rather it should be spontaneously and naturally encouraged. It is called *iṣṭha-goṣṭhi*: *goṣṭhi* means “combination” and *iṣṭha*, “desirable company.” In that association we must talk about Him. That is a necessary part of devotion.

And when *bhāva-bhakti* (true devotional feeling) awakens, automatically these things will come:

**kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ viraktir māna-śūnyatā
āśā-bandhaḥ samutkaṇṭhā nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ
āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne prītis tad vasati-sthale
ityādayo 'nubhāvāḥ syur jāta-bhāvāṅkure jane**
(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ 1.3.25-26)

“When the seed of ecstatic emotion for Krishna fructifies in the heart of the devotee, the following symptoms naturally manifest in his behavior: he feels forbearance; he doesn’t like to waste any time; he is detached from the mundane; he is free from pride; he lives in full hope; he is always eager to serve; he always has a taste for chanting the Lord’s Name; he loves to tell of the Divine qualities of the Lord; and he loves the Holy Abode of the Lord. These nine are called *anubhāva*, subordinate signs of ecstatic love.”

If a *sādhū* spontaneously out of his own accord is expressing so many qualities of Krishna, and we go away, losing the benefit of that—it is suicidal! Rather, we need attachment for that, *āsaktiḥ*. “Oh, the good qualities of Krishna are being explained through this agent; I must try to give my ear to that.” Otherwise, why has the ear been created? It has been created only to receive tidings of Him! The ear and the brain have been created for that purpose

only, and both must have their fulfillment in *Krishna-kathā*, *hari-kathā*.

For what purpose is the *Gītā* there, the *Bhāgavata*? What is *māyā*? What is *svarūpa-śakti*? What is real knowledge and what is misconceived, apparent ‘knowledge’? All these things we must know to a certain extent, because to avoid what is undesirable and to accept what is desirable presupposes some sort of knowledge at every step of our progress.

So, *jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā*, to abandon fruitless knowledge-seeking does not mean we must not talk about Krishna amongst ourselves, or that when a *sādhu* is explaining about the Lord’s *nāma*, *rūpa*, *gūṇa*, *līlā* (Names, Forms, Qualities and Pastimes) we should flee from that place! It is not like that. By *jñāna*, in the sense used here, is meant the teachings of the *sāṅkhyā* of the atheist Kapila, the schools of Patañjali (yoga), Jaimini (*karmamīmāṃsa*), the Buddhist school, etc.; and the advice to avoid them is also meant for the beginner, but the preacher will have to come into contact with everything—to smash them.

And also sometimes *jñāna*, knowledge which is necessary, can come from within. There is a stage of

devotion when the necessary knowledge comes from within, automatically. There is a stage of *bhakti* where things occur in this way; it is revelatory, through revelation we can understand. Without any study but being supplied internally by *caitya-guru* (the Lord as our inner guide), sometimes knowledge of devotion may come to us; but generally it will be by hearing from the lips of the devotees.

So the plane, the conception of Krishna in Vṛndāvan, is not lacking in *cit*, in knowledge. *Cit* means *cetana*, that is, consciousness, to know. It is not in want of grandeur and awe, such as is found in Vaikuṇṭha. But when *ānanda* (joy, ecstasy) takes precedence over *cit*, then it is advised, “Don’t endeavor much through knowledge.” There is *sat-cit-ānandam* (eternity, knowledge and bliss) and by *cit*, by the faculty of knowing and understanding, we cannot achieve everything. But everything comes automatically to us by service. In service, there is also knowledge, a department of knowledge, and that develops automatically.

The Sweetest Struggle

Devotee: Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, some time ago I was told that if one is not struggling in Krishna-consciousness it is not a good thing. Should that be the condition of someone who is striving to be Krishna-conscious, that he is struggling?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: When a devotee is trying to conquer his senses; when he is trying to conquer the influences of *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *mātsarya* (lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy), at that time he cannot avoid that struggle. Progress means a struggle, of different kinds, and that happens in the stage of *mādhyaṃya-adhikāra* (the intermediate stage). Generally, that is the time of difficulties. In *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, in the lower stage, one does not concern himself with the stage of his progress, or if he is getting devotion or not; with a peaceful mind he is engaged in *arcana* (deity worship), or whatever may be his service. But when the stage of *mādhyaṃya-adhikāra* begins, real struggle

begins in one's life. He will have to adjust many things, *laukikī vaidhikī vāpi*, not only regarding his devotional life, as advised by the scriptures (*vaidhikī*), but also his social position (*laukikī*), his ordinary dealings, his quarrels, his relationships with society, with education.

Generally the tendency to preach comes in this stage; he wants to extend himself to try to remove the difficulties in the environment and convert it to his purpose. The *mādhyama-adhikārī*'s life is one of struggle. And when he reaches *uttama-adhikāra* (the advanced stage of realization) then he becomes somewhat peaceful in his life. He becomes peaceful; he sees that everywhere things are going well, according to the will of Krishna. He can see the will of Krishna very easily and that His backing is everywhere. So he has not much to do, or struggle for:

**sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah
bhūtāni bhagavatya ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ**

(*Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.45)

“One on the topmost platform of devotional service (*uttama-bhāgavata*) sees within everything the Soul of souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna. He sees everything in rela-

tion to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.”

But when one is living in the plane of ignorance, of misconception, it is necessary for him to find harmony, because he is seeing both things, *māyā* (illusion) and *īśvara* (the presence of Godhead). He wants to install *īśvara*—God, Godliness, God-consciousness—and he tries his hardest to remove misconception. So, *mādhyaṃga-adhikāra* is a period of struggle; it is in the stage of *sādhana-daśā*, the stage of practice.

As a result of *sukṛti*, spiritual fortune due to devotional service rendered knowingly or unknowingly, the soul first acquires *śraddhā*, divine faith, then *sādhū-saṅgha*, one gets the association of real devotees. That is the stage of hearing, *śravaṇa-daśā*; then *varaṇa-daśā* one accepts the principle, the teachings, the path of devotion; and then comes *sādhana-daśā*, the stage of practice, and this stage is full of struggle. Then, in the *āpana-daśā* stage of advanced realization, one feels peaceful in *bhāva-bhakti*, the first opening of the bud of divine love, which in the stage of *prapanna-daśā*, full surrender, becomes *prema-bhakti*, pure love of God.

And again, when he is already in *līlā*, situated in the transcendental pastimes, there is another struggle, but that is of another kind. In Vraja, Vṛndāvan, there is also competition, a struggle. Yaśodā will think, “How to control this naughty child? I fail to do so; I can’t manage Him!” In this way there is struggle, but that is produced by *yoga-māyā*; it is in *prema-bhakti*, *ahi bhāvati premnā*, and it is dynamic in character, not static. Where the plane is dynamic, there must be struggle; in some way or other it is present as competition in the plane of *līlā*.

In the *sakhya-rasa* there is play where there are two parties; on one side is Krishna, on the other, Balarāma, and each wants to be victorious. That is also a struggle, but it is purely of another kind: it is transcendental play.

In *madhura-rasa* also, several parties are there: Rādhārāṇī’s party, Chandrāvalī’s party and so many others; and the servitors of each party have to manage for their own interest, the interest of their mistress.

So the dynamic character means a kind of struggle—a sweet struggle. And in this world there is struggle also, but that is bitter. When we have to struggle to remove the nescience and invite the real science, to go from misunderstanding to pure

THE SWEETEST STRUGGLE

knowledge, in the beginning that struggle is very bitter. It is not only tasteless, but also sometimes painful. But when we enter the higher realm, the struggle becomes more or less sweet.

Līlā must mean a kind of struggle. There are differences, there is conquering, sometimes they are taking the help of deception—one party is deceiving the other—but everything is *āprakṛta*, *prakṛta-vat*, super-transcendental, though it is appearing just like ordinary worldly affairs.

And so also something like immorality is there; *nīti rahita*, the moral laws are being crossed for the satisfaction of Krishna. This is a very high conception: to do anything and everything for Him. The *kāma-rūpa* group are prepared to do anything and everything for Krishna, and for that kind of service they are under no law. Krishna is the origin and master of law, and for Him anything can be done, crossing the existing law of the society:

**ājñāyaivaṁ guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ**
(*Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.11.32)

Those who are ready to cross even the *śāstric* orders, which have been given to us for our own

benefit, for the service of Krishna, are really the highest class of devotee. Law, which has been established by the Lord, is for the ordinary people; however, a special section exists who are ready to cross over that law, only for their exclusive service to the Lord.

**sarva-dharmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ**

(Bhagavad-gītā 18.66)

“Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair.”

Many rules and rites of *varnāśrama-dharma* are given for our benefit, but that is when we are in a lower stage. And in the higher stage, “crossing the law, I shall serve Him”—that is faith!

Suppose it is forbidden to enter the harem of the king; the general law states that it is forbidden to all, and none should transgress that. But if one perceives some urgent service is necessary, if he suspects there is some danger to the king’s life, then perhaps he will cross the law at his own risk and enter the harem, for the benefit of the king, to save him. So there is a particular section of

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devotees who are ready to cross over the law for the Lord's satisfaction.

Those who can know the interest of Krishna are a special group; they are highest among the devotees. Law is meant for the general public, but the sweet will of Krishna is above all law.

So everywhere there is struggle: where there is life, there is struggle. Where there is progress there is struggle; and where there is *līlā*, play, there is struggle, though of a different kind. One is sweet, the other painful. In the lower stage it is a little painful for us to cut the tie of attraction to this world; but when some permanent relationship is established with the upper world, when we have regained that, then to move forward is happy. Since progress means a struggle, that struggle will continue throughout the whole stage of *madhyama-adhikāra*.

Then, in *uttama-adhikāra* (the stage of advanced devotion) externally the life may become peaceful. And again, in the higher stage, in *vilāsa* (pastimes), crossing *śanta-rasa* (passive appreciation and adoration) which is a peaceful stage, again the struggle begins, but that is a sweet struggle. It is arranged not by *mahā-māyā*, but by *yoga-māyā*; it is carrying us to the center. The very land there is of *rasa*; it is

rasamaya, full of sweet taste, the land of nectar, *amṛtamaya-loka*. The difference between the two kinds of struggle is something like the experience of a man working in a hot desert or in a good, healthy atmosphere, or the work of a diseased man and that of a healthy man. It is like that.

There is also an expression: “ignorance is bliss.” One who is in ignorance is living in peace, because he does not know anything; he is unconscious. That is also peaceful; because there is no consciousness, there is no pain. When a patient is in pain the doctor wants to render him unconscious by some injection, and to keep him in that state, because if he awakes he will experience so much pain, acute pain. So, it is necessary that he be placed in another state, unconsciousness.

That unconsciousness is ignorance, and it also has a kind of taste, *tamo-guṇa*. But that is not real peace. There is no feeling, it is zero. But zero is also of an infinite character. Infinity and zero are similar. If we add zero to zero it comes to zero, and if we subtract zero from zero it is also zero; zero divided by zero, again zero. In the same way, if infinity is added to, subtracted from or divided by infinity, it all comes to infinity.

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So, “ignorance is bliss.” If there is no consciousness, there is no question of pain. It is like the existence of a stone. The extreme liberationists reach such a stage as that of a fossil or a stone. They want peace, so they are given a stone-like state of peace:

**ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ
patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad aṅghrayaḥ**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.32)

“O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe penances and austerities to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence remains impure. They simply speculate in various ways and do not seek the means to take shelter of You. Because they have no regard for Your lotus feet, they simply fall down from their position of imagined superiority into material existence again.”

To those who are determined to be ‘one’ with Him, this heavy punishment is at last given, and they are thrown down to take such an existence, that of a stone, and in that way they can live in peace for *lakhs*, *crores*, or millions of years. They can become a

Himalaya, a stone, or a tree. In the *Purāṇas* we find examples of personalities who were cursed to such a fate; and in that state there also is a sort of peace: “ignorance is bliss.”

And those who have gone up to *śanta-rasa*, they also find some peace. But entering *Vaikuṇṭha*, again there is life, movement, and that is for service. In *dāsyā-rasa* there is activity, there is struggle. They are serving the order: “Do this, go here, give this to them.” There is so much movement, and movement means struggle, but that struggle gives peace. That kind of struggle begins in *dāsyā-rasa*. And *śanta-rasa* is the marginal position, and in that position of nonactivity there is also peace, but it is of a lower quality:

**ātmārāmas ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ**
(*Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.10)

“All varieties of *ātmārāmas* (those who take pleasure in the *ātmā* or spiritual self), especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord

possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including even liberated souls.”

That is the marginal position, it is only on the threshold of service proper:

**brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām**

(Bhagavad-gītā 18.54)

“The spotlessly purehearted and self-satisfied soul who has attained to his conscious divine nature neither grieves, nor craves for anything. Seeing all beings equally (in the conception of My supreme energy), he gradually achieves supreme devotion, *prema-bhakti*, unto Me.”

So the marginal position is a position of so-called peace. But we find dynamic peace in struggle, as it appears externally in *dāsya*, *sakhya* and *vātsalya-rasas*, and in *madhura-rasa* and its sub-divisions, *svākīya* and *pārakīya*. Suppose the *madhura-rasa* servitors are to meet with Krishna on a dark night in the forest; on the surface it appears they have to struggle in so many ways. Being given the sign, hearing the particular flute-song of Krishna, they

will have to pass through the jungle to be somewhere, at a particular time. That appears like an ordinary struggle, but it is the sweetest movement.

If 'struggle' means 'movement,' then there, on that plane, where movement is so sweet, struggle is a high thing. But if we think that struggle means something painful, then that struggle must be of the lower plane. Here it is pain-producing; all movement, all endeavor here produces only pain. On the higher plane, there is also movement, but that movement produces sweetness, just as sandalwood when rubbed produces a sweet scent. There is struggle for the purpose of producing sweetness.

So there on the highest level they are also very busily struggling, but that struggle is producing nectar, which they are tasting. To struggle also means to be busy; everyone there is so busy, more than we can ever conceive. They are so active, but their activity is not painful; it produces peace. Here, trying to do away with our unholy attraction to the mundane, we experience a painful struggle. But, as the English poet Shelley wrote: "Our sweetest songs tell of saddest thought." That kind of struggle also gives us peace. When a beginner in devotion starts to become detached from his mundane

environment, to leave it is painful, but he also gets a kind of peace:

**yad anucarita-lilā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ
sakṛd adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ
sapadi gr̥ha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsr̥jya dīnā
bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryāṁ caranti**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.47.18)

A devotee leaves his family, and his family is crying and wailing; he also feels pain because of their anguish. But still he feels a kind of peace of a higher quality, so he can bear the apparent pain of separation from his family life. When he is giving up his home and his family, he feels some painful reaction, but beyond that, in his heart of hearts, he feels some bright prospect. When a man goes to a foreign country to earn some money, he leaves his family and so he feels some pain, but at heart he also realizes that he is going to bring in money which will satisfy him, and enable him to enjoy.

In a similar way, when a person goes to leave this world, his association with misconception, apparently, or outwardly, he feels pain on account of what he is doing, but at heart he gets some hope of a bright future, and with that strength he can go on.

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So, when we have some attraction for this mischievous world, and we try to leave it, at that stage we struggle—a painful struggle. But still, beyond that we see a bright hope of some unparalleled nectarean taste of life.

So struggle does not always mean pain. Up to a certain stage it is painful, and that is due to *māyā*, misconception. And we find also the symptoms of pain in Krishna-*līlā*, but that is not really pain. It is apparent pain; it only seems so. Krishna said that He would come to a particular *kuñja* (forest bower) and Rādhārāṇī with Her party went there, but He did not come. That is called *kalahāntarītā*, mistiming, that is, being let down by the lover or beloved; and there are so many other situations, like *māna* (jealousy), etc. All these things are painful, but as Krishnadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī writes, describing Krishna-*prema*: *bāhye viṣa-jvālā haya, bhitare ānanda-maya*, externally there appears to be great pain, but the heart is overflowing with blissfulness. So, “Our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought.” Externally it is sad, but internally, it is sweet. It is like that.

When we take the Name, in the beginning we think it our duty to count so many rounds, and sometimes it

is painful. But when we get a taste for the Name, then our inner tendency incites us to take the Name more and more—not that as a duty we will somehow have to finish sixteen rounds. But when we acquire *ruci*, inner taste for that particular service, it is happy. Until and unless we acquire that position, there must be some pain.

As long as we do not have that taste and we are doing that service as a duty, we will feel some pain. So *sādhana-daśā* is a little painful, on the whole. Then in *āpana-daśā* it becomes sweet. Underground, of course, sweetness is everywhere; otherwise why should a person be tempted to approach the spiritual path? Only for the hope of sweetness. But still, if we want to see by analysis, then the process is: *śravaṇa-daśā*, hearing; then *varana-daśā*, accepting; then *sādhana-daśā*, practicing. Up to this point it is a little painful. Then *āpana-daśā*, realized devotion; and finally *prapanna-daśā*, full self-surrender. And what pain exists is only apparent; substantially it is all sweet.

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Heart and Halo

The prejudice of our past experience, caught within us in a subtle form, has covered, like dust, the eye of our soul. Our inner vision is densely covered with the dust of many different misconceptions of separate interest, causing us to ignore the universal interest.

This mental cover is made up of the prejudices of local and provincial interest, and it keeps us from seeing reality: *viṣaya-dhūlite kemane se paratattva pāiye dekhite*. How will a person be able to read the universal wave when his mind is fully engrossed with local interest of different kinds? How can one detect the universal interest, the universal wave? Only one who has fully eliminated all kinds of local interest, and is eager to understand the universal wave, can see it clearly.

Aṛtheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāṭ: what is the purpose of the movement of this world? The answer is clear: “For itself.” Reality is for itself; not to satisfy many, but to satisfy One. All the waves are meant to

satisfy that One, and if we can put ourself on that level we can understand the truth; otherwise we are all cheaters.

We are far from the truth when we cannot see that everything, all waves are flowing towards the satisfaction of One, *svayam bhagavān*. We are laboring under a deception; we are deceivers who are not just deceiving ourself but the world also. We are guilty of misunderstanding everything and of carrying that false knowledge to others. Everyone, all the *baddha jīvas*, are more or less cheaters. That is our position and we must be relieved of such misunderstanding, such deception of our own self as well as of the environment, if we are to be placed in our proper position.

Then we can go there and find that universal wave, see it: *darśan*. *Darśan* means ‘to see,’ and how to see, that must be learned. What to see, how to read what is going on, in myself and outside, that is proper understanding and proper education. A proper understanding of one’s own self and also of the environment is proper education. Education must be Vedic. The standard must be drawn from outside this area of *māyā*, misunderstanding; it must be drawn from the perfect realm through *veda*, revealed truth.

We must accept revealed truth and bid farewell to

so-called scientific knowledge and other kinds of perceptions, which are all erroneous, based on false experience and false information. “It belongs to me; it belongs to him; it belongs to them”: this calculation is all false. So we have to be relieved, we have to get wholesale relief from this mania, this misconception. And not only must we get relief from the misconception, from misunderstanding the external waves, but we must attain a positive position, to learn to understand the wave, the vibration of Goloka. Goloka is the most universal, most fundamental plane, and if we can harmonize ourselves with that plane we will be led to Vṛndāvan, or Nabadwīp, and there we shall see things as they are.

Some are more attracted to Krishna-*līlā*, others more towards Nabadwīp-*līlā*, and others have an inclination to be accommodated in both places. In Krishna-*līlā* also some are attracted to Rādhārāṇī’s camp, some to Krishna’s camp and some are holding the middle position. We find this sort of division, and that is necessary for the *līlā*, by the arrangement of *yoga-māyā*. So, in the highest plane, we find two kinds of pastimes, Krishna-*līlā* and Gaura-*līlā*, and they are of the same value. In one there is transaction within a ‘limited’ camp and in the other there is

transaction, along with a tendency towards distribution to others. But they are of the same value. That which is being distributed, and that which is being enjoyed are of one and the same value of ecstasy, sweetness, love and beauty. Some are more attracted to the one *līlā*, some to the other.

Within Gaura-*līlā* also, we find those like Narahari Sarkara and his followers, who were more given to Krishna than Gaurāṅga, and others who are more inclined towards Gaurāṅga than to Krishna. This is all by the grant of the Lord, the Supreme will—His *līlā*.

In Gaura-*līlā*, Gadādhara Paṇḍita is holding the helm, everything belongs to him; still he has to admit he's dispossessed, that Gaurāṅga has taken everything! He is exhaustively dedicated to Gaurāṅga. So Śrīla Kaviṛāja Goswāmī says: *teho lakṣmī-rūpā, tāra sama keha nāi*, that he represents the main potency of Gaurāṅga, and no one is to be compared with him. This is the conclusion of Śrīla Kaviṛāja

*In the *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* purports by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swāmī (*Ādi-līlā*, 10.15) it is stated that Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the fourth branch of the Chaitanya tree, is the combination of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lalitā-sakhī. In the Pañca-Tattva, Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita represents the internal potency or pleasure potency of the Lord. (*continued on next page*)

Goswāmī about Śrī Gadādhara. He is *gaura-prema-maya*, the embodiment of Śrī Gaura’s love.

Gadādhara Dās represents the halo of Rādhārāṇī, but Gadādhara Paṇḍita represents Her mood, Her nature—Her heart.* It is as if Mahāprabhu has taken away Gadādhara Paṇḍita’s soul, and the body is still standing! That is the position of Gadādhara Paṇḍita; he is quite empty, and following Mahāprabhu. He is not full in himself. Something, the most important thing, his heart, has been taken by Mahāprabhu, so he has no other alternative but to follow Him. He is wholly given to Mahāprabhu. Gadādhara Paṇḍita’s position, the part he played, was something like that of Rādhārāṇī, Her heart stolen by Krishna, the empty body still standing. *Rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-subalitām naumi Kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*: He was fully engrossed in the conception of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Gaurāṅga had taken everything from him, so he had no other alternative; he was fully engrossed, captured completely by Him.

In *Ādi-līlā* 10.53, it is explained that Śrīla Gadādhara Dās, the twenty-third branch of the Chaitanya tree, is considered to be a united form of Candrakānti, who is the effulgence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Pūrṇānandā, who is the foremost of Lord Balarāma’s very dear girlfriends. Thus Śrīla Gadādhara Dās was one of the associates of both Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu.

We find his activity throughout his whole life was like this. Of the other devotees, some were ordered to go to Vṛndāvan, and some were allowed to go there, but though Gadādhara Paṇḍita wanted to visit Vṛndāvan with Mahāprabhu Himself, he was denied: “No, you won’t go.” When Jagadānanda Paṇḍita asked to go there, Mahāprabhu, with hesitation, granted him permission, “Yes, go there, but move always under the guidance of Rūpa and Sanātana.” He also gave him some special instructions: “Do this, and this, and don’t do that.” But Gadādhara Paṇḍita was not allowed to go there.

He was the representation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself, yet his peculiar position was such: the Queen of Vṛndāvan, but now transferred to Nabadwīp. His position had become just the opposite; he could not enter Vṛndāvan! He prayed for permission, but Mahāprabhu did not give it. He said, “No, stay and live here.” And he had to do so. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita represents the predominated moiety of the Whole. The Whole consists of predominating and predominated moieties, and he represents the predominated half. He is one half of the Absolute Truth.

In the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose preaching was inspired by Śrī Gadādhara

Paṇḍit and Śrīman Mahāprabhu, we also find all the substance that is present in that plane of vibration. These two personalities, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, are our great gurus, our guides, and by offering our worship to them we can sow the seed of our highest benefit. By the grace of that great Guru-Mahārāj Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda, we have been able to understand this.

And Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, though generally he has his own position, as understood from the consideration of the disciple, Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has seen Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in him: a ‘relative’ vision. He once said that Rādhārāṇī represents the full play of *aṣṭa-nayikā*, the eight characteristics of the heroine; we see that they are all perfectly represented in Her. In other places we may find partial representations of them, but we find them fully manifest only in Her.

He said, “I see my *gurudeva* as Guṇa-mañjarī, and in that *mañjarī* form he has some partial representation of Rādhārāṇī. But if I attempt to look more deeply, I find him identified fully with Her; the eight kinds of qualities displayed in the service of Krishna (*aṣṭa-nāyikā*) are to be found there. If I look at him

with my head a little more erect, I can see that he is one with Rādhārāṇī. *Ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyāt*: know the *Ācārya* as Myself. If I give more attention to this *śāstric* rule and try to search out the meaning, I find that Rādhārāṇī comes to take Her place there, in the position of my *gurudeva*.” In this way he has seen in Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the fullest representation of the cult of Śrī Gaurāṅga.

This realization is expressed in his poem where he says that he saw Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī in Gaura-kiśor Dāsa Bābājī, and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In one place he has written: *gadādhara-din dhari’ pāiyācche gaurahari*, that he has accepted the day of the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to be identified with that of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit. In another place, in his poem at the conclusion of his *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* commentary, he has written: “Here, in Nabadwīp-*dhāma*, the eternal pastimes are going on continuously; only those who have got that deep vision can perceive it.

**gadādhara mitra-vara, śrī svarūpa damodara,
sadā kāla gaura-kṛṣṇa yaje
jagatera dekhi’ kleśa, dhariyā bhikṣuka-veśa,
aharahāḥ kṛṣṇa-nāma bhaje**

**śrī gaura icchāya dui, mahimā ki kava mui,
aprākṛta pāriṣada-kathā
prakaṭa haiyā seve, kṛṣṇa-gaurābhinna-deve,
aprakāśya kathā yathā tathā**

He says, “It is very difficult to perceive the sweet will of Śrī Gaurāṅga, but if we can lift ourselves to that level, we see that Svarūpa Dāmodar Goswāmī and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita are always engaged in their service here in Nabadwīp. Sometimes it is suppressed and sometimes it is appearing on the surface. In that plane all is going on by the sweet will of Śrī Gaurāṅga, without any restriction. But now I find that those two have appeared on the surface as Śrīla Gaura-kīśora Dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. I have seen it with my own eye of divine service but this is not to be advertised, not to be given publicity anywhere and everywhere; people will laugh at it. But this is my heartfelt conclusion.” He has written this in his poem concluding *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*.

So Gadādhara Paṇḍita was identified with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. That was the vision of our Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He could see in them the same identity. He considered *śikṣa-guru paramparā* to be the most substantial

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thing. Eliminating the *sahajiyā-vāda* which gives much importance to the outer cover, try to look within, and see things more deeply. Try to understand the deeper vibrations of the outside environment, and see within yourself also. Dive deep, and you will find the plane of the finest vibration which will carry that news to you, and you will see that truth.

An Invitation to the Reader

Readers interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with the secretary at the addresses listed below.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
Kolerganj, P.O. Nabadwip
District Nadia,
W. Bengal, PIN 741302, India

or

Ananta Printing & Publishing
2900 N. Rodeo Gulch Rd
Soquel, CA 95073

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HEART AND HALO

The Golden Staircase



by

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev Goswami

Volume One

Practical Steps on the Path of Devotional Service-Life
Fulfillment

Compiled from informal discourses given between
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Maharaj
Founder-Acarya of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip,
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Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Foreword

I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to present these gems from the treasurehouse of devotional service to the Supreme Godhead which emanated from the divine lotus mouth of Om Visnupad Paramahansa Sri Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj between 1981 and 1985. Known

affectionately to his disciples simply as Srila Guru Maharaj, His Divine Grace personified the life of eternality, supra-mundane knowledge, and divine happiness, and he planted the nectarseeds of *Krsna-prema* - the supreme goal of life - in the hearts of the fortunate souls. He extinguished the burning fire of separation we felt in our hearts following the disappearance from this world of the great ambassador of Krsna Consciousness to the West, His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, simultaneously fulfilling our cherished desires for spiritual nourishment and inspiring within us an ever-greater thirst for spiritual perfection.

The topics presented here have been selected to illustrate the proper and practical way for a sincere *sadhaka* (aspirant) to progress on the path of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, especially in His form as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Guru Maharaj repeatedly emphasized that the path should be followed carefully, step by step, without omitting anything, lest one fall into the traps of either *sahajiyaism* (imitationism) or *mayavada* (impersonalism). He taught that by always keeping *sadhu sanga* (association of good devotees) - either personally or through their *siksa* (instructions), by chanting the Holy Names of the Lord with sincerity and faith, and by rendering loving service to Sri Guru and the Vaisnavas, one could steadily progress on the path back to Godhead.

This progress continues and accelerates by our acceptance of ever-higher conceptions and elimination of lower ones, and such progress is infinite, going beyond the *tatastha* region of *viraja* (*nirvana*), the goal of the Buddhists - and the *brahmajyoti* the goal of the yogis - and onward through Siva-loka to the spiritual abodes of Vaikuntha, Ayodhya, Dvaraka, Mathura, and finally Goloka Vrndavana. There the Supreme is worshiped as Sri Sri Radha-Govinda in Vraja-Dhama or as Their combined form as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Nabadwip-Dhama, and it is by Their own grace that one may ultimately attain to the inconceivably high position of service to the servants of the servants of Srimati Radharani Herself, which is the ultimate goal of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

Preliminary instructions regarding the process for **controlling** the mind and senses and the principles of devotional behavior have been given in books such as *Sri Upadesamrta* by Srila Rupa Goswami, and carefully following this advice in a properly-adjusted way will ensure genuine progress on the path of *bhakti*. Srila Sridhar Maharaj spoke at length on all these top-

ics, but he always emphasized that it is one's sincere internal hankering for the Lord's service and the genuine feeling of one's own incapacity which are the real keys to realizing *saranagati*, the pure soul's surrender.

Ultimately, when genuine divine love awakens within the soul, that love will itself direct the soul to his or her best serving location within a particular serving group (*svarupena-vyavasthitih*) imbued with one of the predominant serving mellows of either servitorship (*dasya*), friendship (*sakhya*), guardianship (*vatsalya*), or the all-inclusive mellow of amorous love (*madhurya-rasa*). Srila Guru Maharaj explained that within these *rasas* there are "divisions and subdivisions," heads of groups and their followers, right-wing and left-wing parties - so much gradation, all of which is ultimately arranged by the Supreme Lord's own Yogamaya potency to provide a dynamic interplay of 'variety-in-oneness' by which the Lord's pastimes (*lila*) are supported, nurtured, and enhanced.

The Infinite is not static (*nirvisesa*) but dynamic, and that dynamism generates sweetness in service through both union and separation. Srila Sridhar Maharaj's explanations of these finer points and his revelations of the inner meaning of the *slokas* of *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam* and the Gayatri and other *mantras* give such new dimensions of depth to one's consciousness and nourishment to one's devotional creeper (*bhakti-lata*) that they are impossible for the truly fortunate souls to ignore.

The devotees who were introduced to the teachings of pure devotional theism by the unparalleled preceptor and *saktyavesa avatar* Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada will find in this book a very sweet and glorious illumination of his teachings. The "matchless gift" of Krsna consciousness which Srila Prabhupada gave to the West must be carefully accepted in the heat and preserved and nurtured there. That is only possible by the supporting strength of the devotional illumination given by great beacon lights of the spiritual world such as Srila Sridhar Maharaj, whom Srila Prabhupada loved and revered as his own *siksa-guru* in spiritual matters. The fortunate and awakened soul must see the value of this spiritual interchange as a cause of growth if he is to really progress towards the all-harmonizing Truth beyond all material sectarian concerns.

It is also my heartfelt feeling that the legacy of both Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhar Maharaj is being carefully preserved, practiced, and preached by Srila Guru Maharaj's

successor Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj, and that in the unbearable fire of separation from those two great souls, our hearts may be given hope once again.

The Lord mercifully comes as the *acarya* to deliver Himself to the souls of this world. All glories to Bhagavan Sri Krsna and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! I offer my sincere *dandavat pranams* to all the holy Vaisnavas through whom we may have the benediction of divine faith's revelation.

Humbly,
Swami B.S. Tridandi

Disappearance day of Srila Srinivas Acarya, November 21, 1993

Chapter One

The Conscious Sky

The original substance is spirit, is soul, is consciousness, and matter forms a part of that conscious portion, that conscious substance. It is not that matter has produced consciousness, but it is in one part of consciousness. Consciousness is infinite, and everything is in that ocean. Somewhere there is ice, somewhere moss, somewhere iron - they are all in that ocean, these different conceptions. But consciousness is all-in-all, and everything has its shelter there. Just as you find patches of clouds in the sky, or so many specks of dust in the air, so the material conception is there in the sky of consciousness. It is a sky - the conscious sky - and somewhere there are patches of clouds or dust. You can't see the air, but the dust is in the air! You can't see the sky - the actual ether - but the clouds are in the sky! So the background is consciousness, and therein we find somewhere is dust, somewhere is a cloud.

Darwin and others have proposed that consciousness was originally generated from material elements, but my response to that is, "Fossil fatherism? Crush it, and establish a spiritual infinite!" It is all spiritual: the "fossil conception" is a part of so many conceptions in the spiritual plane. Consciousness is in the background and there are developed positions, gradations, within consciousness: *bhur*, *bhuvar*, *svar*, *maha*, *jana*, *tapa*, *satya*,

brahmaloka - and when service is added, it is enhanced. A sweet structure begins from the point when service is added to consciousness. Service can construct a beautiful capital, a beautiful country. It is there, and you have only to feel it, enter, and take up your appointed service. You will think, "This is my home! This appointment feels very friendly to me. Now I have come home." This is the innate capacity or substance, innate nature - *svarupa* - which is presently covered by ignorance, by misconception.

Madness And Malengagement

A madman, leaving his own sweet home, wanders in the street and thinks that it is imperative for him to collect pieces of paper or cloth, as if that were his 'business'. It is absurd. His brain is focused in such a direction that he thinks, "It is my duty to collect these pieces of paper and pebbles." In this way he is going on, but what is the real, innate wealth of his heart? If he could only remember his home: his father, mother, other family members - his sweet, sweet home. But due to his madness, his consciousness is forcibly focused on some malengagement. Similarly, the position of so many persons - including philosophers, scientists, political leaders, and many more - is that their consciousness is focused toward the external direction, and there they are all busy 'collecting'. Some are collecting more pebbles, some more pieces of cloth or pieces of paper, but in this way they are going on. Swami Maharaj (Srla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada) said that, "The United Nations, UNESCO - all such world committees and barking dogs are both equal. Actually they are more dangerous because they are capturing the more intellectually-minded people, but they are of the same value. They are casting their own attention toward the material substance based on illusion and misconception, and posing in a very grand way, they are giving so much importance to that thing just as many dogs also bark to have possession of a particular thing. It is not more than that." With great courage Swami Maharaj boldly refuted them, and this sort of conception is leading us to our higher prospect.

Seeing Beyond The Perception Of The Senses

Devotee: Now the weather is starting to become hot!

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: We should not pay much attention to that. It will come and go, come and go.

*matra-sparsas tu kaunteya
sitosna-sukha-duhkha-dah
agamapayino 'nityas
tams titiksasva bharata
(Bg. 2.14)*

"O son of Kunti, only the engagement of the senses with their objects gives rise to the sensations of cold, heat, pleasure, and pain. But these effects are temporary; they come and go. Therefore, O Bharata, you are to endure them."

Regarding this verse of the *Bhagavad-gita*, one scholar, a Mr. Chatterjee, has explained this Sanskrit word *matra* to mean "what is measured by our senses, the result of our senses' measurement." In this way, the word *matra* comes near to the word 'matter,' it comes to mean matter or the world of material comfort. There are so many different views of the world. An ordinary man's estimation of the world and a scientist's estimation are different. An astronomer's estimation of the world is of another type, the politician's view is something else, the socialist's, the humanist's, the humanitarian's views - they are all different. But if we can come to the plane of the soul - even the lowest conception of what is the real inner self - that will help us, and there will be a revolutionary change in our lives. All the things of this world will then seem to be trash, of no value, empty.

Presently the soul is captivated by a great many things which produce mean consciousness, but the solution is given in *Bhagavad-gita*, how we can achieve control of our senses and gain control over the impulses of our mind. It is recommended there that step by step we try to rise up to the soul's plane, eliminating the lower planes: first the field of experience of the senses; then the mental field, the impulse which works through the senses; then the intellect, that which drives the mental tendency - and crossing those, that we try to find that point of light which is the soul. If in any way, by the soul's introspection you can perceive the soul, then whatever value you had assigned

to this whole material manifestation will turn into ashes. You will see, "My real identification is here within! It is so wonderful, and valuable, and independent of all the hallucinations I was suffering from by coming in contact with the external world. The inner domain is so high, and my consciousness was focused so low, on such nasty things." That is the highest way to control one's senses, one's charm for the world, for wealth, women, and popularity.

The Astonishing Soul

Kanak, kamini, and pratistha - collection of energy for sense-pleasure, sense-pleasure, and popularity-seeking: these three things try to keep us down from consciousness of the self. So rise up step by step: from the world to the senses...to the mind, receiver of the sense-experience...to the guide of the sense-experience...and finally to the light which makes all these possible. That point of light is near and dear, and the others are like foreign agents who have come to capture me and focus me, that light, towards the rubbish and dung-like things of this world. If after having been focused here through our senses we become more attentive and see some nasty things, then some realization will come into our mind causing us to feel that such things are actually foreign to our real self, and only by connecting with them through our senses do we feel disturbed. On the whole it is like that. Then, upon rising up from the sense-plane you will find that there is another wonderful land of experience; the *atma* is such a wonderful thing.

*ascaryavat pasyati kascid enam
ascaryavad vadati tathaiva canyah
ascaryavac cainam anyah srnoti
srutvapy enam veda na caiva kascit
(Bg. 2.29)*

"Some see the soul as astonishing, some describe him as astonishing, and some hear of him as astonishing; while others, even after hearing about him, cannot understand him at all."

Even after giving attention to all these things, still it is very difficult to understand the soul properly. But our inner wealth is so valuable, and our present engagement is so nasty. On the whole, we must honestly admit that our condition is nasty. Our

true selves are good, but our present situation is very nasty. But somehow we must get out of the intoxication of these nasty things, because to hanker after and obtain and mix closely with and relish these nasty things is improper for the soul. Whereas upon rising up to the Supersoul-area, we find that the greatest fulfillment of our life is in that soil. Whatever we presently consider to be "concrete things", to be real, are nasty. We are told to "be realistic", but that is to become 'unrealistic'!

Withdraw From Knowledge

Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.1.2) says, *vedyam vastavam atra vastu sivatam tapa-trayonmulanam*: Reality is *vastavam vastu*, the real substance above all of the unreal, imaginary things of this world. All the accumulated knowledge in relation to this world is a wholesale concoction. It is the result of misreading the environment and is full of misinterpretation and misconception. The whole thing - the vocabulary, the history, the epics, the whole thing, whatever has been collected - is all a misrepresentation of the truth, and we are in the midst of that. We are captivated within that, but at the same time we have the capacity to enter the plane of real life because we are a particle of that higher world. So we must go back to God, back to home.

Home is there. What charm can there be for us here where there is death, and then birth again, and where everything is stale and produces dissipation and suffering? Mortality, suffering, and death - and even then it is not finished, but we must continuously come here again and again and follow the same course of life!

So try to obtain real relief, and help others also to take up their proper life away from this undesirable atmosphere. We must go "back to Godhead", where everything is wonderful. What is that Godhead? Our home is there! - Our home, sweet, sweet home. We are a child of that soil, and the scriptures urge us: "You have got this human life, this chance, so always try, by all means - by thinking, by meditation, by talking, by hearing - to cultivate your own true identity, your noble identity, in your homeland where the soul lives. Always, always, always engage yourself in that. Try to avoid this plane of misconception by any means and enter into that land."

Going back to Godhead means going back to our own soil, our real home. What is night to us now - that we will make our

day! Where there is presently darkness to us - we are to find light there; and what is so apparently plain and expressively clear - that must be neglected. In our earnest calculation the entire world of exploitation and self-interest should be kicked into the darkness, and we should withdraw wholesale from that 'knowledge'. And what is dark to us now we should try to make light by always giving our attention, thoughtful consideration, and adherence to achieving residence in the higher soil, the land of wonders where everything is wonderful.

Shadow, Substance, and Sound

The spiritual plane is substantial. And why are things as they are here? This is the reflection of that plane, a perverted reflection. So that nature is also to be found here, but the substance is there, and this is like a shadow. The shadow is unsubstantial, without real existence 'the substance is itself real existence. The difference is great. The *Upanisads* say:

yasmin vijñate sarvam evam vijñatam bhavati
yasmin prapte sarvam idam praptam bhavati

"By knowing That (spiritual domain), everything is known; by attaining That, everything is attained."

We have been told this in a general way, but that does not mean that with this consciousness you will arrive in that plane and everything will then be in your fist. No; more and more you will continue to have an intense hankering to approach, to advance - and the more satisfaction you get, the more earnestness you will have to go forward, to go on. It is not to be finished. Here also in the shadow we do not find any 'finish', and this is the reflection, so it is a dynamic affair. "Go onward, go onward - more." But substance and shadow - that is the difference. That world cannot be eliminated. It is constant, eternal. There the soul is finding real substance, but still he is not satisfied: "I want more." That is the nature of real substance, and sound will reveal it.

Here, sound is the most subtle thing, but there it is just the opposite; there, sound is a 'gross' thing. That is what reflection means, and it is perverted. So the right hand in the reflection is the left hand, and in the reflection of a tree, the top of the tree is

in the bottom position. So in the plane of substance, sound is the most concrete thing. The subtlest plane here - the nearest, innermost plane, that of sound - can cross over the many coverings of this world and come in connection with the nature of that existence, where the cover of that world is comprised of sound. So through sound, we can go inside there.

Sri Jiva Goswami says,

*prathamam namnah sravanam
antahkarana-suddhy-artham apeksyam
suddhe cantahkarane rupasravanena
tad udaya-yogyata bhavati:
samyag udite ca rupe gunanam sphuranam sampadyate:
tatas thesu nama-rupa-guna-sphuritesv eva lilanam sphuranam
bhavatity abhipretya sadhana-kramo likhitah:
evam kirtana-smaranayos ca jneyam
(Bhakti Sandarbha, Paragraph 256)*

First listen to the Holy Name, and cultivate that sound divine. Then gradually, if we do it properly, we can find that next there is color and figure - not drawn from this mundane world, but that sound has got its own figure and color and will show itself.

Although we are presently far away from our original consciousness, when our mind is purified and we are free from worldly, mundane thinking, then like lightning that Divine Name will reveal itself to us, producing some color and figure within us, within our conception - and that form will be of another type, not like the color and figure of this world.

From the relativity of that sound will first come the color and figure, and next the quality. In this way, one will spring from the other: such sound must have such color and figure, and such figure automatically must have such quality. It will come forth from within.

Then again, that quality is classified according to different intensities relative to the paraphernalia. From the quality, after the quality will come the association. And it will all come from the other plane and enter within the soul's conception. Then, from the Name, Form, Quality, and Associates will come their mutual transactions, the interaction between all these things, the waves and vibrations of different types - that is pastimes, *Lila*.

And then the soul will find that his purest, finest ego, who he really is, also has a part to play in such a position. He will see

his own soul in a particular place, a particular location there. He will see, "In this exact spot, I am there; my self is there." In this way, the infinite wave will come.

Chapter Two

The Eye to see Sri Guru

Devotee: We are often told, regarding the Guru and the *sisya* (disciple), that if the *sisya* is not successful in becoming a completely pure devotee in this life, then the Guru will return by taking another birth. But does the Guru *personally* take another birth?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: The relationship must continue. Whether that particular soul who was delegated as the Guru in the previous life will personally come - whether he will again be sent or not - there is no guarantee; but in any case the disciple will maintain his awareness of that higher connection. He will recognize it just as it was in former stages, although it may be in a different form. It will not be unknown to him. And he will also perceive that "I am not unknown to my master." But the Guru's external form may not be similar.

Suppose a disciple takes his next birth in a particular country or a particular sect. The Guru may also appear in a particular country or a particular sect, but that the disciple will again come exactly in the same position as before - that may not be. And that the Guru will also come as he did previously, in that fixed position - that also may not be. But they *will* be able to recognize one another. The Guru will know about the disciple's previous life, and the disciple will also think, "He knows everything about me." With such broadness of vision we are to look at our Guru Maharaj. So *guru-tattva* means it is *saksadd haritvena*: not only the person, but the person plus something more. And that arrangement is made by the Lord or His *svarupa-sakti*. But whatever the external circumstance, there will be no disturbance regarding the path for the disciple.

Devotee: I don't know if this is correct, but I have heard it said that if the disciple is not spiritually successful, then the Guru may not return back to Godhead but may remain in this *brahmanda* (universe). He may not return to Krsna until the disciple can also go.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: If that is the case, then no Guru can ever return to Krsna at any time, because the continuation of the disciples will go on, so he will have no final result at any time in his life. But we cannot think that it is so. Sometimes he may be deputed himself, or others also may be deputed in that case. But the inner instruction and inner feeling and paraphernalia will be such that in any case the disciples will have no trouble. The officer may change, but the function will go on smoothly. So the Guru may return - the *nama-guru*, *mantra-guru*, *sannyasa-guru* - they are all Gurus, but we must recognize something similar in them, and hence we are given the statement about the ontological aspect of Guru: *saksadd haritvena samasta*- "I Myself appear as the Guru, who is simultaneously and inconceivably one with and different from Myself."

Krsna says, *acaryam mam vijaniyat*: "You should look there for Me. I am there. I am your Guru. With My different types of *sakti*, by the *jivas*' recruitment or by any other way, it is My function to take you up to a different place. In every case I am there. I am there in My *Madhura-rasa sakti*, or *Sakhya-rasa sakti*, My *Vatsalya-rasa sakti*, *Dasya-rasa sakti*, and in a general way also." Sometimes one may be recruited by the Ramanuja *Sampradaya* and then be converted to join the Krsna *Sampradaya*, the Gaudiya *Sampradaya*. That is also possible. We are to remember the eternal link.

Divine Unfoldment

Devotee: So if someone says that the Guru himself will personally come back - that is a mundane conception, a wrong conception?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Yes. The main thread is there, but it will not always appear in the same form. Although to the beginners one may say that "he will come back," ultimately we find that a disciple may even be transferred into another section, and then another section, so that he may gradually reach his destination. According to the unfolding of his inner necessity, the departmental change may occur. And he will always perceive his own Guru in newer and newer ways. At first sight he perceived his Guru to be of one type; then again with progress he will see the same Guru in another way, and thereafter another new characteristic will be found in his Gurudeva. The disciple will

feel, "I could not detect so much in my Guru in the beginning. I saw him in one particular way, but now I find that he is something more, and then he is still more." In this way there is divine unfoldment.

In this world there is unfoldment, and in the higher domain also there is unfoldment. So *avesa*, the Guru is something like *saktyavesa*. There is the "chance contingency" *saktyavesa* who is deputed according to a particular time, place, or circumstance, and there is also the permanent *saktyavesa*; but in all cases, according to the necessity of the situation and by the divine dispensation of the Lord, the disciple will be connected, and he won't feel any distrust, it is the presence within. He will quench the thirst for the full progress of his heart, there will be divine unfoldment within his heart, and again he will begin a new thirst. And that new thirst will be quenched by whom? His Guru. It will be quenched by his Guru and he won't have any feeling of unscrupulousness or anything else. As his internal thirst is being satisfied, he will feel, "There is my Gurudeva."

Wherever there is unfoldment - gradual unfoldment and full attention given to that - then we can understand that from the upper side there is Guru. Gurudeva is my guide; and as I progress, guidance of different types will be necessary for me. Always new guidance, and my progress will take me into different places, and there a new type of guidance, a new life, will again come. In this way dynamic life is going on, and the main thread is there: *raso vai sah* - the pure *rasa*, pure ecstasy. And my inner heart will approve: "Yes, I want this. This is my fate; this is my fortune." Otherwise, if any *madhyama-adhikari* is appointed as Guru and has so many disciples, and if he is to come back again and again, then he could never enter into *nitya-lila*. But that cannot be so. In any case, whoever is connected with a genuine Guru will be satisfied, because the Lord is present there.

So *acaryam mam vijaniyat* is not in name only; it has a very specific purpose:

*acaryam mam vijaniyan, navamanyeta karhicit
na martya buddhyasuyeta, sarva deva-mayo guruh*
(Bha: 11.17.27)

Krsna says, "Don't try to limit the *Acarya*! You may have come up to a high position, but will you then think that you have surpassed that *Acarya* through whom you received your initial

instruction in spiritual life? No, *navamanyeta* don't think that there is less in him, don't consider him to be of lower position. *Navamanyeta* - I Myself was there! I was there in your primary teacher, in your 'college-level' teacher, and I am there in your 'post-graduate professor' also! So *navamanyeta*, don't look at only the outside. I Myself am your guide in different forms. It is I."

Sarva deva-mayo guruh: the *Acarya* has got more spacious characteristics than that of the ordinary, general Vaisnava. Krsna says, "For you, I am there. And *mayanukulena nabhasvateritam* - I am backing so many *Acaryas*. There are so many *Acaryas*, and I am working through them. The *Acaryas* are like helmsmen in so many different boats, and I am the favorable wind helping those boats to make progress. So don't limit the *Acarya* - try to see him on the same level as Me."

Universal Mind, Absolute Backing

Devotee: In his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4.12.33, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada wrote something in connection with the story of Dhruva Maharaj. He said that Dhruva Maharaj was a very powerful devotee and could take his mother back to Godhead, and then he wrote, "If one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Maharaj, then he can take me back to Godhead." This statement seems very mysterious.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Dhruva's mother was his Guru, his *vartma-pradarsaka-guru*, his first guide, just as Cintamani was in the case of Bilvamangala Thakura. Through Cintamani, that Krsna-function as *Acarya* came as *vartma-pradarsaka*, and in a similar way Dhruva was initially inspired by his mother; his first spiritual instruction was from her. Next he received guidance from Narada, and then by dint of his *bhajan* he attained the next stage, and then again he went further. But his *vartma-pradarsaka-guru* was his mother, and yet she was to be apparently left behind.

The *vartma-pradarsaka-guru* is the one who first gets the *kanistha-adhikari bhakta* started on the progressive spiritual path. But we have to consider the past lives of Dhruva and his mother. In his past life Dhruva had made more progress, but then in that life it was arranged by the Lord that his mother would get him started in the proper direction, and thereafter he adopted the

path of *bhajan*. Both of them had previous lives of progress in the proper direction, but sometimes a primary teacher may have a student who is an extraordinary scholar.

In my school days, I remember there was a case we had to read about in history class in connection with the famous statesman Edmund Burke and the taxation laws passed by Parliament at the time of the American Revolutionary War. It happened that his service was so much appreciated that he had the title of 'lord' conferred upon him, and to make him a lord, his father and then his grandfather were also awarded the title of 'lord.' The title of 'lord' comes from up to down, but in that case, it went from down to up! The grandson was first given the recognition of lord, and then the father, and then the grandfather. The grandson received the title first by dint of his capacity. So it may be that because of previous arrangements, a less qualified person may give a push to a more qualified person in the beginning, and in return the more qualified person may later help him. Thus the Guru will instruct God-consciousness to different people in different places. From different directions one may receive help.

Devotee: And when Srila Narottama das Thakura says, "*Cakhu-dana dilo yei, janme janme prabhu sei* (He who has given me the gift of transcendental vision is my lord, birth after birth)" - ?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Whenever there is any difference in the spiritual advice we may receive from different directions, we are to see the common thread. However, the absolute position will warrant a higher consideration than the relative one. Both the absolute and relative considerations must continue, because without that, no progress is possible. Absolute and relative - both considerations must go side by side. But the absolute has the primary position, and the relative, the temporary, shall be evaluated according to what is suitable to the particular time, place, person, and purpose. So in this, the longest journey of our lives, and for our greatest interest, we are given the truth, the connection of the Absolute, always - and there is unity.

Even in the case of an ordinary Guru of lower type, the *sastra* has also maintained that link: *paroksa-vada vedo 'yam*. If a certain standard of self-discipline such as no meat or fish-eating, etc. is demanded of those who are very much conditioned by lower propensities, then they won't come into the fold; but the policy is that they must come, so some allowances are given. For a particular type of disciple there will be a

corresponding Guru and a similar *sastra*, but it is with the hope that they will take up the path of progress. The *sastras* are so generous in going to the lowest section, and the corresponding Guru will also be there. Similar Guru, similar *sastra*, and similar *sadhu* - all are extended to the lowest plane to elevate the conditioned souls by a gradual process.

And the *sastra* has got in its mind that in this gradual process some provision must be given, otherwise a great many will give it up. That universal mind is there, and that sort of consciousness is in the minds of the *rsis* who have prepared those *sastras*, and in the corresponding Gurus as well. The *sadhhus* and *sastras* are going to the extremity of the sinful area, because otherwise there would be no chance for anyone to rise from that level. But generally the disciples, the *sadhakas*, will take up spiritual practices from their own plane - their own level of realization or inner evolution - they'll go up from there, and along the way also they will find the appropriate Guru and *sastra*.

It is just like this: our sight is within a particular spectrum - we can't see very much intense light, nor very meager light either. The same with sound; we can't hear very high frequency sound, nor very low. So we are working in the relative position. But we are told to stick to the absolute thread continually in order to properly understand the whole. Therefore don't undermine the *Acarya*. Although you may be seeing some ordinary characteristics there - eating, sleeping - don't undermine him! Otherwise you'll be the loser. Just as in the Ganges water, we are not to take notice of the stones, the wood, the foam; Ganges water can purify everything. What is it that can purify? Its water aspect? No. There is another aspect, and if that is analyzed, ultimately we will see the order of the Lord: it is His order that Ganges water will purify. So the purifying power comes from His will; His will is backing that. We shall try to find the absolute backing everywhere; and if we can't sacrifice the relative position, then we'll have to go to the plane of *nirvisesa* (the undifferentiated aspect of the absolute in which service is absent).

There is a complete system which comprises Krsna and His Associates of different types, and we want to have our connection with both *Sakti* (the Potency) and *Saktiman* (the Possessor of Potency). We can never sacrifice either of Them, especially *Sakti*. For example, when Raghunatha Das Goswami says, "I do not want Krsna if Radharani is not there; rather, I

want Radharani," then *who is Radharani?* Who is She? She is the one who is full of Krsna to the greatest degree, so Das Goswami says, "I want Radharani." Krsna is there, and in different relative positions He comes to each particular person as sweet, sweeter, sweetest. In this way, we find such relativity.

Harmonizing Instructions Of The Upper House

Devotee: It is said there are five principles for *Bhakti* - associating with devotees, chanting *Harinama*, hearing *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, worshiping Tulasi, and residing in the holy *Dhama*. In regard to residing in the *Dhama*, is that for the general devotees, or just especially fortunate or more advanced devotees?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Generally it means for *madhyama-adhikari* devotees, those who can discriminate. *Kanistha-adhikaris* cannot differentiate between the various positions of different personalities - who is advanced, who is neutral, or who is envious. But "religion means proper adjustment" - our Guru Maharaj used to say this now and then, and that "proper adjustment" requires *sambandha-jnana*, knowing what is what. Then one's service will come accordingly, and one's necessity, one's destination, will be established from that. Sanatana Goswami is the *Acarya* of *sambandha-jnana*. "Who am I? Where am I? What am I?" All these questions - "Why am I troubled? What is the real purpose of my life?" - are answered when there is proper adjustment with the Absolute and the relative. Nothing can be sacrificed.

And one thing we must always keep in mind is that we can't investigate all of the subtle, higher knowledge as a subjective researcher. Rather, according to the degree of our *saranagati*, our surrender, the Truth will come down to make Himself known to us. We must always remember this, otherwise some spirit of imitation will be created in us. Knowledge of the higher domain is not under the jurisdiction of the intellect, and to think so is very dangerous. Intellectualism is dangerous; it will cause us to think that we have "caught the Infinite". It will be negligence to the infinite characteristic, the infinite aspect of the Lord. He is *Adhoksaja*, beyond the grasp of academic research.

One time I asked Prabhupada (Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura), "Srila Rupa Goswami gives his explanation

of Lord Balarama's *Rasa-lila* in one way and Srila Sanatana Goswami gives his explanation in another way, but both get their instruction from Mahaprabhu, so why is there this difference?" My Guru Maharaj said, "Why has Krsna been called *Adhoksaja*? *Adhoksaja* cannot be harmonized within our intellect. It is *acintya-bheda-bheda*, inconceivably and simultaneously one and different. Both explanations may be true simultaneously. It is *acintya*, inconceivable. The *Acaryas* have explained that when Baladeva is performing *Rasa-lila*, He is actually conducting *Rasa* for Krsna in His heart. Externally Baladeva is seen to be participating in Pastimes with the *Gopis* directly, but internally He is making Krsna enjoy that *Rasa*. Baladeva is not the enjoyer Himself." These are the harmonizing instructions of the upper house, and in this way we shall harmonize things.

Full Satisfaction, Absolute Realization

Devotee: Maharaj, the different animals, insects, and trees in the *Dhama* - how shall we view them?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: They are wholesale *cinmaya*. They are not under bondage, but are posing in different ways; there are different types of service, and they have their fullest satisfaction in their own plane of service. They imbibe the most blissful internal feeling thereby, and do not want any other. In their relative position, they are fully satisfied there. In other *rasas* also, *Sakhya* or *Vatsalya* - *yanra yei rasa, sei sarvottama*: each person feels, "What I have is the best. I have got the best position and I do not care to go to any other." *Santa-rasa* is also like that: the trees and creepers, the sands, and so many animals and birds are there, but still there is a qualitative difference between them. Uddhava, the highest devotee in Dwaraka, aspires to take birth as a creeper in Vrndavana. So there are qualitative differences within *santa-rasa*. In Dwaraka also there is *santa-rasa*; but he who has the highest type of *sakhya-rasa* in Dwaraka aspires after the *santa-rasa* service in Vrndavana once he has gotten a little peep into the atmosphere of the type of service rendered there. This shows that even the highest thing in a particular place still has its relative position in the absolute consideration. Though the relative position is satisfied there, the absolute always surpasses

it; otherwise the unity, the connection with the whole, would ultimately be dislocated and disorganized.

So the absolute consideration is possible from any position. Although all servitors are fully satisfied where they are, in their own position, they realize the supremacy of Vrndavana. *Tatastha-vicara* (impartial consideration) is always there, and between the relative and the absolute, the absolute always takes the upper hand. *Sarva-dharman parityajya*: The absolute or 'revolutionary' consideration is firmly established above the relative or 'constitutional' one when Sri Krsna says in *Bhagavad-gita* (18.66), "Just abandon all *dharma*s, all considerations of social and religious duties - even the ones that I Myself have established in the various scriptures and described here in My previous instructions to you - and just surrender wholeheartedly to Me."

Everywhere, the absolute consideration prevails. In connection with Guru, Narottama das Thakura has his Gurudeva Lokanatha, but still he aspires: "When will the day come when Lokanatha will take me by my hand and guide me to Srila Rupa Goswami? When will he surrender me to Srila Rupa Goswami and give me some engagement there in that camp?" In this high type of expression, the absolute consideration is also there underground.

Chapter Three

Seeing with the Eye of the Soul

Devotee: Guru Maharaj, I have one question about Tulasidevi. The devotees here at this math say that even if their *japa-mala* is not made from real Tulasi, when you chant on their beads at the time of their initiation, you turn those beads into Tulasi-*mala*. So, is it important to have *japa-mala* made of Tulasi, or not?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: There is a higher spiritual consideration.

*yasyatma-buddhih kunape tri-dhatuke
sva-dhih kalatradisu bhauma ijjadhih*

There is *bhauma* (mundane), and there is *ijjadhih* (that which we consider worshipable). What I really want to revere - if

I consider that to be of mundane nature, that will be an offense. It is an offense. *Arcye visnau sila-dhih*: If I think that what I am to worship is simply stone; or *gurusu nara-matih* - if I consider Gurudeva to be an ordinary man; or *vaisnave jati-buddhir* - if I see a Vaisnava as a *brahmana*, a *sudra*, etc.; or *visnor na vaisnavanam kali-mala-mathane pada-tirthe 'mbu-buddhih* - if we think that the water that washes the lotus feet of Lord Visnu or the Vaisnava, *caranamrta*, is just plain water; or *visnau sarvesvarese tad-itara-sama-dhi* - if we think that the Master of all, the Lord of all, Visnu, is merely one of many gods; then *yasya va naraki sah* - we shall have to go straight to hell. This is stated in the *Padma Purana*.

And in *Srimad-Bhagagatam*, we find *yasyatma buddhih kunape tri-dhatuke*: That soul who identifies himself with the body, or thinks that "The wife and children are my own," or who thinks that "Our worshipful object is something material," or who thinks that "It is the material element of water at these pilgrimage sites which is purifying," then *sa eva gokharah* - he may be considered to be a donkey which can be used to carry the food of the cows! *Khara* means the donkey which carries a burden, so *gokhara* means that beast of burden which cannot even be utilized for the purposes of the human section, but only for the beasts; a very low, beast-conception. So we are to remove ourselves from the platform of identifying the spiritual with the material. The spiritual is necessary, not the material, and it is imperative that we understand the real position.

Ravana Deceived

Once, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was the guest of a devotee of the primary class belonging to the Ramanuja school who was very much shocked to hear about the abduction of Sitadevi by Ravana. At that time the devotee managed to give some food to the Lord, but he himself was observing fasting and was always wailing and lamenting. Mahaprabhu asked, "Why are you not taking anything to eat?" He replied, "I want to die. I heard that my beloved Mother Janaki, Sitadevi, was abducted by a demon! If I have to hear that - if that should even enter my ear, then I want to die; I don't want to live any longer."

Then Mahaprabhu consoled him: "No, no, don't think like that. Sitadevi is Laksmidevi herself. She is *cinmaya*,

consciousness personified, not having a body composed of any material elements. Sitadevi's body is not made of flesh and blood, so what to speak of forcibly carrying her away, Ravana could not possibly touch her, he cannot even *see* her. Sitadevi's form is composed of such substance that Ravana can neither see nor touch her! This is the fact. So don't disturb your mind. This is the truth, I say, so you take *prasadam*." Then that devotee took *prasadam*.

Later Mahaprabhu went further south, and in one place He found that the devotees there were reading the *Kurma Purana*, wherein it is mentioned that when Ravana came to steal away Sita, she took shelter by entering into fire, and the fire-god Agni gave some imitation Sita to Ravana, and Ravana took that '*maya-Sita*' away. Then after killing Ravana and attaining victory, before taking Sita from Lanka, Ramacandra said, "To prove her chastity, she must enter into blazing fire, and if she can pass through that test, then I shall accept Her. But for one whole year she was living with the demon-family, and therefore I cannot immediately trust her chastity." Then so many devotees began to weep, but by the order of Ramacandra the fire was prepared and Sitadevi had to enter. When the fire receded, Sitadevi came out with a smiling face and the devotees began to cry out, "*Jaya! Sitadevi ki jaya!*"

This was written in that *Kurma Purana*, and Mahaprabhu asked the reader, "Please give Me that original page and insert a newly-written copy in there; I met a *brahmana* who is extremely troubled, thinking that Sitadevi was actually abducted by Ravana. I want to show him this old page of this book to convince him that I was not just consoling him, but it is written in the *sastra* that Ravana could not touch the real Sitadevi because she is consciousness personified - not matter, not any flesh or blood or bone or any such things."

The Soul Has Its Own Body

If a ghost can show his form, or a *yogi* can show his form, then is not God able to show *His* form? He can do so. By His will, "Let there be water," there was water; and when He said "Let there be light," there was light. His will is law. Whatever He wants to do, at once it is done; so will He have to have a permanent flesh-and-blood body? At His will He can show

anything as He likes, and it is all spiritual with no touch of the contamination of any mundane substance. But the eye in the higher domain of reality is not like the fleshy eye here. Everything is there: the eye, the ear - but they are not the same as here. Just as in dreams, our fleshy eyes do not work, these ears do not work, yet within our dream we see, feel, walk, eat and drink. The mind is only 'half material,' and if even in the mental plane all these activities are possible, then transcending that also is the pure spiritual world, and there is the spiritual eye, the spiritual ear, the spiritual mind - everything is spiritual. It is possible.

On the battlefield, when two tanks come to fight, the men within the tanks may think "The tanks are moving like two demons pushing one another!" The tanks are crashing together, but the *man* is within. Similarly, the soul within this body has its own body, its own plane of living, its own food - everything of its own in the spiritual realm - and this world is the perverted reflection of that realm. We must purely aspire after a life in that spiritual realm, and purity depends on love, and love means sacrifice, "Die to live." We have to die wholesale in regard to our interest in life here, and then another sort of interest will awaken within us and we shall live there, in that place. That is our aspiration, and for that we have left all our 'concrete' things - our house, our property, our friends, our father, mother, children, and other relatives. So many things we have left, and we have gone out in the quest of other things. We have no more charm for mundane possessions, we are seeking something which is supra-mundane.

'Mundane' means under the jurisdiction of mortality: at every second it is dying. Everything on which we depend for the maintenance of this body is dying at every second. Everything. So we want to be out of this dying land, and if it is possible, we want to live in a land where there is no death. That is *amṛta* - that which is without death - and that is sweet, it is Vaikuntha; it is Goloka. *Vaikuntha* means in the consideration of the infinite perspective - that conception. *Kuntha* means limitation, and *Vaikuntha* means unlimited. To live in Vaikuntha means to live in the relativity of the infinite whole.

The Purest Prayer

Devotee: Maharaj, also regarding Tulasidevi - I noticed that at this *math*, while circumambulating Tulasi during her *arati*, here, the devotees don't like to chant the mantra *yani kani ca papani brahma-hatyadikani ca, tani tani pranasyanti pradaksinah pade pade* ("Those who circumambulate Srimati Tulasidevi step by step destroy whatever sins they have committed, even the killing of a *brahmana*"). Why is this?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: A devotee of higher order must not have any prayer to "Absolve me from sin." The first-class devotee will pray, "Whatever I have done wrong, I am ready to suffer for that, to the farthing. But my prayer is only that I may get a drop of the nectar of the favor of Krsna." That should be the prayer of a real devotee. *pasu-pakhi haye thaki svarge va niraye tava bhakti rahu bhaktivinoda hrdaye*: according to my *karma* I may be a bird, I may be a beast, I may be a worm or an insect, I may be in heaven or in hell - I don't care about that. According to my own *karma*, let me suffer accordingly. But my only prayer is, "Let me not be devoid of the favor of Krsna; let me get that. I want His grace; I want devotion for Him. Only devotion - that is all I want. Whether I have to enjoy the result of my good works in heaven, or I have to suffer for the misdeeds of my previous life and go to hell, I don't care to get out of that. As a result of my *karma* I shall have to suffer or enjoy, but I don't care about that. My prayer is not to remove the reactions to my sins, to take away any good merit or bad result - but only that I may obtain pure devotion independent of these two.

"I do not want release from either happiness or suffering; let it be, according to my previous *karma*. Rather, what I want from this moment on is that I will never try to waste the favor of Krsna by only praying to be able to face any eventuality; but that whatever I shall acquire from now on, however small, even a drop - that must be nectar of the highest order, and the lower delegation can deal with the question of heaven and hell."

For removing our reactions or delivering us from hell or heaven, much lower agents are required; they can do that. But we shall only pray for Krsna's favor as a positive attainment, and never try to minimize our previous *karma*, the result of bad activities performed due to misconception. I don't care about the 'passport'; I want the 'visa'. If I get the visa, no passport trouble will be able to disturb me - it is something like that. So to merely do away with *maya*, misconception, is nothing. But the positive attainment in the domain of Krsna is a very much higher thing. By passing *maya* we can attain Viraja, Brahmaloka, we can get

mukti (liberation), the marginal position. But why should I waste my energy only to acquire a position in the marginal plane? All my attempts must be focused toward the prayer for a position in Goloka, and that will be a gain of the very highest order. I shall pray only for that, and automatically everything else will be accomplished.

Savitri's Encounter With Yamaraja

There is a story from the *Puranas* which illustrates this principle, the story of Savitri and Satyavan. Savitri was a chaste lady who had acquired special capabilities through the performance of certain penances, and one day she went to the forest with her husband Satyavan, knowing that this day was the day of his death. She knew that this was the day of her husband's death, but he did not. While cutting wood in the forest, Satyavan said, "I have a headache; I need to take a nap." Savitri was prepared and Satyavan put his head on her lap and slept. In his sleep he died of heart failure, and Yamaraja came to take him. First Yamaraja's agents came, but finding that Satyavan's body was on the lap of his very pure and chaste wife, they could not venture to take him.

Then Yamaraja himself came and told Savitri, "You leave him; he's dead. Leave his body." Savitri said, "Yes, you may take him." Yamaraja took Satyavan's soul, but then he saw that Savitri, by dint of her penances, was closely following him in pursuance of her husband. Yamaraja said, "Oh, why are you coming? I am taking him. You must go back."

Savitri replied, "No, I can't. I shall go also."

Yamaraja said, "No, you must not come. Why are you disturbing my duty? This is the arrangement of the Creator, Lord Brahma, and you must obey that."

Savitri replied, "It is better to die than to live without my husband."

Then Yamaraja said, "All right, I will give you a boon. Accept that and be satisfied." Savitri asked that her father-in-law and mother-in-law, who were blind, would regain their sight. Yamaraja said, "Yes, they will regain their sight." But Savitri continued to follow him, saying, "I am not yet satisfied completely."

"Then take another boon."

"Well, if you are pleased to offer another boon, my father-in-law and mother-in-law have also lost their kingdom, so

now please arrange for them to be reinstalled in their own kingdom.”

"Yes, I say they will get back their kingdom." But again Savitri began following him.

"Again you are coming?"

"Yes, I can't live without the company of my husband."

"Take another boon."

"Yes."

"What is that?"

"I want one hundred sons."

"Yes, you shall have one hundred sons." Still Savitri kept following behind Yamaraja. "Now why are you coming? I told you that you would have one hundred sons." She replied, "If you are taking my husband, then how can I get any sons?"

Then Yamaraja was perplexed: "Yes, that's true. What can I do?" So he appealed to the higher force. Savitri's boon was sanctioned, and she got her husband back. Yamaraja had already committed himself - "You will get a hundred sons" - so Savitri asserted that "You have clearly sanctioned that I will get a hundred sons; therefore you certainly can't take my husband!"

The general idea is that if we get some backing from the higher sphere, that will overrule all mandates imposed by the plane of mortality. If we are given a place in Goloka, we cannot be detained in this mundane world. When Tulasidevi can give us a place *there*, then why should we waste our prayer to her by asking, "Please clear away the dirt on which I am standing"? That is self-deception. So we shall always pray to the higher servitors for the higher service of the Lord. We won't care about where we might be; that problem will automatically be solved. If we get some higher appointment in the divine realm, then automatically we can't be detained here. Therefore a *suddha bhakta*, a pure devotee, from the core of his heart will never pray for anything else, for that would be a waste of energy. Only, "Pure inclination toward the service of my eternal Lord - that I want. I know nothing else but that, and I do not want anything else."

A pure devotee won't pray for anything but for the higher service of the Lord of his heart. He can't even imagine asking for anything for his or her own interest. In Christianity such self-sacrifice is also present. And greater than that is self-forgetfulness: the self is there, but the servitor is forgetful of that and is cent-per-cent absorbed in attending to the pleasure of the Lord. No self-interest, wholesale self-forgetfulness - they are

unconscious of their own particular interest because it has become merged in the interest of the Lord, the Absolute Whole.

So one who is aspiring to become a pure devotee should never desire anything else but to purely serve and give joy to the Lord of his heart. When one is unconscious of everything else - "Let it be, whatever He may like" - that is pure devotion for Tulasi, or whomever we are praying to. If one has got that higher *sukrti*, that *suddha-bhakti*, the seed of *Prema-bhakti*, then he won't be able to think of anything else but Krsna's pleasure. He'll think only of the pleasure of his Lord, cent percent, forgetting his own body, mind - everything. That is the purest type of prayer.

Chapter Four

Test, Taste and Triumph

According to one's *sukrti* and inner adaptability and grace from above, the soul within will experience awakenment, emerge with some taste, and according to that taste he will adjust himself with the environment. According to his internal taste he'll find, "These friends, this type of service, this company - these seem to be my own! This is tasteful: very, very tasteful." According to his taste he will take some particular type of 'food'. Just as when animals are let loose they will take food according to their own choice, so the awakened soul will be able to select a proper environment for himself. His inner taste will guide him: "This is very charming; this is attracting my heart. I feel helpless - I can't control myself, so much attraction do I feel for this particular thing." In that way he will be guided. Intuition will direct him. In this world we find intuition, and in the plane of divine life also there is intuition - the undiscovered tendency in the self - and that will perform the function of selection, elimination, and new acceptance. As we go on with our *sadhana*, with the process of realization, elimination and new selection will come, gradually. Gradually it will take us up.

Why have all of you from the Western countries come to Krsna consciousness? You were students of Christianity, mostly, so why has Krsna consciousness attracted your soul, your inner heart? You had some sort of religious conception, but why did you leave that, leaving so many traditional formalities and so

many friends within that circle? Why have you left them to bring yourself here, in Krsna consciousness? For what have you come, taking such risk? The country, the society, the religious conception - you have left them all and come forward for Krsna consciousness, and moreover as active preachers. That tendency will again push you into the selection of different departments of service in Krsna consciousness.

Our inner tendency, inner liking or hankering, will guide us. "This particular sort of service is very pleasing to me; I cannot but associate myself with this sort of service." That will be the guide: cooperation with the *caitya-guru*, the Guru inside, the 'dictator' within. The Guru is outside and inside. When we cannot catch the dictation of the inner dictator-Guru, then we must have some guidance from the *mahanta-guru* outside and from scripture. We always want guidance along the path, and when we reach a certain stage, from there our *ruci* may guide us. Our inner dictating tendency may guide us like intuition, just as birds and beasts are guided by intuition.

Weeds Curtailing The Bhakti Creeper

Devotee: Then, Maharaj, in this connection, why is it that there are so many practitioners of Krsna consciousness who, for whatever reasons, have given up their previous devotional association?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: From a general perspective, the life of wholesale dedication is not a very easy thing to swallow; so many difficulties are in the way: previous tendencies, and also the possibility of offenses in the choice of thought, speech, and behavior due to our free-will. The defect is there; it is not a perfect thing. Our free will is very weak and limited. *Sadhana* means elimination and new acceptance, and within that also so many difficulties and disturbances may come from our past tendencies which do not allow us to progress smoothly. Though I know that what I see is a higher form of service, my previous tendencies won't allow me to accept that and to undergo the austerities and challenges that are necessary for that service. There are so many difficulties, like weeds. This is described in *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*:

*brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva
guru-krsna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija
kintu yadi latara sange uthe 'upasakha'*

*bhukti-mukti-vancha, yata asankhya tara lekha
'nisiddhacara', 'kutinati', 'jiva-himsana'
'labha', 'puja', 'pratisthadi' yata upasakha-gana
seka-jala pana upasakha badi' yaya
stabdha hana mula-sakha badite na paya
(C.c. Madhya-lila 19.151, 158-60)*

"According to their *karma*, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets the opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Krsna. By the mercy of both Krsna and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service."

"Unwanted weeds growing with the *bhakti* creeper are forbidden acts, violence, duplicity, mundane profiteering, adoration and popularity, etc. All these are weeds. If one does not distinguish between the *Bhakti-lata* creeper and the weeds, then the sprinkling of water in the form of devotional practices such as hearing and chanting etc., is misused, because the weeds are nourished while the *Bhakti-lata* creeper is curtailed."

The creeper of devotion becomes a sprout and gradually grows. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami says here that along with the main creeper of devotion there are also many weeds, and when the creeper receives watering and nourishing, those weeds also grow up as well. *Labha* means 'gain' - the apparent gain of something, mainly position. But that position and '*puja*' - appreciation - which the *sadhaka* receives may then create so many other enemies within him. From the previous tendencies, new enemies come: maybe the desire to accumulate money for self-interested purposes or the desire to get the love of women, and then there is hankering for *pratistha* - fame and popularity. So many things may come. When one is "going up", so many difficulties come on the way to check him, but we must consciously shun those things. So many difficulties come on the way, and we must save ourselves from all of the many internal enemies to our aspiration with the help of Guru, *sadhu*, scripture, and our own sincerity, then gradually we shall grow.

And at each new stage that we advance to, there also we shall find some other difficulty. So the path of inner evolution is not strewn with roses; it is a difficult path to walk. As we get nearer to the goal we become more and more free, but in the

beginning various difficulties do come to check us. Our previous *karma-phala* - 'fruits' of our previous actions will return to be tasted by us - and tendencies of different types will chase us to try to keep us within their jurisdiction; but upon meeting those difficulties and surpassing them - conquering them - we shall progress higher and higher and the difficulties will lessen. Still something may remain, especially *pratistha*.

More Humility: Less Opposition

*trnad api sunicena, taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih
(Siksastakam 3)*

While treading the path to *Bhakti*, if we are well-equipped with this helpful mood, then we shall certainly meet less opposition. *Trnad api sunicena*: humbler than a blade of grass. I won't allow myself to be the cause of any friction with the environment - this will be our first mood and the foremost guideline for our conduct. Second, *taror api sahisnuna*: Still, if any attack does come from the environment, then I shall try to bear it silently, without giving any opposition. And third, *amanina manadena*: I won't try to gain any popularity, any good name or fame - I won't hanker for that - but at the same time I shall give proper respect to the environment and to everyone who is in the environment. I shall offer respect, but I won't desire any respect from others. The more we try to go on our way with this mood and corresponding behavior, the less difficulty we shall have to face.

Also, those who are in a mission and under the guidance of a higher realized soul can face many dangers. When we go out to preach we shall have to face many difficulties, but with the help of the higher guidance, we can fight those who are propagating misconception, and we can either subdue them or invite them to meet with the higher leader. In this way, we can give opposition to the forces of *maya* and counterattack. At that time we shall not adopt the policy that we shall "give no opposition to the environment." No - when we are engaged in preaching, as 'soldiers', we shall approach and face the opposition, and we shall try to 'disarm' him. And if we can't, then we shall invite him to our Guru to be disarmed.

In this way I shall go on, carrying out the orders of the Vaisnava. And if in some way I am 'wounded' by the local environment in that attempt, then my spiritual stamina will increase as a result of following the order of the higher agent -*Vaisnava-seva*; and I shall be more greatly benefited thereby.

I want '*Vaisnavi-pratistha*: I won't want any popularity from the ordinary public - they are almost insane - but I want a position in the eye of my master, my Gurudeva, that, "Yes, he is a promising boy. He will spiritually prosper." When my higher guardians look upon me with some affectionate encouragement, that will be my capital. Their goodwill and liking for me will be my capital on my passage toward the higher realm. When we are alone in a solitary place and going on with chanting the Holy Name, then of course this *trnad api sunicena* must be strictly observed at all times. But when fighting under a 'general' in a preaching campaign, then our external demeanor should be a little different, more towards carrying out the order of that higher spiritual general. That will be more gainful.

The Meaning of Sannyasa for the Vaisnava

Devotee: Since the general order to go out and preach has been very broadly given to all devotees by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, what is the special utility of the *sannyasa* order in our *sampradaya* when Mahaprabhu has said that it is forbidden in this age of Kali-yuga?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: The answer is explained in *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*. This is a general question not only for the Gaudiya *Sampradaya*, but also for the followers of Ramanuja, Madhvacarya, and even Sankaracarya. The Buddhists may not care for the directions of the *Puranas*, but the Sankara school and the Vaisnava schools accept *sannyasa*. Sankara was a *sannyasi* and for the most part his successors were all *sannyasis* as well. This is true of Ramanuja also, Madhvacarya, and the Visnuswami *Sampradaya* also.

The interpretation is this: in Kali-yuga, *sannyasa* in the strict sense of *karma-sannyasa* is forbidden. *Karma-sannyasa* means that you leave everything, and that type of *sannyasa* is not possible in Kali-yuga. It is described in the *sastras* that in Satya-yuga, as long as a man's bones exist, that is how long he will live. Along with the longevity of the bones, the life will be

there. In Treta-yuga, life may be maintained by the nervous system; but it is stated that in Kali-yuga, *kalav annagatah pranah* - one's longevity depends on food. Therefore *sannyasa* in the strict sense is not possible in Kali-yuga.

Previously, Valmiki was engaged in *tapasya* for so many years that the insects captured his whole body and reduced the flesh into earth, yet he remained present within his bones. Then later, by the help of some spiritual miracle his whole body was restored. But in Kali-yuga, without food it is not possible to live. All penances have been especially adjusted for Kali-yuga, and the only continuous fast allowed in Kali-yuga is for twenty-four hours; not more than that. In other ages, at least twelve days fasting was generally done. If a person had done anything wrong, then according to the *Smṛti sastra*, twelve days fasting was the standard punishment for any sins. But in Kali-yuga, twenty-four - hour fasting is the maximum because without food a man cannot survive.

If he were to take *karma-sannyasa* while being so extremely dependent on material giving and taking, then he wouldn't be able to maintain his existence. But the life of Vaisnava *tridanda-sannyasa*, which is not very extreme - take *prasadam*, do service - is a sort of modified form based on *yuktahara viharas ca*, and one living according to this principle can take *sannyasa*.

Mahāprabhu took *sannyasa*, Sankarācārya, Rāmanuja - all the pioneers of the different *sampradāyas* took *sannyasa*. That has been interpreted as *karma-sannyasa*, but still, *sannyasa* is of several kinds. There is also *vidvat-sannyasa*, which is considered by the salvationist section to be the highest. Their idea is that when one has fully realized that his connection with this material realm is a negative one, he will finish his material encasement and enter into the spiritual sphere. When he is fully established in this firm consciousness that "my connection with the material world will be injurious to me," he will then relinquish his body and go away to the spiritual sky. That is *vidvat-sannyasa*.

There is also *narottama-sannyasa*:

*yah svakat parato vaha
jata-nirveda atmavan
hrdi krtva harim geyat
pravrajat sa narottamah
(Bha: 1.13.27)*

In the *narottama* system of *sannyasa*, one has realized the presence or existence of God within his heart, and thinking of Him, he leaves his present engagement and duties of the household and remains outside, anywhere and everywhere - under a tree or in a cave or wherever - careless of his physical needs. He does not immediately relinquish his body, but he takes whatever food he gets, and when he does not get any food he fasts, and in this way he goes on. He leaves the household for good; that is *narottama-sannyasa*.

And there are also different stages of *sannyasa* mentioned in the *sastra*: *kuticaka*, *bahudaka*, *hamsa*, and *paramahamsa*, progressively. But *tridanda-sannyasa* is when the *sannyasi* engages himself fully in the service of Godhead by spreading His messages and doing some good to the public, and that characteristic is different. It is categorically different. The *tridandi-sannyasi* is not adopting an attitude or tactic of leaving all of the engagements of this world as a result of becoming disgusted with its many temptations. Rather, he is engaging himself in the higher duty of the upper world through an agent, so his body has got utility. Remaining here, maintaining connection here, he is drawing some higher thing from above and distributing that in the environment. That is another conception of *sannyasa*, and it has positive value.

This is a similar engagement to that performed by the Lord's closest associates. When an incarnation of God comes down, His favorite *parsadas*, His friends and servitors, are also sent by Him to come down to do some service to help Him. There are also sub-agents who have received some engagement from the higher agent, and by moving within this world in that capacity, they can earn more spiritual wealth than those who are very eager to disconnect completely from this material plane. They want to try to utilize their connection with this mundane plane to earn some substantial wealth of the upper house. So like the Lord's *parsadas*, the *tridandi-sannyasis* want to work as God's agents.

The Glory of the Divine Feminine Nature

Devotee: Maharaj, we know the injunctions forbidding *sannyasis* and *brahmacaris* specifically from mixing with ladies, but what should be the general overall vision of the male section

of devotees as we are serving Mahaprabhu's mission together with our Godsisters?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: According to the *varnasrama* system, generally the *sudras* (laboring class) and ladies are not allowed direct participation in the higher religious functions. Only indirect participation is allowed for them, and they also do not get the sacred thread. Yet a *brahmana* boy can be found touching the feet of his mother! The mother will not touch the Deity of Narayana, but her son who is worshiping Narayana is touching her feet and taking her feet-dust. Such a position is there in the *varnasrama* system. Women are generally considered unfit or below the standard of engaging in direct service to the Lord, but in the Vaisnava conception there is no such strictness about that.

In my youth some sort of disregard grew in my mind about the lady section - "I must keep far away from them; they are untouchable." But that notion was amended by my aunt in this way: She noted my nature, my conduct, and once affectionately remarked to me, "Oh, don't you know that ladies represent Laksmidevi? They belong to the same section, and in them the qualities of sacrifice and submission are very clearly visible, so they should be respected. They should be respected, and the aggressive male nature is to be viewed unfavorably. The feminine ego-conception is an ideal of a very noble type wherein sacrifice, the devotional aspect, is very prominent. Ladies are not aggressors; they are sacrifice personified. Whereas the male nature - that is aggressive."

Gradually that idea came to me and I learned to appreciate Sita, Draupadi, and so many others, especially the supreme example shown by the *Gopis*. The standard established by the *Gopis* has shown that self-forgetfulness, self-sacrifice, and self-surrendering reaches its zenith, its highest conception, in the lady-aspect. The passive aspect holds the highest position: that viewpoint came gradually and caused a turnabout within my mind.

Madhura-rasa, consorhood, is the highest position, and within Srimati Radharani we find the greatest degree of sacrifice and affection. The males are the aggressors; they are responsible for all the difficulties and troubles, not the ladies. That we possess the aggressive nature of a male is the disease in us. Gradually that perception developed from inside, and ultimately I found that when the female nature is pure and in connection with the Supreme *Lila* of *Vatsalya-rasa* and *madhura-rasa*, it holds the

highest position in the topmost realm. And our aspiration is for engagement in the service of Srimati Radharani.

The position of Sri Radha is that of the highest service to Krsna, and *Radha-dasyam* has been considered by Mahaprabhu to be the highest attainment. Vasudeva Ghosa says:

*(yadi) gaura na haita, tabe ki haita
kemane dharitam de'
radhara mahima prema-rasa-sima
jagate janata ke?*

Who could disclose this holy, divine fact if Sri Gauranga did not personally appear on this Earth? Who could let us know, who could inform us that the highest servitor is Radharani? But Gauranga did come, and He clearly showed that the highest conception of service is to be engaged in the service of that highest, Negative Potency.

Contact:

Sri Chaitanya Saraswath Math
Kolerganj, P.O.Nabadwip,DT. Nadia,
W.Bengal, PIN 741302, India

Holy Engagement

Compiled from informal discourses given by
The Founder-acharyya of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
Srila B. R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami Mahraj
Under the direction of the present Acharyya
Srila B. S. Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj

Transcribed by Sri Mahananda Dasa Bhakti Ranjan

Introduction

Divine Transformation

An expert from Chapter 3 of Jaiva Dharmma written by Srila
Bhaktivinoda Thakur
(Translated by Sripad B.A. Sagar Maharaj)

One evening, a few hours after nightfall, Sannyasi Thakura sat alone, singing the Holy Name. He was seated on a small mound in a lonely arbour of Sri Godruma forest. As he cast his glance northward, the full moon rose, revealing an unprecedented beauty throughout the Holy Abode of Sri Nabadwip. A short distance away, Sri Mayapur became visible. Sannyasi Thakura exclaimed, „O! What is this wonder? I see an ecstatic holy place. There, constructed of precious jewels, are an effulgent palace, a temple, and gateways. The entire bank of the Jahnvi River is illuminated by their brilliance. In many places at once, a tumultuous roar of Hari-nama Sankirttana is arising, vibrating through the skies. And now hundreds of devotees resembling the celestial sage Narada are vibrating vinas, chanting the Holy Name and dancing. Somewhere, the white-complexioned god of gods, Mahadeva, is clutching his Dambaru drum, crying, ‚O Visvambhara, please give me Your mercy!’ Dancing in a mad frenzy, he now falls to the ground. Somewhere else, four-headed Lord Brahma, seated in the assembly of Veda-reciting Rsis, is singing the Vedic *mantra*,

*mahan prabhur vai purusah sattvasyaishah pravarttakah,
sunirmmalam imam praptim isano jyotir avyayah*

„That Supreme Person is Mahaprabhu; He alone is the Source of our enlightenment. Only by His grace can one attain immaculate peace. He is the Supreme Being, the Invincible.“

„Now Lord Brahma is giving the transcendental commentary on that *mantra*. And somewhere else, all the devas headed by Lord Indra are leaping and bounding, singing, ‚Jaya Prabhu Gaurachandra, jaya Nityananda – glory be to the Lord Gaurachandra, glory to Sri Nityananda!‘ All the birds, perched on the branches of the trees, break out in song, ‚Gaura-Nitai, Gaura-Nitai!‘ The bees have become intoxicated drinking the nectar of the Name of Gaura, and they are busily humming through the length and breadth of the flower gardens. Intoxicated by the Ecstasy of Love for Gaura flowing in all directions, Mother Nature extends her beauty all around. Lo! I never saw all these things in Sri Mayapur by day! What am I seeing?“

Then, remembering his Divine Master, he said, „My lord, I know well that you have given me your grace by extending unto me a divine vision of Holy Mayapur. From now on, I shall adopt a method to come out into the world as a member of the party of Sri Gaurachandra. In this Holy Abode of Sri Nabadwip I see that everyone wears Tulasi beads around their necks, and they decorate their bodies with the signs of *tilaka* and the Holy Names. I also shall do this.“

Speaking in this way, Sannyasi Thakura fell into semi-consciousness.

Shortly after, he awoke. Certainly he was awake, but the beautiful divine vision was no longer visible. Falling to weeping, Sannyasi Thakura said, „I am greatly fortunate. I received the grace of Sri Guru, and just for a moment I had a divine vision of Sri Mayapur Dham.“

The next day, Sannyasi Thakura threw his mayavadi sannyasanda into the river. He tied three strands of Tulasi beads around his neck and decorated his forehead with the Vaisnava insignia of *tilaka*. He danced, chanting, „Hari! Hari!“

When the Vaisnavas of Godruma saw his new-born countenance and charming new attire, they all offered him their obeisances, considering him to be most blessed. Sannyasi Thakur felt somewhat bashful, and said, „No doubt I accepted the dress of a Vaisnava to

become a fit recipient of their mercy, but now I'm falling into another predicament. Over and over I have heard this verse from the lotus mouth of Sri Gurudeva:

*Trnad api sunicena, taror api sahisnuna
Amanina manadena, kirttaniyah sada harih
(Chaitanya-caritamṛta, Antya 20.21)*

„Knowing oneself to be lower than a blade of grass, being more tolerant than a tree, divesting oneself of all pride, and offering due respect to others – one should chant the Holy Name constantly.“

„Now, what will be my fate if those very Vaisnavas that I have accepted as my Gurus offer me their obeisances?“

Thinking in this way, he approached Paramahansa Babaji and offered him his prostrate obeisances.

Seated beneath the roof of Madhavi vines, Babaji Mahasaya was taking the Holy Name. Seeing the completely transformed appearance of Sannyasi Thakura, and seeing that his heart had bloomed in love for the Name, Babaji Mahasaya embraced his disciple, bathing him with his tears. He said, „O Vaisnava Dasa, today my ambitions are fulfilled by touching your auspicious form.“

By these words alone, Sannyasi Thakura's previous name vanished. He now became known as ‚Vaisnava Dasa.‘ He had now attained something very special, a new lease of life. His dress of a *mayavadi* ascetic, his haughty name and titles of that *sannyasa* order, and his condescending egotism – all these things had vanished.

In the afternoon many Vaisnavas of Sri Godruma and Sri Madhyadwip visited Sri Pradyumna Kunja to offer their respects and meet with Paramahansa Babaji Mahasaya. All were seated around him, chanting the Holy Name on their Tulasi beads. Some shed tears, crying, „Ha Gauranga, Nityananda,“ or „Ha, Sitanatha,“ or, „He jaya Sacinandana.“ The Vaisnavas discussed spiritual matters amongst one another. The visiting Vaisnavas circumambulated the Holy Tulasi tree, and began to offer their prostrate obeisances to the resident Vaisnavas. Just then Vaisnava Dasa also circumambulated Sri Vrndadevi, and threw himself into the dust before the feet of the Vaisnavas. Hearing the devotees' remarks, some of the highly respected, elevated

Vaisnavas exclaimed, „He can’t be the same Sannyasi Thakura – what an amazing transformation!“

Vaisnava Dasa rolled on the ground before them. Imploringly, he began to speak, „Today, my life’s mission is fulfilled. I have attained the dust of the feet of the Vaisnavas. By the mercy of Sri Gurudeva, I have learned well that there is no refuge for the soul other than the dust of the feet of the Vaisnavas. The foot-dust of the Vaisnava, the nectarean water that washed the feet of the Vaisnava, and the remnants of food left by the Vaisnava – these three are the medicine for the disease of mundanity, and they are the healthy diet for those afflicted with this disease. Not only do they cure the disease, but they bestow the highest ecstasy upon the healthy souls.

„O Vaisnavas, please don’t think I am flaunting my scholarship. These days, my heart has become purged of egotism. I was born in a *brahmana* family, I studied all the Scriptures, and I entered into the fourth order, the life of asceticism. Thus, the inflation of my ego has known no bounds. But since the day I became attracted to the principles of the Vaisnavas, a seed of humility was planted within my heart. By the mercy of you all, I have gradually cast off the pride of my birth, the megalomania of my scholarship, and the grandeur of my ascetic status. Now, I find that I am a helpless, wretched soul. Other than the shelter of the lotus feet of the Vaisnavas, I have no refuge whatsoever. Brahmanism, scholarship, and *sannyasa* – these things were the cause of my downfall. Now I have openly confessed everything at your lotus feet; please utilise your servitor as you deem proper.“

An excerpt from *Sri Dasa-mula*
Composed by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur
(Translated by Sripad B.A. Sagar Maharaj)

*yada bhramam bhramam hari-rasa-galad-vaisnavajanam
kadacit sampasyams tad-anugamane syad ruci-yutah
tada krsnavrttya tyajati sanakair mayika-dasam
svarupam vibhrano vimala-rasa-bhogam sa kurate (8)*

After wandering throughout the higher and lower species of life, when he is blessed with a holy glimpse of a Vaisnava whose heart is melted in the joy of love for the Supreme Lord Hari, the attraction to live the life of following in the wake of the Vaisnava is born for the conditioned soul. Continuously chanting the Holy Name and Glories of Lord Krsna, his life of illusory existence is gradually dispelled. He soon attains to his own intrinsic form and becomes eligible to revel in the joy of the unadulterated Service of Sri Krsna.

All glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga

Chapter One

Devotees Pilgrimage

Devotee: Please tell us something about Sri Nabadwip Dham Parikrama (circumambulation).

Srila Gurumaharaj: We should try to become more acquainted with the realistic view of Nabadwip. There are so many divisions in this Nabadwip Dham: mainly nine. It is mentioned that they represent the nine sections of devotion:

*sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam pada-sevanam
arccanam vandanam dasyam sakhyam atma-nivedanam*

Simantadwip represents *sravana-bhakti*, hearing about Krsna. Chanting about Krsna, *kirttan*, is in Madhyadwip; serving the Lord's feet, *pada-sevanam*, is here in Koladwip; worshipping with ghee lamp, etc., *arccanam*, is in Rtudwip; offering prayers, *vandanam*, is in Jahnudwip; rendering service as servant, *dasyam*, is in Modadrumadwip; rendering service to the Lord in the relationship of a best friend, *sakhyam*, is in Rudradwip; and full self-surrender, *atma-nivedanam*, is represented in Sri Antardwip, Mayapur. They have connection with these nine main types of devotional conceptions respectively. When travelling to these places we are reminded by the incidents connected with them how such representation comes from

each place. All of them taken together promote our understanding as to what is devotion proper.

Atma-nivedanam, full self-surrender, is the basis of all. After *atma-nivedanam* the plane of life will be categorically changed. After surrendering to the central direction, whatever will be done by us will come to have recognition as devotion. That is devotion. *Atma-nivedanam* is selflessness plus self-surrendering. Self-surrendering presupposes selflessness. Selfish actions come to an end and selflessness is also crossed, and then self-surrendered life begins - and that is devotion proper.

The life of a devotee has no individual or provincial interest. He works only for the universal interest of the Whole Absolute. Devotees are soldiers of that plane. Whatever they may do, the suggestion and inspiration comes from the centre, the Absolute Good. Thought apparently they seem to be members of this plane of quarrel, in their heart their connection is with the Absolute Good; therefore their colour has completely changed. The valuation of the devotees' movements has completely changed although apparently they seem to be doing everything almost in a similar way to the mundane persons. Mundane persons eat, and the devotees also appear to eat, but actually they are not eating: they are rendering service to the remnants sent by the eating: they are rendering service to the remnants sent by the Lord. In this way they are going on.

*tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha-, vaso 'lankara-carccitah
uccista-bhojino dasas, tava mayam jayema hi*

Uddhava says in Srimad-Bhagavatam, “We shall conquer the whole of the deluding energy (*Maya*) by only one thing. And what is that? We shall accept everything with the spirit of service. Whatever You, O Lord, send to us, you have already taken and enjoyed, and we shall serve those remnants and thereby the whole of the deluding energy will be devastated.”

One of my learned professor Godbrothers was challenged by his younger brother who was perhaps a graduate, “What do you do there in the Math? What we do, you also do there.”

The professor replied, „No, no, you do not do what we do in the Math.“

„You do not eat?“

„No, we do not eat.“

„Then what do you do? With my own eyes I have seen you eating.“

„No, we don’t eat. We don’t eat like you; we don’t put solid things into our stomachs like you. We render service to *Mahaprasadam*. What we do is beyond your understanding. We don’t eat like you. We have no spirit of consumption. We don’t consume anything, but we honour the remnants of the Lord.”

Such will be the difference between all the activities of the true Vaisnavas and the worldly men. Apparently the Vaisnavas seem to do the same things as others are doing: walking, sleeping, eating, engaging others in activities, earning money, spending, and so many apparently similar things; but the standpoint is totally different. It is connected with the centre. They abide by the direction of the central movement whereas the worldly men are guided by their provincial, local interest. The difference is that one is guided by the local, and the other by the Absolute, and that difference is very, very great. The Vaisnavas are on the other side of selflessness, the other side of renounced life. Between the worldly men and the Vaisnavas is the realm of complete renunciation. One is on one side the other is on the other side.

What proper devotion is, must be realised. Generally, it may not be understood by the apparent movement of the devotees, but it is to be realised by the question of adjusting the angle of vision. The angle of vision is to be changed.

There are so many incidents, stories, and sceneries connected with Sri Nabadwip Dham Parikrama, but all are meaning to help us in our life

of absolute adjustment. If one can catch that, then by his *parikrama* through different holy places and his hearing about local ‘historical’ incidents he will receive eternal instructions in various conceptions of devotion. He will receive encouragement in this way.

It is not lie the *parikrama* of the ordinary people in the general Hindu section of society who also go out on pilgrimage. The general people come in contact with the holy places and they have some holy association, but their main object is to gain some unseen help in their present life. They want their desires of this present life to be satisfied by some invisible help form the demigods. It is *punya-karmma* – to acquire good merit to help success in their present life according to their conception. It is not *Suddha-bhakti*.

The objective of the Gaudiya Math people is quite different and it cannot be reckoned in any of the different planes the present educational section are hunting fore. The present-day scholars cannot even think that purely spiritual life is possible at all. They consider that spiritual life may be only concoction that others are suffering from. According to the so-called scientific scholars, the spiritual searchers are fighting with their shadow, hunting after impossibility and imaginary things. They consider the devotees to be running after phantasmagoria and superstition.

*ya nisa sarvva-bhutanam, tasyam jagartti samyami
yasyam jagrati bhutani, sa nisa pasyato muneh
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 2.69)*

But on the other side, we think that in the name of concrete reality they are running after phantasmagoria – just the opposite. They are running after the mortal achievements. They think immortality is not possible, and Socrates had to pay a heavy price for expressing that the soul is immortal. At the cost of his life he announced that the soul is immortal. They objected, “No, nothing is immortal, therefore it is foolish to neglect the mortal pleasures, so let us enjoy whatever there my be.” That was their viewpoint.

The normal viewpoint is that we want to be wakeful in that plane of life which is darkness to them. The basis is that the soul is immortal and there is an immortal world – it is not only immortal but it is nectarean reality. *Srnavantu visve amrtasya puttrah*: “O you sons of

nectar, be mindful. You are eternal and you are children of that soil. Why do you suffer so much. You have become victims of mortality but really you are not so. You have an inconceivably higher prospect of life. Come back. Come back to your own plane. Come back home.” That is the general call of the *Upanisads*, the most ancient revealed Scripture.

The attempt of the followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu does not only call for theistic life, but it calls for theism in its full fledged condition; that is family life with God – family life with the Absolute Beauty and Charm. “Your place is just on the lap of the affectionate father, or just on the lap of the beloved consort.”

“Do or die” is the slogan of Mahaprabhu’s followers. Let us try. Let us strive our utmost to achieve what is our own real prospect. No compromise. There must be no compromise along the way, but we must fight to the finish and we must be prepared for that. Our Guru Maharaj, Prabhupad Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura, was the *Acaryya* of the whole Gaudiya Math and he was of such nature. He was not haphazard or prepared to make any compromise – nothing of the kind.

Prabhupad Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura had to begin his fight almost single-handedly against the whole of the world - against all the different stages of culture ever known to the world. His only support was *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and Sriman Mahaprabhu. He proceeded with ‘heart within and God over head’. On his head was Mahaprabhu and *Bhagavatam*. He stood alone to fight out Their cause. Not only did he want to fight in Bengal, the provinces of Mahaprabhu, and not only in India, but he wanted to fight outside as well.

He wanted to attack the highest position of the present civilisation – the Western world, the scientific civilisation. They are so proud with their present achievements, but Srila Saraswati Thakura Prabhupad wanted to break down the whole structure of the present false civilisation. He wanted to demolish it and construct a divine temple over the ruins. He wanted to construct a temple of God over the mundane world. He wanted to present not any half-truth, but the fullest: in his words, “full-fledged theism” in accordance with *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. We are not to stop halfway or be satisfied with partial

progress, but we are to only engage in wholesale dealings, and that is given by *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

avismrtih krsna-padaravindayoh

The conception of theism follows these lines. It is continual existence under the holy protection of the divine Feet of Krsna: to maintain one's life of continuous engagement with all sorts of activities, while thinking, "The guide is upon my head. The Divine Feet of Krsna are upon my head." With this attitude we can easily remove what is foreign within us in no time at all. The continual remembrance of Krsna's Lotus Feet, of Krsna's connection, will in no time disperse all the difficulties along the way, as well as all meanness and all that is not dignified. Our Srila Guru Maharaj said, "The Gaudiya math stands for the dignity of the human race." We are to understand that slavery to Krsna is a most dignified position. And everything against that ideal is meanness. The only standard of life for a gentleman is to understand and accept the position of subordination to the Absolute Truth. To admit what is proper and real, and on that basis make one's life advance, is not meanness. To understand one's proper position and to understand one's proper duty and discharge it – that is gentleman's life; to accept what is truth. What is considered to be meanness will be removed very soon. And what is really for our welfare and beneficial to us, that will increase.

You are at present in an adulterated conception of your own life. The mind, intelligence and exploiting energies of different kinds are all adulteration. So from your existence will be eliminated all kinds of adulteration. It will be purified and your real self within will come out in its pristine glory, and you will find you have a happy devotional connection with the Supersoul, the Super-knowledge. You will come across knowledge proper – a clear, personal type of knowledge – with its paraphernalia and systematic existence.

Whatever you are attracted to at present in this mundane plane will be transferred. Affection proper will be discovered. At present your affection, attraction, and love are misdirected, but they will find their proper place and position. The special characteristic is that you will have a real place and position where these faculties of affection and

attraction will find a special support, a proper place to which they will be directed. This is devotion.

Chapter Two

Searching Life's Secret

We must have eagerness to mix with *sadhus* of the higher type and avoid liking the company of the ordinary public. If we allow ourselves to mix with the ordinary public in the name of preaching or collection or any other thing, that will be detrimental to our cause.

*vaco vegam manasah krodha-vegamj
jihva-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah
sarvvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat
(Upadesamrtam 1)*

Inspired by the advice of Sriman Mahaprabhu, Srila Rupa Goswami put His advice into this poetic language.

Vaco vegam – one should not be habituated to speak much; to speak always, whether good or bad, without discrimination. Also, *manasah*, the raw mental flow is to be controlled. The mind generally thinks about war, about astonishing scientific research, about making money feverishly, and so on. People who are greedy always try to keep company with millionaires, but the mind must not be allowed to run after such things. Those who are full of lust are always searching for different conceptions of Narayana. So the ordinary flow of the mind towards exploitation, towards tempting things, must be checked. We are not to allow the flow of our mind to go this side, that side and every side.

Krodha-vegam. Sometimes anger may come, but it creates disaster. It is inevitable that there will be a reaction to anger, therefore we shall try to check that type of flow of the mind towards anger. But still, we must try to utilise for the Service of Krsna all of whatever we still have left of these things.

Kama krsna-karmmapane krodha bhakta-dvesi-jane. Speculation, planning, etc. may be utilised in the Service of Krsna.

We shall try to utilise any anger within us by defending the devotees, and in this way in no time we shall get relief from anger. The free-flow of the mind may be directed and utilised in *sadhu-sange harikatha*. *Prajalpa* is unnecessary discussion about mundane affairs. Also we should not be eager to have the company of any person without first considering whether his association will be good.

Jihva-vega means our attraction to a particular taste. Some may have a particular attraction to the pungent, some to the bitter, some to the sweet, some to the acidic, etc. We should try to avoid the hankering of the tongue to taste particular things. How? The process is that while taking anything I am to consider how nicely the *sadhu*, the Guru, or the Lord has first tasted it. The material things should be subservient and our attention should be directed towards the subjective feeling of how the higher have tasted it. This is the clue to how to get free from the material taste.

Mahaprabhu tried to avoid sweet things; “I am a *sannyasi*, so I must keep the ideal. If I take the good things then all will follow that example and it will be detrimental to them.”

Then Swarupa Damodara said, “That is the negative side, but the positive side is that one should take *Prasadam*. A person must have the experience of how Jagannath has tasted the preparations.” From the objective world we are to go to the subjective. All feelings should be collected and applied towards the higher plane, and they must be withdrawn from the lower plane.

Udara-vega. “I have not taken much food. My belly seems to be vacant, I shall take more.” Such tendency to take more and more is called *udara-vega*.

Jihva-vega is for the taste, the quality, and *udara-vega* is for the quantity. And *upastha-vega* is the tendency or urge to gain pleasure from the company of women. We are instructed that these three are in one line and they help each other: *jihva-vega*, *udara-vega* and *upastha-vega*. We must be very careful to get rid of them. They cause so much disaster in one’s life. They spoil so many lives. We must be careful in our dealings with them.

“*Etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah, sarvvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat*. One who can control all of these difficulties is a real Goswami, and he can control the whole of the world. He is eligible to make the population of the whole world into his disciples. Any number of

disciples cannot make him deviate from his standpoint.” These have been given as the cautionary points for the *sadhus* who come under the flag of Sri Chaitanyadeva.

But how can we become intimate with a *sadhu*?

*dadati pratigrhnati, guhyam akhyati prcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caive, sad-vidham priti-laksanam
(Sri Upadesamrtam, 4)*

We can increase our attraction and love for a *sadhu* by giving him raw items and by accepting his *Prasadam* – to give and to take. To give items to be utilised by him, and to accept whatever is necessary for ourselves, but nothing new.

We won’t try to take anything new, but we will wish only for something which has been used by the Guru and Vaisnavas, whether it be a garland, clothes, decorations, or whatever. We shall try to live by the remnants of the Vaisnavas. We shall present new things to the *sadhus*, and we shall try to live by their remnants.

Guhyam akhyati – I should reveal my innermost feelings to the *sadhu*: From my innermost heart I feel these many particular things within me. Are these feelings good or bad? And if bad, what is the remedy?” We shall place our inner heart before him so he may examine and proceed accordingly.

Prcchati – we shall enquire from the *sadhu*, “What is the secret of your holy life? Please tell me and I shall try to follow that example in order to get out of my present circumstances. In your case how did you gain relief?” We shall try to collect the secrets of success of life from a *sadhu*. *Bhakti bhajayate caiva* – we shall feed him, and accept his *Prasadam*.

If we follow the above guidelines we shall come closer to a person. If we deal in these ways with a bad man we shall become bad, and with a good man we shall become good. There are two types of water: filtered and filthy. Filthy water can be purified. The higher *sadhus* can take evil thoughts from others without becoming contaminated. In their hearts resides Govinda. Govinda is infinite and He can consume any quantity of filthy things, therefore their hearts cannot be contaminated.

*yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa
amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa
(Chaitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya 7.128)*

“Whoever you find, talk with him about Kṛṣṇa only.” This should be our motto. One who follows this is a real follower of Mahāprabhu – not of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is almost confined within His own circle but when He comes as Mahāprabhu His main interest is to open the way to His domain. “Go on distributing. At first distribute My sound aspect. It is the most spacious, subtle and effective. Gradually you will find everything there. The first connection is with my sound aspect.”

His sound aspect is all-embracing. From far away it can connect, and then the Figure, then Colour, then Quality, then His Associated, and then His Pastimes. At that time the devotee becomes attached with some particular duty by which he joins the *Līlā* of the Lord.

Chapter Three

Recognising Divinity

Devotee: When my *Dikṣa-gurudeva* was present he gave me spiritual instructions, therefore he was also my *Sikṣa-guru*. After his departure I received guidance from his books and tapes as well as his general instructions. Is he still considered to be my *Sikṣa-guru*? Are his books and recordings now my *Sikṣa-guru*?

Srīla Guru Maharaj: Of course, but in a passive way. Generally the *Caitya-guru*'s function is better there. If you fail to understand a particular passage, then you cannot have progress. Passively it is represented to you, but you have to exact the real purpose; and another Vaisnava may see something more there. Therefore it has been said, '*Jāho bhāgavatā pada vaiṣṇavera sthane.*' If you want to read *Bhāgavatam* you must go to a Vaisnava *Acāryya*, a Vaisnava teacher, and read it under his guidance, otherwise you may fail to understand the real standpoint. You must read Vaisnava Scripture with the help of the Vaisnava *Acāryya*. The passive *Sikṣa-guru* may help to remind you, but if you fail to understand, the book will not come to remove

your misconception. But the living *Siksa-guru*, the *sadhu*, will point out and explain the misunderstandings. *Sadhu* and *sastra* are both necessary, but the *sadhu* is principal. In the absence of the living Scripture – the *sadhu* – the passive Scripture – the *sastra* – is there to give us help.

Devotee: Is the *Caitya-guru* passive?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is not passive but it is somewhat vague within us and we may not always be able to detect its advice. It is difficult to understand its advice.

Devotee: Can the *Caitya-guru* be a manifestation of our Gurudeva and of Krsna also?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. When we internally ask something while standing before our Gurudeva, “Please advice me in this particular position. What am I to do?” Then we may feel something: “My Gurudeva is giving this suggestion.” If we are pure then we shall be able to catch the real solution from him.

While reading *Bhagavad-gita* we may also ask Krsna, “What is the real meaning of Your speech? Please allow me to understand.” According to our position we will be able to understand if Krsna suggests, “This is the purpose of My speech:...” But it is vague and depends upon one’s capacity of realisation.

Devotee: Many of us did not get to see or speak with our Gurudeva much, so how is the Spiritual Master aware of the activities of his disciples? Also the Spiritual Master is sometimes far away from his disciples, so how does he keep connection with them?

Srila Guru Maharaj: He can gain a general conception from the letters of the disciple, by his words and also from others. From one, two, or more sources he may conjecture as to the way the disciple is engaging as well as his current stage of progress. By the activities, expression, and aspiration of a disciple it is not too difficult to understand his general situation and plane. So many tests exist.

Generally it is said that a man cannot be judged by his dress, but he can be judged by his words. But in devotional life a person may even be judged, by nature of his dress as well as of course by his words, practices, attachment, etc.

If some dirt will accumulate and cause an interruption in the running of a fine machine such as a computer, the expert will be able to understand the nature of the defect. Similarly, the plane of a person can be known from the words he speaks and the actions he performs. His earnestness and attraction for various particular sages of duty are among the many symptoms by which a person's position can be understood.

In general, some may tend towards renunciation, others towards exploitation, and some towards devotion. Amongst the devotional section some may tend towards devotion to the Deity, some to devotion to the Vaisnavas, some to devotion to the Guru. A devotee's situation may be assessed according to where his intensity and eagerness lies. There are many signs to indicate the different stages of devotees.

A position of a devotee can also be assessed according to the nature of his enquiry. What does he want to know? In the *sastra* are listed different stages of enquiry and instruction.

Devotee: After the disappearance of the Spiritual Master, is the connection still maintained? Is the Spiritual Master still aware of the disciple's activities?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Our attitude should be to consider that he is seeing everything from above.

We cannot have full knowledge of our Gurudeva. A devotee after fifteen years of continuous service as a *sannyasi* was told by our Guru Maharaj, Prabhupad Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur, "You have not seen me. You could not see or meet me." By this example we can understand that it is very difficult for the disciples to know in what plane the Gurudeva is staying.

He was one of the most popular *sannyasis* amongst Srila Prabhupad's disciples, but during Srila Prabhupad's last days that *sannyasi* took some independent action which caused this remark to come from our Guru Maharaj, "You could not meet me; you could not see who I am."

In other words we understood that Guru Maharaj indicated, “You are trying to be a canvasser of the *grhasthas* – not my servant. Some men and money are at your disposal and you think I want men and money and some you are supplying me with such things. You think that your property is your men and money, and sometimes you give something to me by way of a bribe, and then you return to keeping your estate. But I require that you be *my* man and that you will always work cent-percent on my behalf, and never be influenced by the popular opinion of any charm of the material world. You are to be cent-percent my servant. Whatever you do must be independent of any connection with the outside world. No outside connection is to influence you in any way. You are to be always clear. You are to handle the world, but not establish any connection or affection in the world. Cent-percent, you are to be mine. That should be the attitude. You are to be my man and you are not to incur any obligation to the external world. It is not that in the name of Devotion you will come and plead on their behalf to me. You are to be always cent-percent mine, and in this way engage yourself with the outside world – whether with men, money, fame, or anything else. This connection must not be slack.”

On the other hand Vasudeva Datta said to Mahaprabhu on behalf of the people at large, “Please accept them. I stand as their guarantor. If you wish, you may send me to eternal hell, but please accept them.” But that mood is of another type. There is no lacking of faith in the centre; rather the most intense degree of faith in the centre is displayed by his words, although apparently he pleaded for the public at his own risk.

Devotee: It is also said, *caksu-dana dila yei, janme janme prabhu sei* – that he who gives me transcendental vision is my lord, birth after birth. So, is the connection with the Spiritual Master actually eternal, birth after birth?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course. But we must not identify him with the appearance we experience by our physical senses. The inner identification is necessary, and that vision will increase according to our inner growth. Our vision will increase and transform from *prakṛta* to *apṛakṛta*, from material to transcendental. As our vision changes, the way we see Gurudeva will change accordingly. A man is generally

known first by his external uniform, then by his body, then by his mind, then by his intelligence. As much as our eye will develop to see things rightly, what we see will change its appearance.

Acaryyam mam vijaniyat – the Lord says, “It is ultimately I who am the *Acaryya*. It is My function in different stages and forms.” At the same time different *Acaryyas* may simultaneously work together. They have their common ground in their Srila Gurudeva, but, like so many branches of a tree, they differ in many ways. Still, the ideal is *acaryyam mam vijaniyat*. The ideal is going from gross to subtle. According to the depth of vision of the eye of the viewer some factors are in common, some different.

Different depths of vision will disclose different realities of the *Acaryya*, and it will go in different *Rasas* (Divine Relationships) to the highest position by a gradual process of realisation. Otherwise it will be *marttya-buddhi*, a material conception of the Divinity, and that is a crime; that is ignorance. It is erroneous.

We are to withdraw ourselves from the snare of identifying reality with the physical form presented to our senses. The eye is a deceiver; it cannot see the proper form. The ear also deceives. The form of the *Acaryya* is not *indriya-grahya*, perceivable by the senses; it is *indriyatita*, beyond the experience of the senses. Because we are in such a low position we must gradually proceed to the inner world with the help of the figure we see before us. But so much importance is given to seeing deeper. The *Acaryya* sometimes wears winter clothing and sometimes he wears summer clothing, but we are not to identify him with the dress even though it is also indispensably connected with his body. Similarly the *Acaryya* may show himself to have a young body but later in life he shows an old body. Similarly in one birth he may come in a particular body and another time he may come in another body. The same *Acharyya* may come differently at different times. From the external we shall have to go to the internal. This applies to ourselves also. If I lose this body of flesh and blood and have instead only a subtle body, then I shall see the Guru in the form of his subtle body, not in the form of this physical type of body. The *Devatas*, *Gandharvas*, and *Siddhas* also have their Gurus, but neither they nor their *Acaryyas* have a material body. So we are to eliminate the external conception and enter within the internal conception, and that will be all-important to a progressive disciple. It

does not mean that he will disregard the physical form of Gurudeva, but he will look to the real importance and real presence within.

We should worship the remnants of the *Acaryya* – his coat, his shoes, his sandals, etc. – but that does not mean that such things will be superior to his own body. Similarly, if we are eager to do some physical service to him but he does not want that, then we should not do it. If I go to massage his feet but he says, “No, no. I do not want that,” then we should refrain. His internal wish will be higher. In this way we are to make progress from the subtle to the gross, but that does not mean we should abhor all external things. We should respect them, but more importance should be given towards the internal as the higher, deeper representation. *Eho bahya, age kaha ara*. “This is superficial, go deeper.” As much as we have deeper vision we shall go forward.

Devotee: In the case of Bilvamangal Thakura, his Gurudeva spoke to him through the prostitute Cintamani, and Bilvamangal recognised his Guru there.

Srila Guru Maharaj: But that does not mean he went back to Cintamani. He accepted Cintamani as his first Guru. Through her advice he went to Somagiri and from there he went to Vrndavana, eliminating his earlier guide. He recognised that Cintamani was his starting point but he did not give so much respect that he stayed there and served her. *Eho bahya, age kaha ara*. Progress means elimination. Progress presupposes some sort of elimination, some change in conception, otherwise it is stagnant and static.

Devotee: Does that mean that in a devotee’s progress he discards lower *Rasas* as he progresses from *Santa* to *Dasya* to *Sakhya* and so on?

Srila Guru Maharaj: When his internal representation finds its full nature it will stay there. He will not make further progress to a higher *Rasa* because his final goal has been reached.

Gradation is everywhere. Similarly, there is classification in the energies: *Goloka-sakti*, *Vaikuntha-sakti*, then *Sivaloka*, *Brahma-loka*,

Viraja; and then, here in the material world, there is classification –but according to grossness. In the mundane plane the classification is from gross to subtle. There is also classification and gradation within the nature of the *jivas*. Some finish their progress in the *Dasya* relationship in Vaikuntha. Some cross *Vaikuntha-dasya* and enter within the *Dasya* of Krsnaloka where there is *Madhura-rasa-dasya*, *Vatsalya-rasa-dasya*, general *Dasya* etc. There are infinite classifications. The soul is infinite and everything is infinite. We are indicating such things from afar (*dig-darsana*) but everything is analysed in the infinite. Every part of infinity is infinite, therefore we are repeatedly told, “Begin work. Begin service. There is no end of knowledge, and there is no end of enquiry, so begin service – Devotion.” *Jnane prayasam udapasya* – enquiry is never to be finished. It is never satisfied. *Pranipata*, *pariprasna*, *sevaya*. *Pranipata* is full confidence; *pariprasna* is honest enquiry; and *seva*, service, is all-in-all. Without *seva* you cannot claim to come in touch with the Infinite. You are to submit and serve, then the necessary direction will be revealed within you. Begin your service. Wherever you are, it is a great blessing if you get the chance to begin your service. Through some agents that chance may come even in the tree and beast species.

Service is all-in-all. It is the concrete whole; anything else is just a partial representation. Without submission, no enquiry is possible. But enquiry is not the fulfilment. Fulfilment is to serve. That is the reality and that will fetch something in return for you.

Bhaktya sanjataya bhaktya. *Bhakti*, not *jnana* or other things, will promote *Bhakti*. *Jnana* cannot produce *Bhakti*, but *Bhakti* is independent in herself. Only *Bhakti* can produce *Bhakti*, so *jnana* is in the negative side. *Bhakti* is independent. *Bhakti* is absolute. It does not depend in any way upon *jnana* or *karma*. *Bhakti* is born of *Bhakti* alone. *Bhakti* can produce *Bhakti*. Nothing else. *Ahaituky apratihata*. It is causeless. It cannot be produced by any other thing. *Bhakti* can extend herself. And *apratihata* – no other wave can oppose the growth of *Bhakti* except for *Vaisnava-aparadha*, offence to the devotees of Visnu, Krsna. *Vaisnava-aparadha* is the misconception of *Bhakti*, the misapplication of *Bhakti*. *Jnana* and *Karmma* cannot produce any effect on *Bhakti* because *Bhakti* is *apratihata*, but anti-*Bhakti* is *aparadha* and we must be careful there. *Yadi vaisnava-aparadha uthe*

hati-mata. In particular we shall be careful to try to save ourselves from *Vaisnava-aparadha*.

There is also gradation in *Vaisnava-aparadha*. If a Vaisnava of a lower type is dissatisfied it will not have much effect, but when there are differences between Vaisnavas it is necessary to see who will have the backing from the higher quarter. The central thought is to be considered. With that consideration we are to approach. Ambarisa Maharaj was a devotee, also Durvasa Muni had some devotion, but we are to compare and see who will receive the higher backing. Duryodhana was a devotee and Arjjuna was also a devotee, but there was a clash between them. Sometimes we see such things.

Bhismas is a devotee – he is one of the twelve devotional mahajans – Arjjuna is also a devotee, but we are informed that there was a clash between them. Sometimes the clash is ostentatious and sometimes according to their circumstances. But who shall we side with? When such a case is there and cannot be avoided along the way, who we side with should be calculated in consultation with higher opinion. We must look for support from the higher office. It is living, not a dead jumble of law.

It is not such an easy thing to commit *Vaisnava-aparadha*. It is *aparadha* if some offence is made to a Vaisnava, but if a clash comes with an *anartha* in a middle-class Vaisnava causing him to become angry, that will not produce any offence. A cent-percent Vaisnava may have some *anartha*, and if some opposition come to the *anartha*, he may be enraged. In such a case it is not strictly the Vaisnava but his mind – the mental system of the Vaisnava and not his spiritual element. It will not be so much of an *aparadha* if the cause of his anger was only that his material interest disturbed.

We can make so many calculations and assessments, but we also see in the Scripture: “*Na hi kalyana-krt kascid, durgatim tata gacchati* – any person engaged in virtuous actions does not go down to hell or become ill-fated.” If one is sincere and does not want to deceive himself, none can deceive him. We must be true to our clear spiritual conscience. We must be truthful to that in our quest, then the Lord within will come to help us. He will always help the sincere souls. He is everywhere and He is the helper.

na hi kalyana-krt kascid, durgatim tata gacchati

I want the highest good, and the Highest Good will also correspondingly come to my relief.

Chapter Four

The Inner Domain

Conceptually Sanatan Goswami took Krsna to Mathura, and from there he took Him again back to Vrndavana. He did not allow Krsna to go out of Mathura. We see this in his writings. But we see that Rupa Goswami connected *Vrndavana-lila* with *Dvaraka-lila*. He showed that everything of *Vrndavana-lila* was transferred to *Dvaraka-lila* including even the Queens. When asked what the adjustment is, our Srila Prabhupad replied, “Why has this subject matter been termed as *adhoksaja* – beyond our understanding? If it is possible to understand everything and keep it within our fist, then it cannot be *adhoksaja* – *acintyah khalu ye bhava, na tams tarkena yojayet*.

It is His sweet will. We must leave everything up to His sweet will. If it is possible to capture all knowledge within me, then His existence does not transcend mine. Therefore, *jnane prayasam*: don’t bother yourself uselessly to try to know anything and everything about Him, but submit. By submission you will come to understand by partial instalments according to your feeling of service necessity. You are finite, so do not try to ‘devour’ the Infinite – that attempt is not desirable. To want to devour the whole thing and put it in your belly is not only a waste of energy but it is detrimental to your cause. By trying to do so means that even unconsciously you consider it to be limited, otherwise how can you be bold enough to try to know everything about Him – to want to know more and more, more and more? This tendency proves that you want to finish all understanding about Him. It may be possible to have some sort of ‘complete’ knowledge of *Maya* to a certain extent, but not *Adhoksaja*, Krsna, in any way. Such hankering for knowledge is a disqualification within you. By that path you cannot make any real progress. *Yam evaisa vrnute tena labhyah* – it must come from the higher side. You can

only try to encourage your negative side: “I am so low, I am so mean. I am the most needy.” And that must be sincere – not a show.

Sincere progress rests on our realising that, “I am the most needy, the most wretched, the most mean.” This is the way we should try to cultivate. So *jnane prayasam udapasya*. We are to hatefully banish such a tendency to ‘know’ Him. *Namanta eva, jivanti san-mukharitam bhavadiya-vartam* – instead, I must try to catch whatever comes through the mouth of the devotees, because by that way knowledge from the positive direction comes to me out of its own accord. I shall welcome and invite that. It is automatically coming. It is freely coming to me, and not that by labouring I shall try to know everything about Him. I will accept such revelation in whatever form it may come, and not that I shall disturb Him with the demand, “You make it known to me what You are.”

Sthane sthitah – and it does not matter wherever one is placed. One may even be a bird or beast, but that does not matter. Hanuman is not in a human form, Garuda also, but they have much. Krsna indicates, “Really they have access to enter into My Domain and within My heart. The real path to Me is through Devotion, through service. Leaving the path of service, those who are very eager to ‘know’ everything about Me, they labour with much pain to try to have some conception and estimation about Me. But their pain is their only reward. Pain is the only reward if one leaves the path of service and wants to know Me. You have curiosity, but why? You are My servant, so don’t try to go to any other side. Don’t be eager to know Me, to know who I am. Instead, try to fulfil Me. Really, you are to satisfy Me. I am *Anandam*, ecstasy. That is My highest part, and you are to come and add to that.

You are to search for Krsna-*santosa*, a way to satisfy Him, but without caring for that, you are using so much energy to try to satisfy your abstract knowledge, your curiosity. Therefore you are a self-deceiver.

*sreyah-srtim bhaktim udasya te vibho
klisyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye
tesam asau klesala eva sisyate
nanyad yatha sthula-tusavaghatinam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam, 2.4.16)*

How? The example is given that if paddy is threshed there will be rice, but if only the husk is threshed it is likened to the attempt for knowledge of Krsna. We want rice, not the husk. To thresh the husk is mere fruitless labour. The pain of the endeavour is its only reward. Similarly, when the finite wants to know the Infinite, his labour is wasted there. Krsna says, “Whatever you get, try to use that in your duty to satisfy Me, *Anandam*.” That is the real thing, the real taste.

There are four *slokas* in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* condemning *jnana*. Another is:

naiskarmmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjjitam
na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam
kutah punah sasvad abhadram isvare
na carpitam karma yad apy akaranam
(*Srimad-Bhagavatam*, 1.5.12)

Naiskarmmam paramam siddhim. The idea that I shall have to labour to live is very dishonourable. If I have to live, I must labour; that is very dishonourable. So the ancient scholars searched for a position where we can live without labour, where without pain we can live easily. They started a campaign to discover or invent such a position. Sometimes *naiskarmma* received much appreciation within the society. They want to be without labour troubles, and in this way the capitalists use computers and so many machines in place of so much man-labour. The man-labour has been so impertinent that the capitalists want to eliminate it.

The ancient scholars were sometimes very busy to discover a social position for all the souls whereby they can live without labour, without *karma*: *naiskarmma*. They came to consider that self-satisfaction, *atmaramata*, could be achieved by complete withdrawal. To back up this conception they considered that Buddha and Sankara came to give relief by pointing out that there is a stage of *Samadhi* such as we feel in a sound sleep. They described that if we can reach that plane of no labour we will still be able to live happily and we will find no trouble there.

Sukadeva Goswami agreed, “Yes, *naiskarmma* is also found here.” But in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* he gave a new form of

naiskarmma: “You say that work is painful, work is dissipating. You say that labour is wasting energy. But now I am going to give you an ideal of life where there is no dissipation. You will labour, but without dissipation of energy.”

How?

“*Yatra jnana-viraga-bhakti-sahitam naiskarmmyam aviskrtam* – we have discovered, or invented, a new type of *naiskarmma*: *jnana-viraga-bhakti*.”

Jnana and *viraga* took Buddha and Sankara to *Samadhi*, but the *Bhagavata* school says, “No, no. You must not be captivated by that. It is not that at the cost of your own individual prospect you are to purchase *naiskarmma*, the labourless life. In *Samadhi* you will be nowhere, so it is suicide for whoever will purchase that kind of *naiskarmma* in *Samadhi*. But we are giving you painless labour, and that is the labour of love in *Raga-marga*. In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* the *atma* (soul) is ascertained as eternal, and in the eternal plane you can keep your own individuality, and you will labour. But the *atma* is above mortality, so there is no pain in such labour. At the same time you can retain your own identity and position, and have a better form of life.”

Our Srila Guru Maharaj used to give an example. If a cow shed catches on fire, the cows naturally become fearful and run out, and, because of that experience, those cows may sometimes become afraid to see red clouds in the sky at dawn or dusk. Our Guru Maharaj said that the Buddhist and Sankarite schools have the type of fear which the cows have upon seeing the red clouds. They think that after emancipation any energising in spiritual life also produces the pain of labour. But it is a labour of love, and that will give nourishing ecstasy, *anandam*. As much as you energise, that degree of *anandam* will come to you, and there is no dissipation of energy because it is the eternal plane; and you are also eternal. Everything being in the eternal plane, there is no dissipation of energy and you can retain your individual, pleasant, fruitful life. It is a life of fulfilment. It is a life of progress. You can have everything, but without the dissipation of energy which you are so afraid of in this mortal world. You can playfully live without any reaction which leads towards death.

jnana-viraga-bhakti-sahitam-naiskarmmyam aviskrtam

Service to the Lord is not labour. It is a giver, a sustainer. It does not deplete vitality, but it sustains more and more. It is life giving. Pure service is life-giving, not life-taking; not vitality-killing, but vitality-supplying. It is opposite in the eternal plane, especially in the Goloka area where everything is a labour of love.

Without labour the residents of Goloka will think themselves to be fasting, and when engaged in labour they will think themselves to be well fed. Service is nourishing. Service is not depleting; it is not killing. Therefore our attempt should not be so much for knowledge, for trying to know everything, but it should be directed towards how we can utilise ourselves in the highest function; service.

*naiskarmmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjjitam
na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam
kutah nunah sasvad abhadram isvare
na carpitam karma yad apy akaranam*
(Srima Bhagavatam 1.5.12)

Naiskarmma is much renowned and appreciated by many scholars, but that *naiskarmma*, to say nothing of the proposal of the elevationists in the mundane world, has no place at all in the *Bhagavata* school. Even *naiskarmma*, which has so much respect from the higher leaders such as Buddha and Sankara is discarded – scornfully thrown out.

Service, service, service. Don't be afraid that service is depleting energy. Service is life-giving. It is feeding you properly. Service!

Die to live. You must have such courage to die for Krsna and you will see everything come in a glorious colour. So, engage in service; that is the main thing. To try to know Him is futile. You cannot make Him an object of your knowledge. He is Adhoksaja.

Why is there a difference between what Sanatan Goswami and Rupa Goswami gave? They are one and the same, so why is there a difference in what they presented? Our Guru Maharaj said, "It is *adhoksaja*. Do not try to bring everything within your understanding, for that will be Maya." It is to be revered by us. It is unknown and unknowable. And faith will help you to 'die' for living.

Chapter Five

The Greatest Benediction

Satyam prya-hitam ca yat. Speak the truth. Tell the truth, no lies, while at the same time be mindful not to be eager to give delivery to unpleasant truth. That does not mean you will speak lies because it is pleasing. We are to speak the truth but with the condition that it must be pleasing, otherwise we should not say anything unnecessarily. *Priya* means tasteful, pleasing. Truth may not necessarily be pleasing, so where does the element ‘pleasing’ have its standing? It is above truth. It is of the mercy character. Truth is something like justice, but ‘pleasingness’ is in the category of mercy – above justice. It is possible that there is something more than truth. Sympathy, mercy, grace, love charm, and beauty are above naked truth. Without these qualities truth will be just law, untasteful, and ultimately that will come to the nondifferentiated Brahma conception.

Lila means beautiful, life-giving, loving Pastimes. Without love, Lila is useless, and that is Maya. If we can have the conception of mercy above justice, we can have some positive conception of the ultimate reality. We will understand just how great a well-wisher He is. We are sinners, for whom Nityananda Prabhu approaches from door to door and appeals to His utmost, “Please accept the Truth. Truth is beautiful because of mercy.”

We may not deserve, but there is hope because there is a land of mercy. Crossing what we deserve, such things may come. Although Nityananda Prabhu was opposed and maltreated by Jagai and Madhai, He nonetheless distributed mercy to them. So of what magnitude is mercy! Nityananda Prabhu approached them for their own welfare but they opposed and injured Him. Still He persisted. So how hopeful is the existence of mercy! It is above truth. This is what is Love Divine. This is what is *sundaram*. This is what is charm, fascination and attraction from the Absolute Realm. It is continuous and automatic, and this is the prime thing at the root of everything. Goodwill. Goodwill is at the basis of everything.

Mercy and grace are present in different forms.

Before taking *sannyasa* Mahaprabhu drew together all His near and dear and spoke with them. During wartime there is a state of

emergency, and similarly Mahaprabhu's advice came with the mood of urgency: "Always think of Krsna. Whether you are eating, sleeping, or awake; day and night always think of Krsna. You are in anger. You are in a situation of emergency where at any moment death can take you away from your present position. So consider it as an emergency and go on with cultivating Krsna consciousness, *Krsnanusilana*. By hook or by crook try to stay afloat upon this Krsna consciousness – continuous Krsna consciousness."

It is not just a case of going to church once a week, or praying five times a day, or thinking of Gat at least three times in a day, but you are to remember and serve Krsna always.

When Mahaprabhu went on His preaching tour to South India, He similarly instructed:

*yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa
amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa*
(Chaitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya 7.128)

"Whoever you meet, speak to them about Krsna. This is My request and order to you all. Save the many suffering souls because they are in danger. Help them because they are drowning in ignorance and illusion. Try as much as you can to rescue them from this drowning position. Rescue the drowning. Take the risk, jump into the ocean and bring out those who are drowning in ignorance and illusion. Try to drag them from darkness to light."

If there is a fire and intimation is received by the fire brigade, it will be mockery if they refer it to the headquarters, wait for an order from there, and only then go to extinguish the fire. Mahaprabhu said, "*Amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa*: I am distributing the relief work for all who are drowning in the ocean of Maya. Go on with this relief work."

While in the Madras branch of the Gaudiya Math I went to see the Education Minister for a recommendation letter to help our preaching in the area under his jurisdiction. He said to me, "Swamiji, they are all Tamil speaking. They do not know English or your Bengali or Sanskrit, therefore first you learn Tamil and then you can go there to preach."

I replied, “Suppose I am going along the road in the Tamil countryside and I find a boy drowning in a pond, should I go to try my best by means of gesture and postures to alert the people to rescue that drowning boy?”

The education minister said, “You are so extreme?”

“Yes. We see so much urgency. It is an emergency that somehow Krsna consciousness must be injected through some mediator, whether he be English-speaking, Hindi-speaking or whatever. Some impression must be given everywhere.”

Mahaprabhu issued an order, “*Yare dekha, tare kaha ‘krsna’-upadesa*. It is an emergency. Whoever you find, talk about Krsna, Don’t wait for any certificate from the authority. I am issuing a general certificate, a letter of authority to you all.

Epilogue

Holiest Engagement

“At least you are my intimate friend, so I won’t deceive you. You can believe Me. I promise.” How shamelessly Krsna expressed Himself! He has come so intensely to plead for Himself, for our benefit. A record is kept in *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* for our guidance.

Even more than that Krsna Himself came as Mahaprabhu in order to preach for Himself. He came as His own canvasser with a group and brought Srimati Radharani along with Him: “If necessary I shall show how charming a position you can have in Devotional Service. I shall show you how service can be so beautiful and dignified. Come along with Me.”

Baladava came as Nityananda to canvass. Krsna and Balarama came to canvass for Themselves as Mahaprabhu and Nityananda. Vrndavana came to canvass for itself as Nabadwip.

We are more indebted to the canvasser than the actual party. We are connected more intimately and we are thankful to the canvasser first, especially when the Lord Himself has come to canvass. How beautiful, how magnanimous, how sacrificing! What sort of Love Divine is found there!

We came to seek something good, and Mahaprabhu posed the direction. I became somewhat charmed there, and I felt, “Yes, this is very charming, very beautiful, and very capturing.” Then I searched for one who could distribute such things of satisfaction to my inner heart, and somehow I found my Master. He is canvassing exclusively for Mahaprabhu, and very strongly – surcharged with infinite energy to work and account of Sri Gauranga. With such intensity was that great dynamo! Then I accepted him and tried to offer myself to be taken within his shelter. I led my life following his order as much as I could, and now also I find that I am still under his shelter and doing some sort of duty as asked and ordered by him. In this way I am passing my days trying to have the core of his advice from the different Scriptures such as the *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and trying to find the culmination of what Mahaprabhu and our Gurudeva expressed. With deeper and deeper thinking, I gradually receive some satisfaction. If I were to not say that I am getting satisfaction then I would be doing some injustice to Gurudeva and his associates. No other ideas of proposals can draw my attention. Rather, I am gaining firmer faith day by day in the teachings of Mahaprabhu, Vyasadvai, the *Vraja-lila*, etc. Though Their Nature is infinite, I find Their position is becoming stronger within me, and I must be satisfied with what little I can get. At the same time I feel in my good faith that this sort of life must be extended to others also. Thus I am passing my days.

By distributing Mahaprabhu’s message we are not going out to do anything bad but according to our conception we are trying to do the holiest thing. Our purpose is of the holiest type ever possible to conceive, so we must go forward with this programme to do good for others, the best for others, and at the same time to get it for ourselves. There can be no engagement more holy than this in the world. It is the holiest engagement and has the blessings of the Lords Nityananda and Sri Gauranga. It is duty to Them. It is Their department.

Preaching is the special department of Sri Gauranga and Nityananda Prabhu. Nabadwip Dham is the place of Their blessings. Our prayer to Them is that, absolving us of all offences, They may utilise us. Here in Koladwip, Nabadwip, at the place of forgiveness of all offences, *aparadha-bhajan-pat*, we are praying that They may forgive us for

all our previous offences and engage us in Their service to spread Krsna consciousness together with Gauranga consciousness.

*srimac-caitanya-sarasvata-mathavara-udgita-kirtir jaya-srim
bibhrat sambhati ganga-tata-nikata-navadwipa-koladri-raje
yatra sri-gaura-sarasvata-mata-nirata-gaura-gatha grnanti
srimad-rupanuga sri-krtamati-guru-gauranga-radha-jitasa*

“On the banks of the Ganges in Koladwip, Nabadwip, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math stands resplendent. The flag flies high, singing its glories around the world. There, the residents chant the glories of Lord Gauranga and aspire to serve Sri Sri Radha-Govinda in the line of Sri Rupa.”

SRI RUPA MANJARI PADA

Composed by Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura

With comentary by Srila Guru Maharaj
(Srila Bhakti Raksak Srila Dev-Goswami Maharaj)

*sri-rupa-mañjari-pada, sei mora sampada
sei mora bhajana-pujana
sei mora prana-dhana, sei mora abharana,
sei mora jivanera jivana*

*sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vañcha-siddhi
sei mora vedera dharama
sei vrata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa,
sei mora dharama-karama*

*anukula ha'be viddhi, se-pade ha'be siddhi
nirakhibo e dui nayane
se rupa-madhuri-rasi, prana-kuvalaya-sasi
praphullita habe nisi-dine*

*tuwa adarsana-ahi, garale jaralo dehi,
ciro-dina tapita jivana
ha ha rupa koro doya, deho more pada-chaya,
narottama loilo sarana*

Sri-rupa-mañjari-pada, sei mora sampada, sei mora bhajana-pujana - my everything is Sri Rupa Goswami's Holy Feet. We are to discuss so many classifications and positions of *Rasa*: *Santa, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya, Madhura*. And in *Madhura-rasa* Srimati Radharani's camp is special. Then again there are so many gradations of *Sakhis*. There is also the class of the *Mañjaris*, the younger girls, and they have more freedom to approach. When Radha and Govinda are in union in a private environment, the *Mañjaris* can still approach; they have such freedom to visit Them. If any materials of service are necessary, the *Sakhis* send the *Mañjaris* to that place. The *Sakhis* do not approach there. In that way the *Mañjaris* enjoy the best confidence. The most secret service of Both can be supplied through the *Mañjaris*. In the highest position they have free entrance, and their leader is Rupa Mañjari. She is understood to be the leader of the whole group of younger girls, the *Mañjaris*, therefore in *Madhura-bhajan* she is all-in-all. This has been taught to us by Srila Narottama Das Thakura. For us - and the younger batch - she is our highest resort.

Sei mora sampada - my wealth is there in her feet. *Sei mora bhajana-pujana* - my worship and service is also in her. *Sei mora prana-dhana, sei mora abharana* - the very wealth and gist of my life is there; and the ornaments of my life, if any there may be, are within her Grace. *Sei mora jivanera jivana* - indeed, the very life of my life, if there is anything, that is also her. I am for her pleasure.

Sei mora rasa-nidhi - if there is anything, the source of any and all desirable ecstasy is only to be found there. The mine, source, and fountainhead of all *Rasa* is there in her feet. *Sei mora vañcha-siddhi* - and if I am to expect any other fulfilment in life, that is also there in her feet. *Sei mora vedera dharama* - if any duty is recommended by the *Vedas* for me, I would like such duty to be at her feet.

Sei vrata, sei tapa – if at all there is any desired fruit from any

penance or observance of vows, that is also to be found there - *sei mora mantra-japa* - and the continuous repetition of *japa* all ends there. All things have only one end in my case: they all meet in different phases in the feet of Rupa Mañjari. If she is satisfied then the variegated nature of my devotional practices are satisfied. *Sei mora dharama-karama* - and any of my conceptions of duty or activity of any phases or form all have one end and meet in one point: the holy feet of Rupa Mañjari.

Anukala ha'be viddhi, se-pade ha'be siddhi - I only pray to the Controller who is at the root of all these arrangements of affairs in this world, "Please connect me there. O Absolute Manager, may you grant my prayer that all my tendencies may go to attain her favour." *Nirakhibo e dui nayane* - and my vision of her will be so very intense and concrete as though I am seeing with these very eyes. It will not be vague, abstract, or imagination, but it will be the most concrete realisation by the grace of the Absolute Manager.

Se rupa-madhuri-rasi, prana-kuvalaya-sasi - what sort of high-class beauty is there in her holy feet! I want to jump. Let my heart be a lotus.

There are two classes of lotus: the white lotus came from the sun and the red from the moon. The *kuvalaya* is a mixture of the two. The lustre of her body will feed me day and night as the life of my life which is compared to a *kuvalaya*. The *kuvalaya* is fed and nourished by the lustre of the moon, and her holy feet are the moon, and my very vitality is likened to the lotus. May the lustre of her beauty maintain and nourish my heart of hearts. *Praphullita habe nisi-dine* - and the lotus of my heart will grow by that ray, and dance.

Tuwa adarsana-ahi - this is my prayer, but what is my present condition? My present condition is in the negative side, my Mistress. My present position is such that without having a sight of you, Your Grace, my heart will burn into ashes. That is my present position. *Garale jaralo dehi* - this is just like the poison of a cobra which produces pain within my heart. I have been bitten by a snake, and what is that snake? It is the snake of your separation. I am not getting

any direct contact with you, Your Grace. The serpent's poison has captured my heart and I am going to die. *Ciro-dina tapita jivana* - and this is not a sudden thing, but from the beginning I have been suffering this sort of pain of separation from such a beautiful and hopeful life of fulfilment.

Ha ha rupa koro doya, deho more pada-chaya, narottama loilo sarana - but I have now reached the extreme position and for the last time I am begging for your favour, otherwise I am going to be finished.

This was composed by Narottama Das Thakura in praise of Srila Rupa Goswami. In this way he has given us light of the higher quarter of *bhajan* life. Our *sampradaya* is named as the *Rupanuga-sampradaya*, and our *Guru-parampara* and all these things are adjusted according to that. He wrote many songs and they are of very substantive firmament, very ecstatic, and of deep faith.

Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Jayatah
ABSOLUTE HARMONY

Compiled and Edited from the Informal Discourses of



Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev Goswami

Compiled and Edited by:
Madhura Krishna das Adhikari
Typing and Transcribing by:
Dina Tarini devi dasi

HIS MAGICAL TOUCH

Like the touchstone turning iron into gold, the lowest receives the highest position by the magical touch of that sweet all wonderful substance, and He is called Krsna, beauty personified who can harmonize the most undesirable base nature of this world simply through contact with His Holy Name.

Everyone wants pleasure, all are searching after happiness, but they do not know how to search it our properly. What is true lasting pleasure? A scientific search of pleasure or bliss will reveal Krsnanusandhana. All seeking will culminate in Him, the emporium of all rasas, the epitome of all taste, the combination of all different types of that pleasing substance which alone can supply ecstasy, love and harmony within us.

Srila B. R. Sridhar Dev Goswami

Foreword

Dedicated the Divine Feet of
Srila B. S. Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj

In Eternal Memory and Service to His Divine Grace

Srila Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

In 1991-92 sincere followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are joyfully celebrating the Auspicious Golden Jubilee Year of the Holy Temple of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, which is situated at Sri Gupta Govardhana, the *aparadha-bhanjana-pat*, on the bank of the Ganges at Sri Koladwip within the sacred mandala of Sri Nabadwip Dham.

During 1941, at a time when most of the people of the western world were involved in waging a useless war upon one another, wasting their precious lives in battle for power and supremacy, a pure saint by the name of Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj was busy fulfilling the sweet will of his Guru, Thakur Sri Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami, establishing a place where world-weary souls could come and take sanctuary in Divine Service to the Manifest Deities: Their Lordships Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharvva Govindasundarjiu.

In the overgrown jungle where cobras and tigers roamed our beloved Srila Guru Maharaj, Sridhar Maharaj, lived in a simple thatched hut (bhajan kutir) and began worship of their Lordships, through which the glorious vision of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math crystalised to the world.

Far from being just an architectural form of charming symmetry - something it may superficially appear to be in the eyes of a layman -this wonderful spiritual residence was designed and built to accommodate God and His devotees who would come to serve Him from every quarter of the globe. And that abode of revelation continues to unfold in the 1990's through the graceful hands and heart of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's successor, and most treasured servitor Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj.

In the early years of the 1940's our Spiritual Father, Srila Guru Maharaj, was laying the foundations for fulfilment of the Lord's grand plan to shelter the whole world through this archetype of a loving Home Sweet Home. In the Transcendental Realm of Sri Nabadwip proper the glory of this Tirtha, this sacred site, is always expanding.

A virtual beehive of dedication and service this Central Math is the Vaishnavas (devotees) who live there, serving the Holy Names of Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga (Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu). Without the Vaishnavas a temple is nothing but a form without substance. So we desperately beg and pray to imbibe a drop of their all-merciful grace. Only through them we can understand Srila Guru Maharaj and His will. In their devoted spirit, Srila Guru Maharaj is present in the true sense.

When our hearts are touched by the grace of those *ananya-bhaktas*, the Vaishnavas who reside in this perfect environment for divine service, only then will the beautifully splendid inner vision of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math become manifest to us. At that time may we place our face in the most blessed dust of that sacred ground where they walk, in full jubilant *sastanga dandabats* (prostrate obeisance). Realising, then, the inestimable great fortune of purest *sadhu-sanga*, (saintly association) manifestly present at Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math for these past fifty years – every moment being golden in the perfect company of Srila Guru Maharaj. (In the words of Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur, “when will that day be ours?”)

We can only appeal to and invite all the sincere souls of the world to please include a visit here when making a pilgrimage to the Holy Dham of Nabadwip, the Abode of Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya. Take *darshan* (insight) at the *aparadha-bhanjan-pat* where all *aparadha* (previous offence) is absolved through the blessing of the saintly souls there during this most auspicious Golden Jubilee Year of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math.

For you will find that the magnanimous dispensation of Mercy, started by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and continued by the Grace of Srila Guru Maharaj, is now being freely distributed to the extreme – just like in Nityananda Prabhu's magnanimous mood – through Srila Govinda Maharaj; with the full backing and blessings of the whole Gaudiya Sampradaya.

We humbly hope and pray this prayer: that the enlightening revelations which have sprung from the lotus-like heart of our Srila Guru Maharaj may give true solace to all who receive them, and that through the mystic connection to Divine knowledge, true understanding and harmony will come.

We gratefully acknowledge the kind assistance and contributions of all those dedicated servitors of Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga whose sincere wish to distribute such merciful nectar is, in itself, its own reward.

We also wish to take this opportunity, if we may, to invite all who read this small offering to please take *darshan*, the living association, of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj in the course of his coming world tour in June/July 1992. For Srila Govinda Maharaj is truly the living manifest embodiment not only of the most perfect conclusions. Indeed of all the previous *acharyyas*, the Vaishnava Gurus, who are celebrating in a *sankirttan* – a chanting festival of divine love – around his blessed presence. We beg all those who have any attraction to the service of Sri Chaitanya Maharapbhu’s wish to spread His benediction rays from the east to the western world to put aside all personal ambition, and all sectarian religious differences, and kindly bless us with your participation in this glorious event which will baptise the entire world under the Aurora Borealis of Mahaprabhu’s banner of Divine Love. In the words of Srila Guru Maharaj, “The conquest of love is perfect for those who wish to be conquered.”

Madhura Krishna das

The Harmonising Spirit

Disciple: The more intense dedication becomes, the more disappointed I become. How is that possible?

Sila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj (Srila Guru Maharaj): You will find in Hegel’s philosophy, “Die to Live.” So you must not be a miser. You are to fully die as you are at present. You are to put your false self into the fire and allow the alloy to be

eliminated. The pure gold will then manifest with its dazzling colour. Of course the soul does not die, but those alloyed things – the mind, body and so many other false aspirations – will be reduced to ashes by the fire of dedication. So die in order to live in the real world.

Disciple: If everyone had that spirit, Maharaj, there would be no breakups, and factions as are found in so many religions and sects.

Srila Guru Maharaj: But everyone is not normal. There are differences. And those engaged in the abnormal cannot follow the perfect course. Everyone has some imperfection and defect.

The Lord's *lila* (Pastimes) are for his satisfaction, but even there we find some differences in the group of the perfect servants although they are in their normal position in His domain, Vrindavan. So competition and fighting to satisfy the Lord's sweet will is acceptable. Nothing can be bad in His domain. If fighting is satisfaction for the Lord, then we can do that. We should not be disappointed to find differences, but we should try to find the common interest.

Disciple: But if we neglect Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission of giving *prema-bhakti* to the fallen souls and fight only for our won selfishness and prestige, I think there is something wrong with that.

Srila Guru Maharaj: A course of treatment is given to a hospital patient, but as one disease is located and treated another disease may emerge. As that second disease is treated another disease may come out, and then another.

Sin is in the aspirants, not in those who are perfect. Those who come to Krishna consciousness are all patients. This is not a place of normal healthy persons but a place for patients who are being purified through a course of treatment. And that process is called *sadhana bhakti*.

Disciple: So where are the doctors, Maharaj?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There may not be expert doctors but there are so many students in the process of learning and they are practising accordingly. You cannot expect absolute knowledge everywhere. Research into nuclear fusion, whether in Russia or America, is always

progressive; it is always in a middle stage, a relative position – and it can be expected that they may never find the full extent of nuclear science. But because progress is always in a relative position it does not mean the Absolute does not exist. Also it does not mean that the campaign should be given up. No! Everything may be defective but still we are to continue.

Aspire for Maximum Good

Although all is not perfect, still we are to progress with our daily food and activities, as we have to maintain ourselves and aspire for the maximum good. We have to make the best of a bad bargain with whatever is available to us. The absolute position is not easily attained. Everyone of us has to pass through relative position towards the Absolute. There is elimination and acceptance everywhere – this is the meaning of progress, and we cannot avoid it. But elimination should not be done inconsiderately. At the same time our object will always be the higher aim.

*Sarva-dharman parityajya,
Mam ekam saranam vraja
Aham tvam sarva-papebhyo,
Mokayisyami ma sucah*
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 18.66)

Lord Krishna says, “Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair.”

In every subject there is progress and we are not to blame others for whatever comes to us; rather the whole burden of this trouble is ours. No one else is to be blamed. Everywhere there is the hand of the Absolute. When there is a government a hooligan may be detailed but if there is no order or government there criminals can run amok. There is the Absolute government and we cannot escape that law. According to our karma we do things to others and receive the reactions: it is controlled, it is not anarchy. So we are to suffer and enjoy the fruit of our own karma – the fruit of our own action – that is

the law. When we think, “I am responsible for all my lawlessness,” there will be a favourable time ahead and we shall be released. When a criminal sees that the punishment being dealt him is justified, with atonement he may be released and may not commit any nuisance afterwards. Similarly, when we realise we are suffering from our own reactions, then we will come to the door of real salvation.

In order to illustrate that our own karma has created our present environment we can adapt the saying, “A bad workman quarrels with his tools,” to: “A bad workman quarrels with his stools.” We have earned such an atmosphere by our previous karma, our previous actions, and no-one else is to be blamed. This is the advice of Srimad Bhagavatam and when, in fact, we come to realise this truth then our day of liberation will be near. Do you follow?

Disciple: Yes, I follow clearly.

Srila Guru Maharaj: So now you can make no further question? Where do you find your prospect?

Disciple: I am simply disappointed with politics and the differences between religious institutions.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Previously when Einstein came and spoke out against Newton, he was insulted, but later the community recognised, “Oh, Einstein is above Newton.”

So don’t forget you are in the infinite. There are many different parties and they may have many different convictions according to their capacity to understand the truth. They are of variegated nature and therefore there cannot but be variety and difference, and for some that may result in internal or external quarrel.

First the followers of Newton took their stand against Einstein, but gradually they found that what Einstein was saying was true and moreover that he was giving a higher conception than Newton. It was not the third but the fourth dimension which was given by Einstein.

So the possibility of the future must be calculated within the present, otherwise any estimation is not proper. Things are always

changing. The factor of change must be calculated within the present otherwise it is not complete.

Spontaneous Devotion in the Fifth Dimension

Now in the spiritual arena Bhagavan Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came and manifest the fifth dimension which was above and beyond all previous conceptions but still accommodating them all. Prior to that the fourth dimension – Vaikuntha – was given by Ramanuja, the third dimension was given by Sankaracharya and the second dimension was given by Buddha.

Buddha recognised the existence of the subtle body and concluded that with the dissolution of that subtle body nothing remains. Then Sankaracharya said, “The subtle body is only a reflection of a further thing, Brahman, which is itself true and eternal; and this world is also a reflection of that. With the dissolution of the reflection, the individual soul dissolves forever and nothing but Brahman remains.” There are in fact so very many differences amongst their disciples.

Sankaracharya and Buddha both preferred that the ultimate goal be non-differentiated, unknown and unknowable, and they finished there. Do you wish to go there? Elimination of all diversity may be a very peaceful position, a deep slumber, and that is their goal. There are many followers of that creed. But their sacrifice is of a lesser degree than those who dedicate themselves to the higher plane.

Ramanuja said, “There is another world on the opposite side.” This material world is the world of exploitation and beyond that is liberation – brahma-nirvana – but on the other side of that is the positive plane which is purely subjective and full of dedication. That is the fourth dimension, Vaikuntha, the land of Vishnu.

Then Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave the additional conception. Explaining: “Calculative dedication in Vaikuntha is one thing but spontaneous dedication to Krishna in Goloka is another. And the

highest ideal is not spontaneous dedication to power and majesty, but to beauty.” And this has been clearly proved.

Sankaracharyya said, “All is one, there is no variety.” But Mahaprabhu points out, “If there is no variety, how can the question of unity arise?” If there is variety then there must be the question of unity. So in this world we are to make proper adjustments.

We want higher sacrifice, living dedication and tolerance for the Central Truth. That Truth we see as Personal, and with His own will. We must admit that, if we want to have entrance into that world.

Nectar and Poison

Dedication to Krishna is nectar and exploitation of this material energy is poison. And what the followers of Sankara and Buddha want is the middle position where everything is harmonised into death – the plane of cessation of difference. That is *brahma-nirvana*, the final peace devoid of trouble where all are buried in eternal slumber. If you prefer then you can go there. But what you find in this world is the reflection of the original whole, perverted into exploitation. On the other side is dedication. In the group of servitors practicing pure dedication, even their quarrel becomes beautiful. Whatever is found here is found there totally. Try to understand this general principle.

A poison may be utilised as medicine when applied properly. The *mayavadis* (impersonalists) cannot find any harmony in difference, they can only find harmony in the conception of non-differentiated Brahman consciousness. They cannot keep up the beautiful harmony in variety held by the Vaisnavas. Rather they consider that everything must be merged into one to solve the problems of the world. Other than that they have no solution, but only disturbance.

With the qualifications of humility, patience and forbearance, with no tendency to seek self-glory, but rather to glorify others and honour their respectable existence, we can live happily with our neighbours and the whole environment. Mahaprabhu has given this solution to us and we are to equip ourselves in this way.

Why should you think your neighbour to be undesirable? You are not to complain against the environment but you are to control yourself and come to the proper understanding. With proper adjustment you will find everything to be harmonious: the desired land of your life. At home you shall find everything.

Love for Betrayal

Srila Guru Maharaj: Do you know of Judas in the Christian teachings?

Disciple: Yes, he betrayed Jesus.

Srila Guru Maharaj: When Jesus was praying in the garden before his crucifixion, Judas approached him with the scribes and priests in order to betray him, identifying that Messiah with a kiss. Suddenly, Jesus cast his glance towards Judas in such an impressive way – he penetrated Judas. And Judas thought to himself, “I am caught, I shall be responsible for Jesus Christ’s demise,” but still Jesus’ vision to me was something more like: “I am exploiting you Judas. It is not that you are exploiting me, rather I am utilising you as a traitor to show the greatness of my life to the future world.”

Jesus has already said (at his last supper), “Amongst these twelve disciples one will betray me.” He knew. Judas had been there then and Jesus had cast his glance towards Judas. Then later, when Judas came with the soldiers and scribes to the garden of Gethsemene to capture him, Jesus had cast his glance towards Judas once again and was thinking, “You think you are exploiting me for some money but I am exploiting you for eternity. You have to stand out as a sinful person against me, I knew you were a traitor, but I did not disclose you. I still took you within my group of followers knowing full well that I am exploiting you.” The look of Jesus was like that.

Judas was crazed. He threw away the sack of silver. He ran to the authorities and said, “I have committed the worst sin, I cannot tolerate it!”

Judas’ energy was drunk, his spirit was drawn. Just like in Jujitsu, when someone attacks the opposition with great force, but the opposition suddenly withdraws, causing the attacking person to fall on their face – Judas found himself in that sort of position. Jesus was exchanging love for betrayal. It was the sort of love that disarmed and sent Judas mad. “I treated him so wickedly, yet his look is not one of vindictiveness but of infinite gratitude. That sort of look Jesus cast upon me.”

In the perfect vision, in the full-fledged consideration, every atom is helping the Pastimes of Krishna. Whether it is direct or indirect – and although it seems to be indirect at present – a deeper vision will reveal that it is coming towards direct service.

Jagai and Madhai came, in the beginning, to physically beat Nityananda Prabhu. Yet later they became submissive. They ended up singing the Holy Names of Nityananda and Gauranga, showing an example to the public. They showed, “We, the worst rogues, are converted into honest men by the mercy of our benevolent Lord.” They enhanced the beauty of the conduct of the Lord by sacrifice. To play the negative role, great sacrifice is required. They gave way their own fame to make the Lord glorious forever. The depth of our vision will detect these things.

We will see so much direct service even from the indirect section. Maya and Satan are also rendering service to God. Without darkness, light cannot be perceived. To play the part of darkness, to show the greatness of light, sacrifice is required. Satan is illuminating God’s greatness. He is apparently negative but Satan’s contribution makes God so magnanimous. If Satan did not exist then how could we understand the goodness and greatness of God? Everywhere there is the Grace of God.

Mahadev, Lord Shiva, sometimes repents and mourns, “Oh Lord, what can I do! You are Absolute and You have engaged me to

accept the position of leader of the opposition party I am going against you because I am giving encouragement to the demons, this most unfortunate post has been given to me by You, but since Your order is unchallengeable then what to do! I am following Your order but my heart is not satisfied my Lord!” So, Shiva is a devotee but sometimes he gives opposition to Krishna or Vishnu. He encourages the demoniac powers against the Lord. In an indirect way he fights against Krishna with his followers the Bhuta demons.

The Cure for Madness

Ignorance is not accidental, it is earned by our previous action – man is the architect of his own fortune. The bad weather I am meeting with at present has been earned by myself. Don’t complain against the environment. Utilise it as best you can and try to see the Grace of the Absolute therein. The anomaly I am facing at this present time is the product of my own action, no-one else is to blame. Not only is that true; but from another viewpoint it can also be seen that the Grace of the Lord is always present everywhere – eager to help me – coming in the guise of an apparently unfavourable environment according to the vision of my present experience. That is the necessary medicine for my disease, the medicine to cure my madness. It is like medicine dispensed by the Lord. He is everywhere with His sympathetic hand extended to us in the circumstances of most intense danger. To have this attitude is to have the key, the solution that solves our unfavourable circumstances, our unfavourable position.

The Lord is not vindictive, He does not want to punish us. Punishment has come only to teach us. The punishment is there but coming from the affectionate hand to teach us, to improve us, to help us. We have to see all dangers like that.

So set yourself right – not others – and real peace you will find. And never try to enjoy the result of your actions. This is the key to a successful life, and happiness will flow from that. You will find the Infinite is your Friend.

Everything is a part and parcel of the Original, therefore God is manifested in everything. And it is not that we can sacrifice or negate everything and only God remains, otherwise why we are here? Our individuality and existence is real. So both sides must have some recognition. Harmony between them is truth proper. This is the conception of Mahaprabhu. There is polarity and also there is unity and harmony, and that is all-important. Dislocation is unhealthy. Proper adjustment is necessary. *Maya* (misconception) means dislocation. Provincial, local interests are clashing with each other as well as with the Absolute. But proper adjustment comes through achieving understanding of the Absolute. Such understanding brings true harmony. All these things should be discussed and understood.

Disciple: How can we practically understand and apply the principle of harmony?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In your conception what does harmony mean?

Disciple: I understand that, strictly speaking, harmony is a musical term referring to different musical tones which are in balance with each other.

Srila Guru Maharaj: In a choir or an orchestra many instruments are being played or many singers are singing so the variety will be a credit to the harmony. Different types of instruments are being played but there must be harmony there, and the highest harmony depends upon how the many different instruments are being played in tune. Hundreds of different instruments are playing, preparing the music – yet they must all be attuned to the conductor. So sacrifice, dedication in its highest degree, will be of such a nature that it can accommodate and tolerate all differences. Therefore by toleration harmony will increase. The highest type of harmony can tolerate any type of opposition. It is all-accommodating. In this way, the highest conception of dedication means there is the accommodation of an infinitely number variety within it; and its sweetness will increase more and more.

So there are different instruments making different tunes from different strata of sound but they are all tuned to one. Plurality is connected to one centre and is giving some sweet, soothing feeling of sentiment. Similarly we can see that the earth and all the planets are each moving in their individual ways but are connected to another force. The moon is moving around the earth, and there are so many planets moving in relation to other planets which in turn are moving in their own way, But all are moving around the sun. Variety meets unity in different plans of movement. That is harmony. This applies everywhere, including the plane of colour and the plane of sound. Many branches meet together in the trunk of a tree, the trunk harmonises the many leaves.

Disciple: In the Absolute sense does discord bring harmony?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In the highest Absolute there is room to accommodate everything, otherwise it can't be Absolute. If we consider something to be Absolute but can still find some thing to be outside of that, then it cannot be Absolute. The Absolute accommodates everything. In Him the enemy is not an enemy! The Centre is everywhere, there is no circumference. In that plane only God can be traced everywhere and He cannot be our enemy.

Zero Conception is Unsatisfactory

The theistic school says, “‘Absolute’ means Absolute Good. It is not zero. Everything is fully represented there. The whole is so great that it can accommodate all.” However Sakaracharya sacrificed plurality and accepted only oneness, saying, “Enemies and friends all become nothing. They become jumbled together.” Such a thing is possible only in the zero-conception. However Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained, “What Sankaracharya gave is not proper acceptance of the revealed truth. Both variety and oneness must be recognised.”

In one Upanisad it is said, “There is no variegatedness.” And Sankaracharya says, “There is no plurality but only oneness, *brahman*.” Yet Mahaprabhu says, “No! Variety also exists.

Otherwise there would be no necessity of saying anything whatsoever, as all would unanimously agree. Rather, there is one who is the Master and all else are subordinate; and they are active in a system – the controlled and the controller.” He explained, “If you say that variety does not exist then what is the necessity of so much discussion? To whom have you come to preach? And if there is no variety then what is the necessity of preaching to those who are already one with you? Illusion also has its existence, otherwise why have you come to try to remove illusion? If *Maya* (misunderstanding and misconception) does not exist then why are you preaching?

It is a reality that there is always the possibility of misconception. Therefore there is always the necessity of a Guru to teach the truth. There is not only the Absolute conception but also the relative, provincial conception. And they both co-exist. This is called *cid-vilasa* which is not the negation of particular thing but the adjustment of everything with the Whole, the Absolute, the Centre. Carity and oneness both exist simultaneously and this is called *achintya bheda-abheda tattva*; and this is the all-accommodating conclusion of Sri Chaintanya Mahaprabhu. Stil Sankaracharyya accepts only one part. His conception is limited and not all-accommodating.

No Fear In Harmony

The only origin of fear is lack of harmony. Fear is born through disappointment resulting from lack of harmony. If that does not exist then there is no place for fear.

‘Undesirability’ is represented in Sanskrit as ‘apprehension’ or ‘fear’, and is regarded as something secondary to the Absolute. But how does it reach and become transformed into perfection? If we can introduce many interests into one common interest then there is harmony – no fear, and all is perfect.

At present we are suffering from the *mania* of separate interest. Only because we have deviated from our common Master, our common Guardian, we have come to suffer the disease of apprehension. If one

Master is common to all then no apprehension can arise, we will feel true unity amongst ourselves. If we fall on the ground, then with the help of the same ground we can again stand.

So forgetfulness of our Guardian is the cause of all the disastrous situations in which we find ourselves. The only way to get out of that disaster is to be reinstated in the idea of common Guardianship, and that is to be effected by the true *sadhus* (saintly persons) who have not deviated from God consciousness. With their help we have to appeal to the all-controlling agency. Then we can be reinstated in that echelon where we have our Master under whose Holy Feet we are to take shelter. If we can accept this, harmony will again be installed in our lives. So we are always to be conscious of our Guardian, the highest harmoniser – and that is true God consciousness.

The Flavour of Nectar

Krishna's two mothers Yasoda and Devaki do not have an open relationship with each other. Krishna's foster mother Yasoda is always afraid that Devaki and her Husband Vasudeva may come to claim Krishna as their child. How can it be that this happens? Similarly the members of Radharani's camp consider Chandravali's camp to be an anti-party to the main group of servitors. But the indirect section is always a necessary part of the Lord's Pastimes. Chandravail has more intellect, whereas Radharani has more sentiment. Similarly in all *rasas* (devotional Mellows) there is harmony and also discord. Some opposition enhances the play of dedication.

In *sakhya-rasa* (the mood for serving the Lord as a friend), at the time when Krishna began His play with His friends the cowherd boys there were usually two parties. One group sided with Krishna and the other with His brother Balaram. The cowherd boys were divided into two sections to represent opposite sides and they began to playfully fight. Then the punishment, for whichever party would be defeated, was that each was to carry a boy from the winning party on their shoulders. In this way a service-punishment was given.

Balaram was very strong, while in the opposing party Sridama is also very strong. In fact Sridama came into Krishna's party because Krishna is not as strong as Balaram. In this way their playing began. When the two parties fought, Balaram generally wouldn't accept that He was defeated. Rather His nature was that He would become enraged.

Sometimes a demon would enter one of the parties by taking the form of a cowherd boy. In this manner Pralambasura and Baumasura mixed with the play of the cowherd boys seeking an opportunity to take a boy on their shoulders and abduct him. One day Pralambasura carried Balaram into the depths of the jungle, but when Balaram came to understand that He was being carried by a demon impostor He struck him with a great blow to the head. In this way the higher conception of truth runs - in order to not only remove all difficulties (personified as demons), but to positively fill up the whole heart with sweet nectar. And the sweetest nectar is personified in Krishna.

On another occasion Krishna was considering the case of another miscreant, Sisupala, and how he could be removed. For this purpose He convened a meeting between Himself, Balaram and Uddhava. But Balaram opposed everything Krishna said. Whenever Krishna wanted a policy to be adopted Balaram would object, "What is this policy? Just leave it to Me, I shall kill him outright! What need is there of all these politics? – I don't understand." All the while Uddhava, who by nature is not partial to violence, tried to pacify Balaram. The example of enhancement of the beauty of the Lord's Pastimes by discord and opposition is represented very cleverly in this story, in an ornamental way.

Masuladhara, a name of Balaram meaning "the wielder of the club-like weapon," gives us a hint that he doesn't delight in the finer mental level of intellect and politics. He likes to solve everything with the strike of His club. So in Balaram we find less intelligence but stronger force. Still the greatest, most subtle opposing forces can only be harmonised by Krishna. 'Harmon' means to control opposite forces.

Lord Ramachandra expressed, “While His own brother Laksmana instead stressed the opposite angle of vision saying, “The brother is the worst type of enemy because when he emerges from the mother’s womb the elder brother can no longer suck her breast, indeed the elder brother is not only deprived of his mother’s milk but is also dispossessed of his mother’s lap, as the new brother captures that as well.” So opposite conception have to be accommodated.

West Meets East

Disciple: We are all trying to be devotees but sometimes we see that there is some differentiation made between the Western and Indian devotees.

Srila Guru Maharaj: You have so many differences such as your hair, eyes, etc.!

Disciple: These are material differences.

Srila Guru Maharaj: But these are all drawn from the spiritual, they cannot demand any originality of their own.

There are so many things to be understood. It is found that in the presence of Krishna at Puskaratirtha the whole of the Yadu dynasties, including such a host of great personalities, were annihilated before His eyes, but these dynasties fought in order to reveal the deeper realities of the plane of the soul. Whatever He wills is truth proper. Can you understand this? Krishna was a sightseer! He simply watches. How can you adjust to that? Can you understand that fighting is life?

All the Pandavas including Arjuna were submissive to King Yudhisthira but still they sometimes revolted against him.

Peace – like in the deep slumber of *brahma-nirvana* – that is wanting in vitality; it is not true lasting peace. And the Absolute Truth is not impersonal but a Person.

Disciple: My desire is to see Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s unity, to see full harmony.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Harmony presupposes independent thinking, but in consonance with the common plane. When a mother cooks food, one child may say, “This is bitter”, another may say, “This is salty”, and the other “This is sour”. So where there are many varieties there must be the question of life. Variety shows that life is present. In diversity there is polarity within unity, otherwise simple “unity” means jumbling everything together – a dead unity.

Vishnu does not represent just one feature but infinite features which accommodate infinite possibilities. Krishna is *akhila rasamrta-murti* (the emporium of all nectarean mellows). Different groups of His servitors have so many diverse elements. Even Radharani and Chandravali compete with each other. They each head separate camps which fight in competition to satisfy Him. We have to understand how all this is possible. Mildly, with humility, we have to try to follow.

In the parliament there is an opposition party but it is there to enhance the work of the main party. In this way the direct and the indirect combine in order to make the government complete. And if that principle is applied everywhere it is not difficult to understand the nature of difference. We are not to try to create another world but to understand what already exists. Why is it so? What is the underlying meaning behind it? What are the differences between Krishna and Balaram? Balaram sometimes side with Duryodhana and Krishna sides with the Pandavas, yet Krishna and Balaram are almost one and the same. So how are we to understand that? What is your answer? Do you think it is all bogus?

Disciple: I can simply say I came to the Gaudiya Math for Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s gift of Love.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, this is true. And love means that there is classification amongst brothers. Rupa Goswami gave the explanation: “*aher iva gatih premnah svabhava-kutilla bhavet.*” That is, just as a serpent moves in a crooked way so similarly is the nature of Love’s progress. The nature of affection is not straightforward because it has to accommodate everything in it. Everything possible in existence is accommodated in love. Love means sacrifice to such a high degree

that it can embrace everything. The movement of love is generally crooked and, for the satisfaction of Krishna, it has been designed in this way by the Lord's Divine Power *Yogamaya* in order to prevent any staleness or sterility from entering the Pastimes. So try to adjust to this. Don't be eager to create another world.

His Sweet Play

To do away with opposition, greater harmony is necessary. And in the higher type of harmony opposition even enhances the beauty of the harmony and helps it. When harmony is successful then it is found to be the necessity of beauty. Krishna represents beauty and His harmonising capacity supersedes everything. There is nothing He cannot harmonise and all enemies become friends in that harmony. In so many ways this is to be accommodated. The Lord is the centre of highest harmony. He is sweetness, He is our Master and He is the Divine Love of us all.

Chandravali is in opposition to Radharani yet by *Yogamaya* the competition is producing more satisfaction for Krishna. Everything is for Him. Through *akhila-rasamrta murti* all possible types of ecstasies are harmonised, nothing is neglected. Justification of all existence is found there. Diversity and unity that is all to satisfy His purpose. Radharani Herself said, "The other *gopis* (cowherd ladies) do not know, I have no objection if they come forward to serve Krishna for My only concern is for Krishna's satisfaction – My concentration is always there, but the standard of their service isn't so exclusive as to give full satisfaction to Him properly. That is my objection. They rush forward to serve Krishna but they do not know how to fully satisfy Him, otherwise I would allow them to. "In this way Radharani's statement justified Her feeling. This statement of Radharani, where She does not consider Her devotion to be commonplace in the company of those exclusive servitors competing for Krishna's affection – that is Her special beauty.

Her degree and intensity of endeavour to satisfy Krishna is above all others. Krishna represents the whole play, He is the centre

and the source of everyone's love. But certain servitors like Lalita and Vishakha are directly serving Radharani; while there are also those in Chandravali's camp who are serving her in opposition to Radharani. That anti-party group is essential, just as the opposition party is necessary in a democratic parliament.

What is the purpose of this world? That is known only to Him. The first verse of Bhagavatam states, He alone is fully aware of the purpose of His activity. He is the Absolute Autocrat, He doesn't have to explain Himself to anyone. Everything is for Him. Also, in some way He is for us.

*aham bhakta paradhino
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sadhubir grasta-hrdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah*

Srimad Bhagavatam 9.4.57

"I do not know anyone but My devotees. All the saints are my sweetheart, and I am also their sweetheart. They do not know anyone but Me and I also don't care to know anyone but them."

He is for the devotees and the devotees are for Him. That is the Substance and the Potency, the Enjoyer and enjoyed, the Positive and negative, the Served and the servitor – both combined make the Whole. The Subject and the object.

No subject can exist without an object. Subject means the thinking thinker, and there must be something to be thought otherwise the subject cannot exist. There must be some thinker and then recognition of a particular thing.

Disciple: Radharani sends Her different associates to canvass on Her behalf. Does Chandravali also have her associates canvassing for Her?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, there is a clash between Radharani's followers like Lalita and Vishakha and the followers of Chandravali such as Saibya and Padma. Bhaktivinod Thakur has written, "As the

attendant of Radharani's camp, I do not like to see that area in Vrindavan where the camp of Chandravali is, because Padma's interest is always to take Krishna from Radharani's special place to Chandravali's camp and if Krishna goes there then our place will become dark." But still opposition is necessary in the development of different levels of service just as hunger or fasting is necessary for relishing food. It is all designed only to intensify the standard of service.

And what degree of attraction and service to Radharani do we find in Lalita devi? If a drop of perspiration is found on the feet of Radha or Govinda (Krishna) she prays for one hundred thousand bodies to busily remove that perspiration. This sort of intense devotion is the unit of measurement to gauge love for one's beloved. This is the inner feeling. Waves of such nature come from within one who comes in connection with that Vrindavan proper.

In Goloka Vrindavan, the abode of Sri Krishna, there are so many parties. The Pastimes there appear to be similar to the competition that goes on here in this world, but the difference is all in the degree of sacrifice the devotee has for their Lord. The life of a devotee is a life of endless sacrifice.

The *Gopis* of Vrindavan are perfectly self-forgetful of their own interest and well-being; they are cent percent devoted not only in the present but also in the eternal future. There they live in the land of mercy, beauty, charm and affection; the plane of Absolute surrender. And that is the highest plane of our life. Nothing less than wholesale surrender is required there. As Krishna states, "If you give yourself wholesale to Me then I will give Myself wholesale to you."

Srila Rupa Goswami has given us an example of the gradation of service: When Krishna is at the summit of Govardhana hill and he sees Balaram and His sakhya friends playing in the pasturing ground below, He also sees Yasoda with all her helpers busily preparing His meal – all the dasya servitors are seen to be engaged in some arrangement under the direction of Yasoda. Chandravali, with her group, is approaching a particular meeting place; while His beloved

Srimati Radharani is coming with Her friends to an appointed place to be united with Krishna. All the different groups represented together around Govardhan are assembling there – *santa*, *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya*, and *madhura* – all are in His sight. He is overseeing everything. So very many affectionate servitors are all vying for His attention. But His eyes are always drawn to Srimati Radharani and Her group.

Even Lakshmi devi – the Goddess of Fortune and wife of Lord Vishnu – wanted to participate in the *rasa lila* of those simple cowherd girls of Vrindavan, the *Gopis*, but She could not enter. For that market – that place of the *rasa-lila* pastime is so very exclusive. Although She has all the wealth and grandeur of Lord Sri Vishnu in Vaikuntha still, unsatisfied, she is running to join in that great dance in which Krishna is at the centre.

No capitalist can enter that market and open a shop there for He has the full monopoly. There is only one commodity in the market and that commodity is Krishna consciousness.

The earth itself is feeling the charming union with Krishna by the divine touch of His Feet. The birds, insects, His friends – everything in the environment – is singing in His sweet play. Only unconditional exclusive Divine Love can enter there. So much so, the attraction of Krishna has captured the hearts of everyone there wholesale. God's grace is of such charming, intense nature that there is no way out but to serve the sweetness – not by fear or by hope, nor by the sense of duty, but all are helplessly attracted to sweet Krishna. Living harmony reigns there in its most natural and intense form. The servants of that quarter feel they cannot live without that service. That is their food.

Srimati Radharani prays, “You have captured My heart fully. Every atom of My body wants only You but the circumstances are so cruel that we are parted. So I will jump into that deep well, taking My life. I pray You will come and take My position and I will take Yours. Oh Krishna, Oh Sri Nandanandan. Then You will realise what hopelessness I am going through and will understand My trouble.”

In that self-same mood Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “My friends save Me by showing Me Krishna. Otherwise I can’t maintain My existence! What I once saw, touching My heart like lightning then withdrawing, show Me once again for I cannot tolerate the separation. How many times can one die in a second to earn that fortune, to get a moment’s perception of Krishna? I am ready to die millions of times. My heart bursts without having a second view of that wonderful thing! I had a little experience previously, but beauty and sweetness can be so cruel! If I don’t get that vision I shall die.”

About the Author

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, the beloved guardian of all the pure conclusions of the Absolute Personal Truth, appeared on this earth in 1894 in the simple village of Hapaniya, meaning ‘Sweet Waters’, within the golden *mandala* of Nadia, West Bengal.

That auspicious Holy Place of Hapaniya was illuminated with the pastimes of Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu, and is just a short distance from Nabadwip, the centre of the Lord’s *adi-lila* pastimes. Appearing in this divine setting of pure Vaishnava association, Srila Guru Maharaj not only danced in the footsteps of the golden Lord Sri Chaitanya’s ongoing eternal sankirtan party, but also synthesised the pure essence of all the previous saints realisations into increasingly ever sweeter and sweetest prose of praise. And if received with a drop of humility his realisations have the miraculous power to dissolve the hardest diamond heart into a condition of nectarean Divine Love. Indeed, Srila Guru Maharaj once stated, “If you just once chanted the Name ‘Gauranga’ purely you will melt, you won’t be able to maintain your form.” So if we can hear from the pure agent of Divinity submissively – without criticism and envy – those revelations we receive will change our hearts forever, and accordingly, to the degree of our *sraddha* (faith), we will be personally transformed, so as to be able to actually live in those transcendental realisations.

The *tridandi-sannyas* name ‘Sri Bhakti Rakshak’ bestowed upon our Srila Sridhar Maharaj by his beloved master – Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad – means ‘Guardian of the Treasure House of Bhakti’, pure, exclusive dedication to Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Govindasundarjiu.’

Yet Srila Sridhar Maharaj saw himself rather as a gatekeeper whose position it was to give entrance, or a visa, into that transcendental land of Divine Love. And Srila Guru Maharaj stressed that though the passport is easy to obtain – by the grace of Their all-merciful Lordships Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – the visa which will allow entrance to certain destinations is not so easily attained. Purity has a price, and the value of our purity will be measured by the degree of sacrifice and surrender we have to the Centre.

Srila Guru Maharaj is, without doubt, the personification of *sharanagati*, self surrender to the highest degree. As the transcendental gatekeeper he was fully conscious and conversant with all of the illustrious conclusions of the revealed scriptures, and he even illuminated certain priceless, hidden treasures of scriptural truth he had been posted to protect from exploitation and misrepresentation. Our beloved Srila Guru Maharaj was found to be graced with a mild and tolerant disposition, personifying the perfect example of devotion explained in the *siksastakam* verses of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. So much so that if Mahaprabhu’s eight sacred *siksastakam* prayers were to be concentrated and personified then they would surely be named Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami, the living incarnation of Sri Gauranga’s sankirtan spirit of compassion for the fallen souls.

Every atom of the form of the divine personality of Srila Sridhar Maharaj was gloriously united with the corresponding atoms of the Transcendental form of our Lord. And this is the Absolute Harmony Srila Guru Maharaj invites us all to come and live within. The inner herald calls us to come and live in that divine civilisation where we, like he, can have complete respect and care for each other, and for every unit of that all-charming environment.

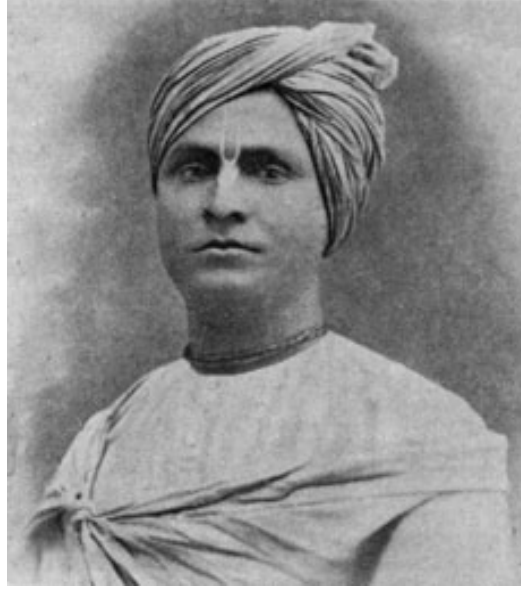
In remembrance of our beloved Ranee.
Sri Sri Prapanna-jivanamritam, verse 5.1

*raksiyati hi mam krishno
bhaktanam bandhavas ca sah
ksemam vidhasyatiti yad
visvaso 'traiva grhyate*

“Certainly Sri Krishna will protect me, because He is the friend of the devotees. He will definitely bless us with all auspiciousness and success.”

Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj

Autobiography



of

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaja

(transcribed of a taped conversation)

I was born at midnight, Saturday 10th October, 1895. Navami tithi [lunar day] under the same sign as Lord Ramchandra. Krsna-paksa [dark moon fortnight]. Sriman Mahaprabhu was also born on a Saturday. I was the second child. The first was a daughter, but she died early, so Ram Kavach [a protective mantram and amulet] was given to my mother for the protection of the next child, that is, myself. So I was born after my mother took Ram Kavach.

There were two thatched rooms, one of which was the maternity room. Because the first child had been lost, after I was born and my mother was still confined within the maternity area, just in the front of that place my two English-knowing cousins kept night watch to make sure that any ghosts or something like that may not come in the shape of a cat, or in any other way. So as they were reading and studying, they would protect the first half of the night. They were B.A.s studying for M.A. And during the second half or last portion of the night two Sanskrit students, one cousin and another an uncle, sat there just in front of that temporary shed, reading, to guard against any unseen attack at that time. They all kept night watch.

Then, as I remember, when I was a boy being carried on the shoulder of my father, there was going in the distance one Sankirtan party; crying, I asked him to take me there. Anyway, to console me he took me there for some time and then came back.

I had a very good memory, especially in Sanskrit. I was taught a sloka in praise of Lord Siva, and I could chant that by memory. When I was one year eight months, my grandfather died, but I can't remember him. My earliest recollection is an earthquake. I was born in 1302, Mohammedan era, and 1304 in the month of Vaisakh there was an earthquake. I was only a child then of one year and eight months or so, but I remember that . I remember the shaking of the earth, so many cows gathered, and so on-this is my earliest recollection.

Then, my first brother was born when I was three. I remember the scene of the birth of my brother, around August, 1898. I also remember when I reached the age of five and I was engaged in studying writing, and I was given to my maternal uncle's house. Many things before that I can remember as well. And when I was in my maternal uncle's house, for three years for early education in a primary school, I got some help from one of my aunts who taught me Ramayana and Mahabharata. That helped me a great deal. Already I had some affinity for all those things, some type of intuitive knowledge and partiality to ancient mythological teachings and culture of the orthodox section. From very childhood my tendency was with culture of the orthodox section-Veda, Upanisad, etc., faith in God-all these things.

At nine years I was admitted into high school [intermediate according to the current system in India]. As a student, there in the debating club I always sided with the ancient Sastric culture, even against the teachers that took up the cause of the renaissance or reformation. I was always on the side of the previous culture. I fought with them, and I don't think they could defeat me. Then I got my sacred thread in the family tradition when I was fourteen years. I feel that my memory was more or less quite sharp. I could remember what I saw and heard in my early age.

I am told that I had a general tendency that if anyone would come to ask me something, I would reply, "No." Whatever would be asked of me, "No." But once, when one of our family-members, a scholar, went to appear for his examination, he came to ask me whether he would pass or not. I pronounced, "Yes." And he won a scholarship. Then I matriculated from the local High School when I was fifteen years of age. I could write Sanskrit verse before that.

I like sacrifice in life. The magnanimous side. I had affinity for Lord Ramchandra, for the model Pastimes, but not so much Lord Krsna, because of His Vrndavan Lila. I could not accommodate why God should be a liar and a girl-hunter. I could not accommodate this. Though I saw Radha-Govinda Murtis [Deities]-They seemed to be very, very charming. I found some mystic background there, but on the surface, I had more liking for Ramchandra than Krsna.

My attraction to Krsna first came through Bhagavad-Gita, and then through Mahaprabhu. I liked Ramchandra for His magnanimity. I was mainly attracted by the self-giving ideal. So I liked Radharani very much, I liked Mahaprabhu very much, but my attraction to Krsna was less. My attraction to Krsna came through Mahaprabhu and through Radharani-from Their side. When I was nine or ten or so, there was a temple where Radha-Krsna Deities were installed in Jagadananda Pur, near Katwa. Every year in Karttik month my father used to read Srimad-Bhagavatam there. Sometimes I visited that temple with him, and I found some mystic atmosphere there. It seemed very mystical to me.

After matriculation I went to Baharampur [District Mushirabad] for college study at the Krishnanath College. There, with the company of one of my cousins, my maternal uncle's son, I came into connection with the East Bengal people, who were renowned, we had heard, for their boldness and sacrificing nature. I took residence in the same hostel as them.

Somehow, I had passed matriculation second division, [Srila Guru Maharaj had suffered a very dangerous bout of malaria for a whole year at that time.-Ed.] but I passed I.A. [Intermediate Arts] in the first division. When we were studying in the local school, we had to do

some family works along with our study. But now, from the hostel, I passed in the first division.

Then I was again admitted in that same college at Baharampur. After the fourth year we sat for the examination of B.A. When I was a student of the fourth year I came into the connection of a younger boy who had just passed matriculation and was newly admitted into the college. In the college I found that there was a small section of students who were addicted to some meditation and puja, etc. And there was another group that did not care for worshipping, but they liked the service of patients, and to do good for the public. But I have an internal nature for both.

I was a fourth-year student and that boy was a first-year student-three years gap. I found that he was given to both sides very intensely; taking the Name of the Lord sometimes very loudly like a madman, and also doing sandhya-vandana [regular morning, noon and evening prayers and worship] etc. At the same time, when there was any patient he would engage himself in their service, even neglecting to attend the college class. Both sides-social service as well as worship were combined in him.

Before this, when I was in school I got a book where it is mentioned that if we can go on with the japam [meditational chanting] of Gayatri 432 times daily, we can achieve a very good spiritual improvement. I practiced that for some time, and at that time I tried my best to understand the revealed truth-without consulting any dictionary or grammar; I had heard that Gayatri is conscious, spiritual, not dead words. So, if I go on with japam Gayatri itself will express its meaning and purpose. I approached it with that attitude, and I used to feel some light coming from the words of Gayatri itself; I had some knowledge about that for some time.

Then, as I said, I came in connection with that boy in college, and I tried to associate with him. His name was Sri Suresh Bhattacharyya-he came from a Brahmana family of Faridpur. The founder of the Bharat-sevashram, Sri Pranavananda, was from his village. Sripad Madhusudan Maharaj also comes from the same village-Bajepratapur in the district of Faridpur.

One day, when we two were going on a morning walk and also cleaning our teeth with small twigs, he referred to his father with the expression, 'that gentleman.' I took exception to that.

"Why do you use this expression for your father? You say that gentleman? What is this!"

He said, "Yes, I have committed a wrong; I shouldn't have spoken in this way before you. But really it is like that. 'That gentleman'-he was a gentleman, and in this life I came to him and he has protected me for some time, and in the next life I shall go to some other place; in this way we are moving hither and thither, coming to some gentleman and from there to another gentleman..."

Although I gave opposition, that point hit me very hard. I began to think, "Yes, it is true. We are in the midst of father, mother, brother, or, as he said, 'that gentleman'. What real connection have I with them, or they with me? We are all almost like strangers!" Thinking and thinking on this point the whole world became as vacant. I felt a furious atmosphere, with no shelter to take anywhere. A chaotic position, and I have no position of stability. Wherefrom am I coming, where to go, how long am I to stay here-this is a point in the infinite. I am an uncertain point in the whole of the infinite. A great shock came to me in this way. And that was the great turn in my life.

The worldly achievement has no value. I was studying, a fourth-year student. I was to appear in a few months for the final examination. My friends were alarmed at seeing my position. "What are doing? You are neglecting your studies! How will you be able to pass? Your father is sending money [for your education]; you are not so rich."

In this way they tried their best to help me but I couldn't concentrate on any book of study. They said, "If you can't do so, we shall read and you try to hear." At that time, my friend gave me some literature on Mahaprabhu's Life and Teachings, and I devoured it like nectar. I found some position there-it is not that I am nowhere. Here is the support-the basis, the foundation; I found here the sustenance, hope and shelter I needed.

In this way I began to read and read. My very nature was that whatever I read, I read scrutinisingly. It may be slow, but my reading is more or less very accurate and representing the true aspect. I could also hear very clearly. Even without reading, acute hearing was also a part of my nature. Whatever I heard, I could grasp the very purpose and keep it within me. And here also by thorough reading I found my life, my future hope, everything. I was converted. In my mother's family there was some recognition of Sri Chaitanyadev, but my paternal were orthodox smarttas. They hated the followers of Chaitanyadev. Chaitanyadev has created a chaotic society. Pests that cannot keep their own stand in the social position-it is they who gather to follow Chaitanyadev. Those who have lost their social position become Vaisnavas and they say that they are followers of Chaitanya. In my father's family they held such a hatred. But after this I became fully converted into a follower of Chaitanya. Such a feeling came in me, not only intellectually, but in heart and mind also. I underwent a wholesale conversion.

Then my father died. He was disappointed and dejected. I was the eldest son; he had some hope in me for family matters, but when he saw such change in me, it may be said that he died almost heartbroken. The burden of the family also came on my mind, but my state of mind was somewhere else. The chance came to me to lead a life of abnegation. For one year the son won't use any umbrella or shoes. I made some extreme addition-I used nothing but one piece of cloth and a sheet for one year. And half-mad I used to do agriculture work and service to the cows. Anyway, I passed B.A. The Baharampur section where I appeared, my classmates, said this was a wholesale massacre! Very few could pass, but somehow I passed. Some of my classmates said, "Oh, by the method of worshipping and satisfying God he has passed! He did not study at all but he passed, only by worshipping God." They said like this.

When my father died, almost with full consciousness he passed away-he told several things to me. One was that I would have to marry. I had never uttered a lie. Whatever the effect, I strictly spoke the truth. But I couldn't commit myself before him. So I felt pressured-'Whether you marry or not don't disturb me in this time of my death. Say that you will do it.' Anyhow, the expression came from me, "I shall try to

fulfill your request." In this way, in a modified way, I answered him. Then anyhow, I had to marry. Married life continued for six years. In the meantime I went to study again in the law class. But the Gandhi movement of non cooperation came forward and I joined the movement, because there was some sort of promise that 'within one year I shall give svaraj [independence] to you.'

I wanted to become a sannyasi, but the countrymen want one year, so I thought I must sacrifice this for them. I left law college and worked for some time posted as a secretary of the movement here in Kalna. In this way, and sometimes in the village for two or three years. Then it was stopped for some time, and later I was wanted for service in Calcutta. With the help of government office superintendent I got some vocation and I put up in Calcutta. I attended the office there.

My attraction stays always towards Mahaprabhu. In the meantime I wandered here and there searching for a sadhu from whom to take initiation. But I couldn't select anyone to my taste or satisfaction.

One day, I was returning from the office and I found a placard in Chittaranjan Avenue: Gaudiya Math Mahotsav [Grand Festival] for one month. The address was given, near the Pareshnath Temple. I found this red-colored placard. I thought, Gaudiya Math must be Mahaprabhu's followers, let us go and see what is there. When I was a law student, through Suresh Bhattacharyya I knew the founder of Bharat-Sevashram, Sri Pranavananda, and he tried his best to take me into his mission; but I flatly refused.

"My head is sold to Mahaprabhu, Gauranga, so I can't go anywhere else."

He said, "I also have great reverence for Mahaprabhu Chaitanyadev, but I think the first stage must be Buddhistic abnegation or vairagya and indifference [to the world]. Second, Sankar's Vedanta or jnana. And the last and highest will be Chaitanya's Prema. Otherwise people will misunderstand that Prema for lust."

I replied, "Yes, what you say is alright-that Sri Chaitanyadev's Premadharmma is the highest, above the Buddhistic and Sankarite conceptions of theism. But Chaitanyadev has not told us, 'Go to the Buddhists and practice vairagya, and then go to Sankar and have

knowledge of the Vedanta, and then come to Me.' He has told that 'wherever you are, take the association of a sadhu and you can take the Name.'"

He was silenced.

I said to him, "If you have got any supernatural power, I will be grateful if you can say where my spiritual guide, my Gurudev, is."

But he took the name of some gentleman, Haranath. I went to search for him but could not find him. But this was when I found that placard and went to Gaudiya Math. There I found only one gentleman manning the outside hall, and the rest had all gone on procession of Nagar-sankirtan [congregational chanting in the town]. Then I had a little talk with that gentleman. I had studied somewhat about Chaitanyadev and other Scriptures, but I found that these people representing the Math had deeper and more sound knowledge than I. Then, the party came back from Nagar-sankirtan and I found Guru Maharaj in front with his danda [mendicant's staff]. As soon as he reached in front of the Math some disciple came and took the danda from him and gradually he was received there.

At first sight I found Guru Maharaj's attitude was that of complete indifference to the ordinary world. He does not care for anyone, he is self-sufficient. I got that sort of impression from his first sight. Then I began visiting. Gradually I came to realize that I wanted to stay in such company.

Unfortunately I had been unable to find it before, but now the thought came to me, what's to stop me coming and staying here? I cast my glance homeward-father gone, mother living, three younger brothers-they won't be much affected. But my wife will be affected. I don't know why, but a sudden thought came in my mind that if she dies, I am free. This thought came. I was attracted by that association. There were so many members of gentlemanly and educated nature, and wholly given to the Service of Mahaprabhu. That attracted me most.

And it was that very day, I came to my quarter and found that my wife was ill. I came home that night, and after three days she passed away. My mother tried to have me married again, but she could not do so. And within six months she also disappeared in Haridwar at the time of

the Kumbha Mela. She died there. One of my brothers, Satyen, was attending her with other pilgrims and sisters, etc.

I was free. I was visiting the Math. I was thinking that I must cast my faith here, so I thought it necessary to know as much as possible about the mission; and to know the mission means to know the leader of the mission. So I tried to go upstairs to where Guru Maharaj stayed. I would go in front of his room and sit there to hear, because I was thinking I shall join here. Then one day, it so occurred that Kirtanananda Prabhu, one brahmachari, stopped me when I was making an attempt to go upstairs.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to Guru Maharaj. I like it very much [to hear and associate]."

"No, never. You must stay here in the waiting room, and when you find anyone you will inform him who you want to meet. He will check, and when he returns with the answer you can go. Otherwise you must stay here. Never cross this threshold."

A little harsh. Then I thought, 'What should be the considerate nature of the sadhus? Why should there be any difference outwardly and inwardly? So I need not come here again!'

But at that very moment the position of Sukadev appeared in my mind. I had read in Mahabharata that Srila Vyasadev sent Srila Sukadev Goswami to Rajarsi Janak to finish his education or sadhana. Srila Sukadev came, and he was detained for seven days at the outer gate. Then information went to Janak, who sanctioned, "Allow him to pass the gate." The next gate, he was again detained. In this way, there were seven boundaries of the capital, and at each of the seven gates he was detained for seven days. So seven times seven means forty-nine days he was detained, and only then he could meet Janak. This thought came in my mind. And then the next concluding thought came, 'If there is anything bad here, and they take me and put me onto a throne to worship me, I should not come here' and if there is real good, and they beat with a broomstick, I must not leave!' That conclusion came in my mind, and I kept visiting.

Then one day, Guru Maharaj was strolling on the roof just after having taken his afternoon food. Generally he did not take any food at night. I just approached, and took my stand in a corner. One man was attending him. Guru Maharaj asked, "Has he something to say?"

The attending person came and asked me, "Have you something to say?"

"No. I have nothing to say."

He went back. "He says he has nothing to say."

Then Guru Maharaj said, "He has something to ask?"

He again came to me, and said, "Guru Maharaj said, have you got something to ask?"

"No, I have nothing to ask."

He again returned to Guru Maharaj. "He says he has nothing to ask."

Then again Guru Maharaj put, "He has got some purpose in mind for coming here."

The person returned to me.

I said, "Yes, without purpose no incident can happen. When I have come, I have some purpose."

"What purpose?"

"To gain the grace of you all." That was my answer. Nothing else but that.

Perhaps that touched Guru Maharaj. He approached me and enquired from me who I was, what I did, where was my home and so on. And then he said, "Yes, you are fortunate. You are born in the area of Gauda-mandal."

They had one booklet printed then and the attending person said, "Guru Maharaj is offering this booklet to you."

I said, "I already have it."

He said, "That does not matter; with his good will he is giving this to you, so it is something else. You take it."

The I took it on my head and accepted it. That was the first talk with Guru Maharaj.

The following year I was invited to Sriman Mahaprabhu's Appearance Ceremony at Mayapur. At that time I was visiting the Math and hearing. I went there for the Ceremony. At that time my mother was also inviting me to the village Gumo where she was staying with my second brother. She wanted to see me before going to Haridwar, and

the Gaudiya Math people were also inviting me to Mayapur. I was in a dilemma.

What to do? It was my mother's call-and maybe the last. She might not live, her health was not good. This was the call. And I thought, I want to take this side in my life, so this side must be given preference. That is, I avoided the call of my mother to see her, and I went to the Gaudiya Math instead.

From their talks in general, I found that they do not care for the opinion of anyone else; but when anything is quoted from Scripture, they give a patient hearing. This was their nature. Summarily they reject all, they don't care for anyone, but they care only for Scriptural truth; that they soberly consider and evaluate. But with adherence they reject so many stalwarts of the then society-this Aurobindo, this Gandhi, the Ramkrishna, the [imitationist] Goswamins-they summarily reject them all. But Mahaprabhu, Bhagavatam, Gita-they are all-in-all. I had an attraction, a taste for them. I could identify with them.

Still, there was some sort of objection. One was that Guru Maharaj comes from a Kayastha family, that is considered sudra, and I come from a brahmana pandits' family of great honor in the society. Ostensibly, and brahmana should have been suitable; in this way some sort of objection was felt in me. Then, when I went to Mayapur I again saw many things that touched me.

Srila Prabhupad was delivering a lecture to so many gentlemen who had come from Krsnanagar-educated persons. In another place the elderly Sripad Bhakti Pradip Tirtha Maharaj was giving a lecture. Somewhere else Sripad Bhakti Svarupa Parvvat Maharaj was found writing receipts, collecting funds from the people. It was a hive of activity. I felt a transcendental, happy atmosphere there.

When the celebration was over, Guru Maharaj was sitting in a canvas chair on the verandah of his room, and many persons were offering him obeisance's and going home. At that time he was speaking, giving some discourse. I was always very eager to hear him. He was saying, "Don't cheat me, you people." I was alert. What? Where was the

question on cheating him? Why cheating?! Everyone was invited, they came, and now they are leaving; what was his point about 'cheating'? Then the next thing he said was, "You all came with the understanding that you will engage yourselves in the Service of Krsna, and so I have entered into some relationship with you. And now, only as a fashion you have attended this ceremony and you are going home to engage yourselves in worldly affairs; but your assurance to me was that you would all serve Krsna, but... disappointed..." Then he continued, "You may say 'Oh, I have got some important business and after finishing this I shall come and join you as soon as possible' but no, no! If you tell me there is just a little fire and after extinguishing the fire you will return, then I say that is also not necessary. If fire burns the whole world you so not lose anything. Rather you are spared if you can disconnect from those things that are burnt. All your positive engagement, your inner hankering, has corresponding things in Krsna. All your necessities and hankering will be satisfied in the service of the Holy Lotus Feet of Krsna, and nowhere else." He was speaking so forcefully.

I was wonder struck. I thought, I would never hear anywhere in this living world such intense necessity for Krsna-bhajana-so I must throw my head here. It was then that I took the decision that I must be a disciple here.

Before my mother died she had had some apprehension that 'he is my eldest son but he will become a sannyasi without completing my sraddha ceremony [last rites]; then who will do my sraddha ceremony?' So when she passed, I went home and completed the sraddha and after finishing that I came, in the last part of April, to join the math. At first, I said that my two younger brothers would finish their studies and take to their vocations, and then I would come away [from the family and join].

But Sripad Bharati Maharaj and others said that I had a great opportunity.

They pressed, "No, no! Krsna has taken your wife, and Krsna has taken your mother. He has done enough for you. Really if you neglect to avail yourself of the chance, perhaps some other obstacle will come and this life will be spoiled with no hope."

I asked, "What are you saying?" They said, "Come immediately." I took that advice and joined immediately. I was living together with my two brothers in a hostel, and they came with me. They went back crying, I remained in the Math.

I stayed at the Calcutta math for some time. I was requested to do some service in the press there, but I was not particularly inspired by the press work of proofreading, etc. I had much liking for the preaching-to go on kirtan and preach. So, I was next sent on a preaching tour.

The first stop was at the Dumurkonda math [in Bengal] and from there to Benares, then to Vrndavan. There, there was nagar-kirtan for some time, then I was taken to Delhi where there was door-to-door collection for some time. Then Kuruksetra math was established and I was made math commander there, and then I was alone. A small village-town and the place of Kuruksetra. That is a solitary place except for during the solar eclipse when there is a great rush of hundreds of thousands of people. Doing collection, I passed about two or three years there. Then the Delhi math was founded and I was in charge there. Then I visited Simla and other places for preaching.

Every year in August we had to come back to the Calcutta Math celebration for one month. So when I came back here I was taken by Sripad Bhakti Hrday Bon Maharaj and Sri Hayagriva Prabhu [later Sripad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Maharaj] in a party towards Madras side, installing the footprints of Mahaprabhu. Then again upon returning, the Bagh Bazaar Math was opened, and from the original rented house in Ulta Danga the Deities were moved in procession in a chariot to Bagh Bazaar Math, and a one-month festival was held there. After that Prabhupad went on that year establishing and installing those .-pitha [footprints of Mahaprabhu] up to Mangalgiri, near Bejoyda, Kobhur, and so on.

Then he went to Madras and declared the opening of Madras Gaudiya Math and put us there. We rented a house. Sripad Bon Maharaj was the leader, and the senior sannyasi. In the meantime I was given sannyasa, recommended by Sripad Bon Maharaj. He said about me, "He can preach well; he's a good preacher rather than a canvasser." I

had a B.A., and I was known as Ramendrasundar Bhattacharya, B.A. My duty was to approach the people and introduce the sannyasins, and more or less I had the work of a canvasser. But Sripad Bon Maharaj said, "He's not a good canvasser but a good preacher. He can speak Hari-katha very well." Then I was given sannyasa in October, 1930, and after installing footprints of Mahaprabhu one by one in various places, Prabhupad opened the Math in Madras [as above mentioned], and we were left there and began preaching for three years or so.

Then there was Vrndavan parikrama, circumambulation of the whole of Vrndavan. We joined that program, and then Sripad Bon Maharaj went to England for preaching, and I was in charge of Madras math. The temple was constructed almost in my time. Later, Bombay math was opened, and I was again taken there. I lived there for some time, and later was taken with the general party with Prabhupad. Staying most of the time with Prabhupad, we preached in different places of Bengal. At 5:30 a.m. on 1st January, 1937, Prabhupad left the world. Before this, Prabhupad had wanted me to go for preaching to London, but I said, "I am not fit for this-I can't follow their accent, and I don't have the tendency to mix with them very closely. So you will spend money to send me, but I won't be able to show any satisfactory result. Of course, if you order me I must go, but I am just informing you what I am." Then he sent Sriyukta A.B. Goswami Prabhu [later Sripad Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaj] instead of me.

When Prabhupad became ill, I attended his sickbed. Just one day before his departure he called for me, and he asked me to chant Sri Rupa-manjaripada. At that time I was not accustomed to leading the kirtan. I was hesitating-Sriyukta Kunja Babu, later Sripad Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj, asked one Brahmachari Prabhu, "You go on singing." Then he began singing, but Prabhupad felt dissatisfaction. He said, "I don't want to hear the tone or sweet sound. Then that Brahmachari Prabhu stopped and I had to sing Sri Rupa-manjaripada. And the others said, "Prabhupad has given you admission to the Rasa-seva section."

About one year before this, I composed a Sanskrit poem about Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, and Srila Prabhupad was very happy with this. When I first read it to him, he remarked, "A very happy style." Next, I

heard, he said to Sripad Srauti Maharaj, "This poem is so fine, it is not written by him-it is written by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur himself, and has come out through him. It is so appreciable." Once, he said to Sriyukta Aprakṛta Prabhu, "I'm satisfied that what I came to say will remain after me-I find in this sloka [verse] the siddhanta [perfect theological conclusion]".

*sri-gauranumatam svarupa-viditam rupagrajenadrtam
rupadyaih parivesitam raghuganair asvaditam sevitam
jivadyair abhiraksitam suka-siva-brahmadi sammanitam
sri-radha-.-sevanamrtam-aho! tad datum iso bhavan*

"That which is the Gracious Gift of Sri Gaurachandra, the deep, internal purport of which is known by Sri Svarup Damodar, that which is adored by Sri Sanatan Goswami, and distributed by the Rasa-tattvacharyyas headed by Sri Rupa Goswami; that which is tasted and enriched by Sri Raghunath Das Goswami and followers, and tenderly protected by Sri Jiva Goswami and his company; and that which is venerated from afar by the great personages like Mahadev, lord of the gods, and Brahma, grandfather of the world-aho! marvel of marvels, that ecstatic nectar of the Exclusive Service of the Lotus Feet of Sri Radha-you hold the perfect position to mercifully give even that to us."

Before this also, I wrote an article for the spiritual newspaper Nadiya Prakash, and Prabhupad remarked to Sripad Sraman Maharaj, who was the editor, "If you can gather this type of article to publish in your paper, the standard of your paper will be raised. Such articles are desirable to be published." Anyhow, he appreciated my understanding and realization. There are many other instances.

Sagar Maharaja: I heard that Srila Prabhupad praised you as Sastra-nipuna.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Oh. In Madras, in the 'Gaudiya', Gaudiya Math's leading weekly paper, there was published one siddhanta. The birthday of Srimati Visnupriya Devi and the birthday of our Guru Maharaj were mistakenly transposed. Both are panchami [fifth lunar day]. Srimati Visnupriya Devi's is on panchami of the bright moon

fortnight, and Prabhupad's is on panchami of the dark moon fortnight. But they were transposed-Prabhupad to the bright fifth and Srimati Visnupriya Devi to the dark fifth. I read it carefully, and I thought the basis of the philosophizing was wrong. Why has Krsna-sakti come on the bright moon, and Gaura-sakti on the dark moon? I found it should be just the opposite.

I showed it to Sripad Bon Maharaj, considering it a grave error. He suddenly took up the pen and wrote a letter to the effect, "What is this? We thought that the editors have some touch with the reality and what they write has some real connection with the sentiment, but how can this sort of error be possible from them? Have they no srauta-connection? All concoction!" So it was detected, and an amendment was published in later issue.

When Prabhupada was there, the books "Ray Ramananda", "Relative Worlds" and "Brahma-samhita" were published. It was mentioned that when Mahaprabhu went to Vrndavan He met Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan Goswamins on the way. But I clearly knew that He met them when returning from Vrndavan, so I objected. Anyway, I didn't take it to Prabhupad's notice, but it must have come to his notice that Sridhar Maharaj detected all these things. On the occasion of his Vyasa-Puja, Prabhupad delivered a written address, and there he mentioned before my name, "Sastra-nipuna Sridhar Maharaj-he has very deep knowledge in the Scriptures"; that was his consideration.

Sagar Maharaja: And about discovering the place of Sri Ramananda Ray?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Yes, when I was called from Uttar Pradesh to join the Madras party, before that my name was Sri Ramendrasundar Bhattacharyya. But now he converted my name into Sri Ramananda Das, and with this name he sent me with a group to find out the place of the conversation between Sriman Mahaprabhu and Sri Ramananda Ray, and to install the .-pitha [footprints of Mahaprabhu] there.

At that time I delivered a short lecture in Raj-mahendry about that conversation of Sriman Mahaprabhu and Sri Ramananda Ray at Kobhur, and I heard from Sripad Krsnadas Babaji Maharaj that Sripad Bon Maharaj was of the opinion that this speech was extremely appreciable, and that it contained the most precious Teachings. Hare Krsna.

Sagar Maharaja: That Temple where you installed the .-pith is still existing today?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Yes. During our time the Deities were installed by Prabhupad, but there was only that .-pith mandir. A separate mandir was established after Prabhupad, perhaps by Sripad Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj.

Later, myself as a sannyasi and Sri Hayagriva Prabhu as a white-clad brahmachari, who was later Sripad Madhava Maharaj, worked together.

Also, I collected funds from the Raja of Jeipur [Orissa] for the Madras Temple. That is also history. Their new I.C.S. was Mr. O. Pulla Reddy. He was appointed 'Dewan' [government official] of Jeipur. Because that is an adivasi [indigenous peoples] area, a special sort of rule was introduced there by the British. The Dewan is more powerful than the King.

We came from Madras with some recommendation from the Chief Justice, Mr. Rameshan, to meet the Raja of Jeipur. Then, the Raja promised to pay the cost of the Madras Temple, but he kept requesting us, "Approach the Dewan, and he, and not I, will give you the money. So go and consult the higher. I am only giving my sign of approval, but the money will be paid by him. So meet him." I had heard that he was half-atheistic man, so I was hesitant to approach him. I said, "No, you are King, you are master, so it is better that you will give the money", and so on, but he insisted again and again. "No. You will have to meet the Dewan."

But when I met the Dewan, it was just the opposite. The Dewan said, "Oh, I'm the last man to pay you this amount, ten thousand, to build the temple at Madras. If you would be building it here, then I could have some consideration; people here would have some recreation in the temple. But these poor people, half-fed and half-clad-if we get any money in excess, I must give an order for this luxury of constructing a temple; and that, too, is in Madras town. Go there and collect funds to construct your temple."

Then I thought this is a hopeless case, so drastic medicine must be applied. So I came out with this sloka of Srimad-Bhagavatam:

*vikriritam vraja-vadhubhir idam cha visnoh
sraddhanvito 'nusrnuyad atha varnayed yah*

*bhaktim param bhagavati pratilabhya kamam
hrd-rogam asv apahinoty achirena dhirah*

I said to him, "You want to help the adivasis, and I also want to help them. But your help is in a particular way, and my help is in another way, It has been told in the Scriptures that to hanker for something [in this world] is a heart-disease. It is mentioned in Bhagavatam by Sukadev Goswami, 'kamam hrd-rogam.'

"I want this, I want that, I want thousands, I want millions-that is heart-disease, and not real. When I was a hog, I devoured a hillock of stools, but hunger is not appeased. When I was an elephant I finished a whole forest, but hunger is not finished.' So hunger can never be finished in this way.

"There are so many who have amassed millions, still they say, 'No, this is very little, I want more, more.' So this is heart-disease, and in the Bhagavatam Sukadev Goswami has given the medicine for this. Vikirtam...when you can accommodate the Absolute to have His full, unrestricted play, and use His ownership with everything, every atom in the creation-if you can accommodate such a conception of the Absolute with the environment, then you can get out of this heart-disease. There's no other way."

The man was impressed. Tears fell from his eyes. "Swamiji, I believe in God."

"Your eyes bear testimony to that."

"I shall pay your money, he said. But not just now; go to Madras, I shall pay." He sent the money, and the Madras Temple was constructed.

My preaching was not that of the false canvasser, but straight dealing; dealing with the plain truth. Not any coaxing or indirect way, flattering, or by sweet words to somehow rob the man. Straight talk, straight dealing representation. My guide was, 'why have I come here?' What fascination brought me here? I tried my best to represent that fascination to them. 'This is the cause for preaching-you must appreciate such cause. I have got appreciation in this line, and I don't think that I did wrong.' Every moment I think I'm justified to accept this principle and to march on, in this line.

After the disappearance of Guru Maharaj there were trustees appointed by him and he said to make a governing body... But

unfortunately for us..... there were many discrepancies and the mission could not be kept together.

Although I thought that I must try my best to purify the movement, according to my conscience, it was not to be so. So I thought I must leave silently. My principle wouldn't be to try to fight again amongst one another to purify the mission. That was my mentality. Others, stalwarts, could not tolerate the discrepancies and they were fighting.

I was somewhat still associated when there was a case, and some stalwart Godbrothers were jailed and the case went on. I couldn't leave like a coward, but after perhaps a year the case was finished, they were release, and I went to Vrndavan leaving the association of the Math. I don't care for such fighting.

They tried their best to keep me with them but I said it was not possible for me to remain in the association of [what was now becoming] quarreling elements. I stayed there at Govardhan for a month, and completing the Urjja vrata there, I took Govardhan Sila and came here and hired a house for two rupees per month. When I returned from Vrndavan I met my previous brother [my brother from my family], Mani Babu. He was in the service of the railway. I asked him to give me ten rupees per month for a few months. He agreed and did so for two or three months, and with that I came here. Gradually the others tried to find out where I was. Finally they found me out and they began to visit me now and then. Whenever they came they would bring some gift or so.

Sriyukta Sakhi Charan Ray secured this plot [where Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math stands today]. He purchased it with his own money. Here I began my 'heart-service' in a cottage here. 1942 on Rathayatra Day I entered that cottage with Govardhan Sila. Before that I lived for some with Sripad Kesav Maharaj in that rented house, and sometimes in Midnapore Math with high people like Sripad Yayavar Maharaj, Sripad Madhav Maharaj and others.

But here I was separated. Only one person was with me, then after some time another person with a few gentlemen of Orissa came, and some other Godbrothers also came. Then Sripad Govinda Maharaj, as a boy, Sri Gaurendu Brahmachari, and others came.

Sripad Krsnadas Babaji said to me, "You please give attention to this Sri Gaurendu Brahmachari; he's very intelligent and qualified." I tried to give a little more attention to Gaurendu Brahmachari, but others could not tolerate that. I wanted to help him by Sanskrit education, etc., but they could not tolerate that, and they gave a proposal that we must prepare a deed. By that time this building had already been constructed in 1943. Two persons who had stayed with me for some time now demanded a document naming three Godbrother trustees, two themselves and one of whom was to be myself.

I then asked according to which law it would be managed. They said by majority vote, which meant that whenever they combined they could do anything with me they liked. So I said, "I avoided remaining in the company of many respected Sannyasins and so many others. I came to live alone. That does not mean that you both will guide me. I can't accept this." They began to revolt and disturb. There was a compromise.

Sripad Goswami Maharaj and Sripad Madhav Maharaj came. There was about five thousand rupees in the bank and another thousand or so was to be paid to them, and then I would be here with absolute proprietorship. Sripad Goswami Maharaj came to my help; he gave a loan of four thousand, and Sripad Yayavar Maharaj and others collected some funds from different parts, then seven thousand was given up, and then from that time I am here. This is the history.

I do not go for preaching very often. I'm almost always sitting here, and I very rarely go out in the previous style. Sripad Madhav Maharaj was always very affectionately accusing me, "You are denying the educated section of the people. Sitting here idle, you are denying the people. You have quality and capacity to preach Mahaprabhu's Teachings, especially to educated section, but you do not do so." Whenever he came he would always charge me. Almost every year, after completing the Gaura-purnima celebrations he used to visit me, and he would charge me! And also, every year for his Calcutta Math celebration I used to go and deliver lectures there. In this way, days have passed.

I first came to meet Sripad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj in Allahabad when I was white-clad [before sannyasa]. After that I came here [Bengal], and then went to Madras. It was probably just before 1930 when I met him at Allahabad. At that time he was an agent of Karttik Bose Laboratories. He was taken to the Math. Prabhupad was not there then. 1933 or so after Vraja-mandal parikrama Prabhupad came back to Allahabad for laying the foundation stone, and at that time he met Prabhupad on a few visits and took initiation. You are already familiar with my relationship with him. (end of conversation)

All Glories to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga

Home Comfort

An Introduction to Inner Fulfilment



Swami B.R. Sridhar

This booklet is compiled from informal discourses given by

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

The Founder-Acaryya

Of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip, India

Under the direction of
The President Acaryya

Srila B. S. Govinda Maharaj

Transcribed by: Sripad B.S. Tridandi Maharaj and Sri Mahananda
dasa Bhakti Ranjan

Foreword

I am feeling very fortunate to have come within the personal association of Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, our Srila Guru Maharaj, and now to have this chance to introduce this introduction booklet. Throughout his whole life Srila Guru Maharaj practised what he preached. The sincere practitioners are themselves an introduction to the subject of genuine, joyful, spiritual life, but they are not able to visit everyone personally. Therefore we are taking the opportunity afforded by the modern scientific age in order to print books to broadcast widely such wisdom. The vibration emanating from a printing press in this way can beneficially influence not only this mundane word, but it can even conquer souls already established in the spiritual plane. It is therefore very joyful and satisfying to see the manifestation of this publication, Home Comfort – An Introduction to Inner Fulfilment. It is a selection from our Divine Master's lectures introducing the subject of theistic spiritual life, and, for the service of his Divine Mission, it has been reproduced in print-form by the sincere efforts of the student practitioners here.

Up until his last days in this mundane plane Srila Guru Maharaj would bestow his mercy upon the conditioned souls in the form of lectures which he would sometimes deliver continuously hour after hour. From his example we can understand the injunction of the Scriptures that until our last breath we must try to practise service to the transcendental service world – and give that same opportunity to others.

If anyone will carefully read this booklet with sincerity, he must be benefited and receive inspiration, as well as the opportunity, to reach towards that life of true inner fulfilment.

Humbly,
Swami B.S.Govinda
Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math 8 February 1992

Part One

Please listen attentively to what I shall explain. In a scientific way I shall try to explain, the subject to you, in general, independent of all religious conceptions.

First of all we are to understand that there are three planes of life: the plane of mundane enjoyment, the plane of renunciation, and the plane of dedication. The plane of enjoyment is where we are at presently, more or less. Mundane enjoyment means exploitation; and without exploitation, none can exist in this plane:

ahastani sahashtanamam
apadani catuspadam
laghuni tatra mahatma
jivo jivasya jivanam

“Those that have hands live on those who have no hands. Four-footed animals live on grass, creepers, etc. and the big live on the small.” Everything is full of life: creepers, grass, and trees also life, but without exploitation none can maintain their body here.

This is the plane of exploitation, and, as Newton’s third law says, to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. By exploitation one takes a loan, and to clear that loan he will have to go down. In this way, there are so many jives (souls) going up and down, up and down due to action and reaction in the plane of exploitation. Society is trying to exploitation. Society is trying to exploit to the utmost; everywhere there is the attempt to live at the cost of others. Without it life is impossible in the area because this is the plane of exploitation.

The Buddhists, the Jains, the followers of Sankara, and so many others are trying to get out of this entanglement of exploitation and to find a life where there is no exploitation, no action and reaction. To avoid action and reaction they try to find a position of renunciation, and they come to a conception similar to dreamless sleep, that of *Samadhi*: to withdraw completely from the objective world and to remain in the subjective plane. Without allowing their feelings to move into the

lower plane, they always keep a subjective position, and that is something like dreamless sleep.

The *Vaisnava* section – those who serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead – are of the opinion that there is another world, the world of dedication. That dedication is just the opposite of exploitation. In the mundane plane every unit wants to exploit the environment, but in the plane of dedication, every unit wants to serve the environment; and not only the environment, but the real key to the life of that plane is to serve the Centre. We are living in an organic whole, so every point must be true to the organic Centre. The explanation is given in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* by the analogy of service the root of a tree:

*yatha taror mula-nisecanena
trpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasakhah
pranopaharac ca yathendriyanam
tatheiva sarvarhanam acyutejya
(Bha: 4.31.14)*

In the Vedic literature also, we find it said, “Try to find the one by knowing whom everything is known:”

*yasmina jnate sarvvamidam
vijnatam bhavati
yasmina prapte sarvvamidam
praptam bhavati
tad vijijnasasva tadeva brahma*

There is a central point by knowing which, everything is known, by attaining which everything is attained. The long and short of the entire Vedic advice is to try to find out that Centre. Therefore try to find out that Centre. In the beginning some may think this to be a ludicrous claim: “By knowing one, everything is known, by getting one, everything is got – what is this? Only a madman can say such a thing!” So an analogy is given in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*: when you pour water onto the root of a tree, the whole tree is fed, and if you put food into the stomach, the whole body is fed, similarly, if you do service to the Centre, everything is served. It is possible and to do that means to

enter the plane of dedication. Avoiding the plane of exploitation, and also that of renunciation, try to enter the plane of dedication. Your *atma*, your soul proper is a member of that plane. That is the real world, whereas this is the perverted reflection.

The real world is where every unit is dedicating itself to the whole, represented by the Centre, just as in a healthy body every atom will work for the welfare of the whole body. If an atom works for itself, it exploits to the extreme, and such local works for local interest are clearly bad. Every part of the body, and every atom, is to work for the welfare of the whole system. There *is* a Centre, and by the guidance of that it will work.

What is the position of the Centre? It is mentioned in *Bhagavad-gita*,

*sarvva-dharmman parityajya,
mam ekam saranam vraja
(Bg. 18.66)*

Krsna explains His position: “Abandon all *dharmmas* (duties) and just surrender unto Me.”

Now I want to express this conception from another standpoint.

Hegel was a good German philosopher and his philosophy is known as perfectionism. He has given an idea: the Absolute Truth, the Prime Cause of everything, must have two qualifications. What are they? It must be *by itself* and *for itself*.

Please try to pay attention. By itself means that He is His own cause – nothing else created Him. If anything else created Him. If anything has created Him, that creator will have the primary importance. Therefore, to be the Absolute He must be *anadi*, eternally existing and not created by anything. The Absolute must have this qualification.

The next qualification is that the absolute Truth is *for itself*. He exists for His own satisfaction, not to satisfy any other. If His existence is to satisfy another entity, then he will be secondary, and they for whose satisfaction He is living will have the prime position.

Therefore, the Absolute must have these two qualifications: He is His own cause, and He exists only to satisfy Himself, to fulfil His own purpose. The Absolute is by itself and for itself. If any straw moves, it moves to fulfil the purpose of the Absolute.

Everything – every incident, and whatever happens – must have to be for His satisfaction. So the real current is His *lila*, His Pastimes, but ourselves we are guided by separate interest: family interest or country interest or social interest or humanitarianism, etc. But in the infinite consideration it is all only a tiny part, and we are all engaged in acting for such separate interest. There is a clash between innumerable separate interests and so there is trouble. But we must leave all our so-called special interests, come out from misunderstanding, and try to attain the function of a unit active for the cause of the whole.

The conclusion of *Bhagavad-gita* given by Krsna is “*Sarvva dharmman parityajya* – Give up all your duties which you think at present you have to discharge, and – *mam ekam saranam vraja* – surrender to My feet.”

*aham tvam sarvva-papebhyo
moksaisyami ma sucah*

„I shall release you from all the troubles of which you can ever conceive.“

In other words you are to remember to be faithful to the Centre. At present all your respective duties are for local interest, but give up the local identification of your own interest and merge totally in the interest of the organic whole.

We see that if a police officer takes even three rupees for his own purpose, he is punished, but if he kills so many for the interest of the country, he is rewarded. Similarly, whatever is done for the satisfaction of the whole is good, but if you do anything for yourself or any local friend, you will have to be punished. In an industry, we have no right to take a bribe for our personal purpose, at the same time we have no right to call a strike, to close down the labour force, for then the industry will be destroyed.

Neither exploitation nor renunciation will do. Exploitation is clearly bad, and because we have no right to go on strike, renunciation is also bad. In an organic whole the common interest is that everyone must be dedicated to the Centre, and to the Centre means to the whole. When we put food into the stomach, the stomach will distribute it properly to every corner according to its necessity. That sort of life is *Vaisnavism*. There is an organic whole, and we are a part of that. We have our special duties in connection with the whole, and that is proper dedication for the whole. We are not to put food into the eye, or into the nose, or the ear, or anywhere except the stomach, then only will it be distributed properly and the whole organism will be healthy. All of us are parts of the whole universe, and our duty is to work for the whole, and that is devotion, dedication, surrender. And how are we to know about that? We will receive help from that? We will receive help from the revealed Scriptures, and from the many saints and agents who are also coming from that plane to bring us into harmony.

The religion of highest harmony has been given by Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanyadev who explained devotion on the basis of *Srimad-Bhagavats*, the book which is understood to be the real conclusion of all the revealed Scriptures. In this way He explained that energy or power is not the highest thing, but knowledge is above it. Knowledge can control power and give a beneficial result, but further, knowledge itself also holds a lower position: above it is love and affection, and that is the highest. Neither knowledge nor power, but only affection can give us fulfilment of life.

Mercy is higher than justice. Justice only exists where there is the necessity of laws, rules, etc., but in the realm of the Absolute Autocrat, who is the Absolute Good, there can be no question of any apprehension about Him. He is Absolute Good, and Absolute Good is Absolute Love and Affection, and that is home! Back to God, back to home. What is home? It is where we find that we are in the midst of our well-wishers. If we do not care for our own benefit, then there are so many who will take care of us – in fact the whole environment will take care of us – and that is home. That is the domain of the Absolute, and we can enter into His service, the highest position, and thereby see

the affection, love, harmony, and beauty that exist there. All these qualities are similar and they constitute the nature of the Prime Cause and Good, and we are to go there.

Misusing our free-will we have been somehow led astray but now we are being called, “Come home, back to God and back to home, the highest position, the land of love.” This is, in general and in short, the sum total which I have presented to you – this is Krsna conception in *Bhagavad-gita* and in *Srimad-Bhagabatam*, and it is the conception that has been given by Sri Chaitanyadev. This Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math and the whole of the Gaudiya Mission is preaching only for that. “Go to the Centre, use your life for total dedication to the Centre, and the Centre is all above justice. It is all-merciful, affectionate, loving, and beautiful.”

This is general background of Vaisnava religion, of *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and a brief history of all conceptions of religion – that is, exploitation, renunciation, and dedication are the three planes of life, and the soul proper is a member of the land of dedication. All are dedicating units but somehow, by misusing their partial free-will, they have entered into the world of exploitation. Buddha, Jain, Parasathan and others have helped those who want to withdraw from here, to get out of the entanglement of exploitation – of action and reaction – by complete retirement. They have said that after retirement, the soul can live happily. Still, there may be the possibility of again becoming entangled in this trap, but where the really free souls live, all are dedicating units, and when we want to trace what is harmonising them and maintaining them in that plane we shall see that all are working for the whole, and the whole is represented by the one Absolute Good. We are to see all these things, and for this the human birth is very valuable. In connection with the *sadhus* – the saints, the agent – we shall try our best to get out of this entanglement and enter into the land of love, dedication, and affection.

We have already published several books, and there are many old scriptures which also help us understand properly and in a more detailed way about all ontological aspects of religion.

Part Two

Our home is full of freedom, more comfort – everything. It is a place where there is a natural transactions of faith, love, affection, etc. It is inconceivable. The *Upanisads* say, “Don’t venture to test the unthinkable plane with your reasoning. That plane really is beyond the capacity of your thought. It is under a different set of laws. Your mathematical calculations and conclusions in this world are acquainted with points, planes, and solids. At present you are a man in the world of solids, and you have some limited association with planes and points in a somewhat abstract way, therefore how can you calculate about higher things of which you have no knowledge? The ways of living and the laws of that country are all unknown to you, so you cannot try to debate about that. That plane is of quite a different nature.”

If your understanding is limited to the laws of water, then how can you calculate about air? Similarly if you are familiar only with the laws of air, how can you make any calculation within the sphere of ether? Therefore, don’t rush to bring within your experimental laboratory those items which are beyond the capacity of your thinking, for that will be foolishness.

Higher things do exist, but the general man in this world has no knowledge about them. We are indeed experiencers and have some knowledge, but only to a particular degree and standard. We cannot venture to calculate what is beyond our reach. But if those who actually have experience of that plane will come to us and give us some information, then we can make some comparison: “This gentleman of a particular experience of ether has written in this way, another gentleman who has experience and has also experimented about ether has written in another particular manner.” In this way we can gain some understanding from their investigation and their real connection with the subject matter.

In the section of those investigating about telescopes, we can make a comparison of their findings. The experience of one researcher with his telescope is of a certain type and we can also learn about the experience of others with their particular telescopes. With the information available to us from their actual connection with the telescopes and their experiments, we may be able to conclude that perhaps a certain telescope was more powerful, another more powerful in a particular field, etc. So, we have some limited capacity to compare what has been discovered beyond our senses by means of the telescope, even though we ourselves may not have a telescope.

The subject of the higher things discovered by the mental “telescope,” or soul’s “telescope,” has been dealt with in the Scriptures. Such subject matter is known by the saints, and we are to take their help in order to have entrance within that land. We are not at present in a position to have experience of the higher plane, but later, by the help of the saints and Scriptures, when we shall ourselves have that type of telescope, we will be able to have such higher experience.

Sve svehadhikare ya nistha
Sagunah parikirttitah

“To pay attention to your own plane is admirable.”

Acintyah khalu ye bhava
Nastam tarkena yojayet

Don’t let the argumentative spirit overshadow everything. Argument is not all in all: It is not that it must be the resort of every belief. The spiritual realm is acintya, inconceivable, but still we are to try to understand things according to our capacity, faith, and realisation. Above all, we have to accommodate within our mind that sweetness is sweet, and truth is truth, however strong it may be, but we should not take any standard from here and apply it to that higher realm.

If one has no eyes but another can see, the blind man will naturally seek help from the one who has vision. We are also blind to what is within ourselves otherwise what is the necessity of consulting

a doctor? The doctor can see what we cannot: he will diagnose and then we will undergo treatment. Naturally we will have respect and will give him something for his assistance – it is not unreasonable.

The Guru is the specialist doctor, and we will understand his qualification when we come to see that what he says is real and not imaginary. Such vision will depend upon the degree of awakening of the eye. If one who is blind is treated by a capable doctor he will gradually directly perceive, „Yes, I begin to see something. I now have some eye experience.“ From that time on he won't care for the speculative opinions of the other blind people, but he will have his direct capacity to see. With the coming of sight he can understand that the application of the medicine has some real effect.

Scientific understanding is also similar. In earlier days when Faraday discovered electricity, many people laughed, „What is this? It is mere curiosity. What utility can we have from this electricity?“

I once read an account of Faraday demonstrating an experiment to show the effect of his discovery. He generated electricity with a machine and then he showed small pieces of paper being moved by that electric current. Many were satisfied to see his new discovery, but then a lady remarked, „But after all this, Mr. Faraday, what practical benefit shall we derive from this luxury play of yours.“

Faraday replied, „Madam, please can you tell me what is the utility of a newborn babe?“ His point was that when a baby is born we are to take care of him, then, when grown, his energy will be put to work usefully. Similarly, some consider that God consciousness is only a luxury, a fashion, or like playing – that it has no practical application or direct utility.

But when God consciousness becomes intense, those who experience it will see all other activities, however apparently important, to have no value. Why? Because ultimately we want to live. We don't want to die.

To live is the main necessity and the general necessity of all of us. No one can deny that they want to live, and not only live, but live

happily, properly, and consciously. Furthermore, we want to avoid all affliction, misery, etc.

When God consciousness arises within someone, he can see clearly, „Why is everyone engaged in a wild goose chase in this material world? Everyone wants happiness, but all are running after an imaginary phantasmagoria.“

Happiness can never be with mortal things. WE are making a transaction with the mortal world, but that cannot bring satisfaction; it can only lose our energy. What we collect on one side, disappears on another. A wise man should neither accept nor tolerate this sort of waste of energy as the principle of life.

Such a wise person can see another plane of life. He can see that he is not a party to this mortal world which is like a place of playing. He will feel, „I am immortal. I am a member of the eternal world but I have somehow become entangled in this mortal aspect of existence. So, as soon as I can shake off this connection I shall then stand in a normal position.“ He will find that he himself – the soul, the feeler, the conceiver – is a member of another soil but he has become entangled within this mortal pain-producing world. This is a miserable world. With the strength of his realisation he can make improvement in his progress to the immortal plane.

As proof positive comes before us we shall feel sure, „Now I see these things and hear these things, and this experience is all more real than the world about me. The world is vague, but what I now see and hear is more real than that.“

A direct transaction is possible with the soul, with God, and with God's land. Where we are presently living is the plane of indirect transactions: first the eye, ear, etc. collect experience, then it goes to the mind before we can have experience of this world. But in the case of the soul, we can feel everything directly ourselves without the help of any instrument.

Through a microscope we see one thing, and through the naked eye we see something else. There is a difference. Through the eye, ear, etc. we have some experience of this world, but concerning the soul, if we can withdraw from the “progress” in the negative side, we shall be able to feel, “Oh! *This* is the nature of the soul.” We shall directly feel who we are without the help of any instrument.

The soul can see itself, it can focus upon itself and through introspection he will realise his very nature. Through the process of introspection the soul, without the help of any other instrument, will perceive all possible conceptions of himself directly. He will then understand his own soil: he will gain the conception of a higher type of soil. On that positive side he will discover: “I do not die.”

The material plane is the plane of misrepresentation and misunderstanding, but in the higher plane there is no misunderstanding. Once admitted there, our conception, though it may be partial, will be clear and true. Anyone having that experience will be convinced and he will be determined to go forwards.

Socrates could feel that the soul was immortal. He was so intense with his feeling that he did not give any value to his own life in this mundane world. He neglectfully disconnected himself from this world because with great conviction he knew the soul to be immortal. Christ also was so much convinced of his Lord that he did not give any care for the happiness and pleasures of this world: he neglectfully rejected it all.

There are many things invisible to this fleshy eye that are visible with the eye of knowledge. We can concede that the eye of knowledge can see many things which the fleshy eye cannot. Similarly a deep vision exists by which we can see things in a different, more hopeful way: “Come and see!” An eye cannot see when it is covered by a cataract, but when the cataract is removed the eye can see. Ignorance is like a cataract in our eye that causes us blindness. Our vision is only superficial, but deeper vision can see many things. This eye backed by the eye of knowledge can see many things – deeper and deeper.

Our apparent sight has no value. Real value is present in the seer who can see with deeper vision. And all are not equal: there are the wise, the wiser, the eve wiser ... There is gradation, and according to his capacity the seer will see.

It is easy to see that at present we are members of this mortal world, but by what are we connected? It is our body that is the member. If we can go above the body we can go to the mind, then on to the intelligence, then to the soul. We will find that the plane where the souls live is eternal, and the soul itself is also eternal. From there we can go on to search after the Supersoul, the origin of all our thoughts.

The Supersoul is likened to the sun which is the origin of all rays of light. Once we find a ray of light we can approach the sun from which all rays emanate. Similarly, from the conception of our own selves, knowing ourselves to be particles of consciousness, we can search out a plane of super-consciousness, super-knowledge, and super-existence. In this way we can progress to the ultimate cause, the source of all. But we cannot go just according to our own whim and freedom, some sort of help from that plane is indispensably necessary. Such help comes in the form of Guru, the *Vaisnavas*, and other agents of that land. With their help we can make honest progress towards the goal.

At present we are as if monarchs of all we survey, but what we survey is all transient, mortal, and reactionary. If we look scrutinisingly we will see it is all reactionary. What is pleasing today, will later on turn into pain, therefore we must seek a good position somewhere else, a good place to build our home elsewhere. In the course of that search we will find that we do have our own home, and it is all-perfect.

“Home. Back to God, back to home – sweet, sweet. Home.” This sort of feeling we shall find within us if we are fortunate to be allowed a little participation by the grace of the canvassers of that land: the agents of the Lord. We shall be taken to that proper soil and we shall

gain some solid familiar type of conception of what our real home is like. In this way we shall progress to that side.

In the beginning we may think that we shall be going to some unknown quarter: “Innumerable living entities are here around me in my present world, but where I am now trying to go, that is uncertain. It seems imaginary and abstract.” However when we begin our journey we will gradually find that almost all existence is in *that* side, the side where all are truthful. We shall find that this material side is very meagre and limited, and here there is only a tiny representation of the truth.

From here we may think that most of the existence is here and only a very few special souls go from here to the immortal world such as Socrates, Muhammad, Buddha, etc. But gradually we will come to understand that the higher world is infinitely greater than the mundane portion we see here. We will gradually come to understand that as in a country a few people are confined in a hospital or a prison and are suffering, similarly a few persons are here in this mundane plane as punishment. As this becomes clearer to us we shall feel more courage to proceed, and with greater speed we shall run towards our home. Let us go home, and the nearer we are to home, our speed will increase more and more, “Oh. *This* is my homeland!”

At present we are outside and our mind is also focused outside. We are helplessly moving. Our hope lies only in the grace of the divine agents. They come to pick us up and warn us, “What are you doing? Don’t go on that side. It is the land of danger, the land of death. Come along with me. I shall take you to the land of eternal nectar.” Those agents come to arouse us from our slumber, our ignorant madness. They are the *Vaisnavas*, and they have also given the Scriptures which give some history of the land outside and of the saints who have gone there. Through the Scriptures our faith will gradually develop and we will increasingly keep association with the sadhus. In so doing we shall make even quicker progress.

One’s own feeling is the guarantee as to whether he is making real progress or not. *Hrdaye nabhya nujnato*. He will receive approval

from his own heart that he is making real progress. Otherwise, a man may be coaxingly taken in a particular direction only to feel frustration after some time, but such a transaction is not genuine – it is false, a hoax. In the name of religion so many such things do go on, like a trade, but that does not mean that real realisation and real emancipation do not exist. *Hrdaye nabhya nujnato* – the ultimate guarantee is the approval of your own heart, “Yes. Really this is what I want. From the innermost core of my heart I feel the desire to dance to find that such progress is possible.”

Part Three

Normally in this world we are men of action, men who exploit the environment and nature in order to gather energy. Always there is the attempt to collect more and more energy to use at our command, and to save something so it may be utilised in the time of necessity. In general, that is the very nature of those who live here. And if any hindrance will come in that attempt then it is considered that those circumstances are very bad because they oppose the object of life here, which is to collect more energy. However, to remind us about the importance of the inner wealth we are advised that the outer nature cannot do as much harm to us as our internal nature can do in its apathy to collect more wealth for the inner existence: the man within. We are to be mindful of this point: what comes from outside is not so important – it all comes and goes. Even the body which is at present the centre of our thoughts will vanish, therefore what is the necessity of collecting so much energy in connection with this body? Awaken from within your soul the proper man within you. Try to find him and try to collect help for him. This campaign is possible only with the connection of the *sadhu*, the saint.

We shall be the loser on any day in which we do not meet with a saint, and hear any discussion about the inner meaning and substance of life. Be conscious of this. In all respects and anyhow, be mindful of your own person. Look after your own interest by finding your own self. Be unmindful towards the external world and circumstances and dive deep into the reality, your inner wealth. Find your inner self and

the inner world within where your inner self is living. Try to find that home. Back to God, back to home. Utilise your energy only for going home, and not for wandering into the land of others: the land of death. Try to avoid the land of death at any cost, and always try to find out the eternal soil. You are to find out that you are a member of that soil. Try to understand what is your home, and why that is your home. What does *home comfort* mean? It means it is the natural place which is our birth-right. We have to face the fact that we are not at home. But if there is some hankering within us to search for that, we are fortunate.

Our necessity is to find how that inner thirst can be quenched. Our feeling should be: “The world is here and I am here, but I am unsatisfied. How can my inner self be satisfied.” We are in want, therefore by what process can this want be removed? For the present we have this fleshy body, but to know anything and everything about the body – about the bones, nervous system, blood, etc. – is all unnecessary. To know about the composition of the blood, etc. is just unnecessary detail. Our enquiry should be regulated in this way: “Who am I, and why am I troubled? I do not know how to rid myself of these problems.” This is the general question and we are to be concerned with that.

“*Athato brahma-jijnasa* – from where have I come? How am I living, and what is my future?” These are the main questions that should concern us, and we must concentrate the whole of our energy to find the solution. This does not only apply to just one person – myself – but this is the concern of all creation.

To seek the source of everything is the nature of proper enquiry, but to enquire after this and that and so many hundreds of things is simply a waste of energy. The *sastric* (Scriptural) enquiry has been couched in such a way: “From where have I come? What sustains me? What is my future? Why am I uneasy, and how can I acquire my inner fulfilment?” All enquiry should follow this standard way, otherwise there is some disease of enquiry: it won’t be proper enquiry. More and more curiosity may arise without end, therefore we must learn how to question, how to enquire, and in that way our energy will have some value and won’t be wasted.

Enquiry is bona fide when it is directed towards how to fulfil the real goal, therefore we are to save our energy and regulate it in the proper channel. This is *Kali-yuga* – the age of quarrel – and our real and only helpful necessity in life is the company of the established saints and the Holy Name of Krsna – *sadhu-sange krsna-nama*. Otherwise, deviating from that, we may be misguided at any and every step.

*sadhu-sange krsna-nama ei matra cai
samsara jinite ara kona vasttu nai*

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave this as the substance of all advice, and there is nothing more useful than this to help us get out of undesirability.

He says that to chant *Krsna-nama* but without the association of the *sadhus* also means that it will be very difficult for us to proceed. Therefore in one word the solution is in *sadhu-sanga*. We are to secure the company of a standard realised soul, then everything will fall into place, and the king of the *sadhus* is the Guru. Gurudeva is the king of the good-men who can give guidance. For one to be Guru it means that he can guide us satisfactorily, otherwise whom can we believe and trust to our can we believe and trust to our utmost understanding, and to whom can we fully submit and surrender? The Guru is where our enquiry will be fulfilled to its utmost necessity. From him higher direction will come from above, from a more and more elevated sphere of love. We are to connect with that high and subtlemost wave and we will be more benefited. This is the general idea.

On the whole, we are to try to always be at the disposal of the higher agency, at the disposal of the higher thinkers of the higher provinces. In that way we shall come in connection with the higher and most subtle layer of life. There are different waves of different types and interests, and of different loss and gain, but to connect with the highest should be our aim.

We are to see that the charm of this life is finished. Already we have had good experience that this is all stale. After all, wherever there are the four enemies, *janma*, *mrtyu*, *jara*, *vyadhi* – birth, death, old age, and disease, there cannot be any real happiness. Wherever there is death there cannot be any happiness. In such a plane we are always under the threat of death, so there is no charm: all charm is completely finished. Therefore, with eagerness we must make enquiry as to where we shall be able to live. We must select a higher plane where we can really live.

*yad gatva na nivartante
tad dhama paramam mama
(Bg. 15.6)*

In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* Krsna says, “The place from which there is no returning to this deathly plane is My supreme abode.”

*abrahma-bhuvanal lokah
punar avartino 'rjjuna
mam upetya tu kaunteya
punar janma na vidyate
(Bg. 8.16.)*

He instructs Arjjuna, “A permanent position is only possible in My plane. All occupations in this plane, even that of a king, are all just as in a dream. So if you want to get out of this dreaming life and enter into reality then raise yourself to the standard of finding the plane of reality, however subtle it may be, for that cannot be devoured by death. Collect your energy to build up something permanent. At present you are investing your energy in something that is going to be demolished at the next moment – a foolish attempt.”

*uddhared atmanatmanam
natmanam avasadayet
atmaiva hy atmano bandhur
atmaiva ripur atmanah
(Bg. 6.5)*

“Note that you are your own friend. But you are your own enemy also. You are your own enemy if you don’t take good care of your own development for your real progress. But you can be your own friend, and non can give as much help to you as you, yourself, can do.”

*bandhur atmatmanas tasya,
yenaivatmatmana jitah
(Bg. 6.6)*

“If at all you can have any self-control then collect your energy from going astray and direct it to the proper channel where you can really thrive, and then you will be your real friend. However, if you allow yourself to be led by the various senses of lower nature which are always trying to move in the land of exploitation, reaction, and suffering then you are your own enemy. Consider all these things.”

*vimrsyaitad asesena,
yathecchasi tatha kuru
(Bg. 18.63)*

“Consider and consider deeply, then take the right step as to what to do.” The human life is very valuable. You have the power of discrimination, but that will be denied you if, compelled by the reactionary wave, you have to go into the body of a tree, a beast, or wherever. Can you say for certain that in your next life you will not be degraded into an animal body? What guarantee is there that you won’t be ?

It is not that all action and all progress takes place only in the realm of death. Progress is not limited just to darkness and ignorance, but if you really participate in positive progress you will be able to feel what real progress is. *Hrdaye nabhya nujnato* – you will feel and conceive the progress with your inner approval, your heart’s approval. It is not that some bogus hope has been given and you will be taken into a foreign land to be murdered, tortured, mistreated, etc. There is no question of that.

bhaktih paresanubhavo viraktir

*anyatra caisa trika eka-kalah
prapadyamanasya yathasnatah syus
tustih pustih ksud-apayo 'nu-ghasam
(Bhav:11.2.42)*

This famous *sloka* of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* explains that when you eat something, your belly will give witness. It will say, “Yes, I am eating.” Hunger will be satisfied, the body nourished, and there will be the fulfilment of having been fed. The body will be nourished, and will gain strength, and, along with all this, will be your own inner approval of having eaten. Furthermore there will be no longer any feeling of necessity to eat more and more. Similarly in spiritual life so many symptoms will come to give proof of your progress.

We now have a human body and this is the most valuable time for us, but it is being lost due to misapplication. Our most valuable energy is being lost through misappropriation. *Uttisthatah jagratah prapyovaran nivodhatah* – so, awake, arise, and engage yourself not only for you, but address others also to engage in this campaign, and that in turn will give you further help in a particular way.

The main thing is that under the guidance of a higher agent we should engage ourselves in devotional activities and have a busy programme so there may not be any spare time to go on with any trifling mundane matters. Such a busy programme in the association of the devotees will be very helpful for us.

Part Four

Internal self-satisfaction, to disregard the present environment of the troublesome world, is a valuable asset. It is nearing the soul area. Real *bhakti*, devotion, is *ahaituki*, causeless; it is its own cause. It is causeless and it is by itself. As Hegel said, reality is by itself. Reality is not an abstract thing, but reality means a system, a system that exists by itself. It is *anadi* and *ahaituki*, it is eternal, and nothing can produce it. *Bhakti* is its own cause. These are the definitions that have been given to help us to understand what is *bhakti*. It is not created by

some other thing, it is there eternally, but it is only covered and should be uncovered, discovered. It is there in a potential form. By outside help it will gradually and progressively come out: it is as if sleeping – it is necessary to rouse it. *Anyabhilasa, karma, jnana* – fleeting desires, and the organised attempts for both exploitation and retirement or indifference, are covers. We have to remove these covers and then *bhakti* will emerge in all its pristine glory.

To have affinity and attraction towards the higher truth is very rarely found, especially in this modern age where the direction of thought is all towards exploitation, even of knowledge. Knowledge being also subservient to exploitation is creating havoc. Atomic energy and so many other kinds of scientific research are the cause of great apprehension: the world is threatened with destruction at any moment. This scientific knowledge has brought us to such a position that at any moment the whole thing may be finished! This knowledge is suicidal. The increase of such knowledge in this world means the result is that we are going to commit suicide. Exploitation means reaction. So, if we are to accept general, wholesale, exploitation then the result will be *pralaya, maha-pralaya*, destruction – wholesale. In any way, whether by the atomic bomb or by any other natural incident, the *pralaya* will come, and after that, again creation: birth and death, birth and death ... Each individual will be born and die again, and the whole solar system will also be born and will die again and again without end.

If we are to get out of this entanglement, we must leave this atmosphere experienced by our senses. In *Bhagavad-gita* and in the *Upanisads* also it is mentioned, *indriyani parany ahur*. Our senses hold the principle position, because if the eye, ear, nose, touch, etc. are gone, then the whole world is gone from us. Because we have senses we have our world. In the world of experience, our senses are all-important. Then – *indriyebhyah param manah* – the mind is within. And what is the mind? It is the faculty within us which selects, “I want this, I don’t want that.” We have a liking for something, and a disregard for something else, and this is the principle of the mind within us. It is more important than the senses because if I am unmindful, a person may walk in front of me but it is possible that I

will say, “Oh, I did not notice him. I did not see him and I could not hear him. I was unmindful.” So, mind is in the centre, and that is more important than our senses.

The senses are more important than the external world, and the mind is more important because if the mind does not receive, then the senses, which are like so many doors, are useless. Then – *manasas tu para buddhir* – there is another principle to be traced within us, a fine thing called reason, *buddhi*, and what is its characteristic? The mind will say, “Oh, I shall take that,” but *buddhi* says, “Oh no. No, don’t take that, it will cause some damage. You rather take this, it will give you benefit.” That faculty of selection, that reason, is a higher principle in us.

Then – *buddher yah paratas tu sah* – that which is superior even to the intelligence is the soul himself.

In this way we are to trace out the elements. More important than the external world are our senses; more important than our senses is our mind; and above the mind is reason which is even more important, more fine and more reliable; and – *buddher yah paratas tu sah* – there is another thing above the *buddhi*, and that is our soul. And what is its nature, its characteristic? It is like light.

In the Scriptures an example has been given that on a moonlit night there may be a cloud in the sky which has covered the moon – but the cloud is seen by the light of the moon. The compiler of the Vedas, Vyasadeva, says the *atma* is like that illuminating moon. Or, like the sun: a cloud has covered the sun, but the cloud is seen by the light of the sun. Similarly, the *atma* is a point of light within us, and because it is in the background we can feel our mental system. If the light is withdrawn, then everything is dead.

The mental system, the intelligence, the faculty of choice, and so many channels through which we gain knowledge from outside, will have no value if that light is withdrawn. That light is the *atma*, a point of a ray of light, and it is quite categorically different from all other things here. The soul is a particle of light and there is a land of light made of souls, and in this way there is development again: from the

subjective to super-subjective, from soul to Supersoul, *atma* to *Paramatma*. Just as in this world we find ether, air, heat, water, then earth, then stone, and in this way there is development in material existence, similarly in the finer world there is also development: from the intelligence to the soul, then to the Supersoul, to the Super-supersoul In this way the subjective side goes towards the infinite. It is super-subjective.

Darwin in his theory of evolution says that everything comes from matter. He says that even within the womb, first there is something material which grows, and from that growth of matter, knowledge also gradually grows. In general terms he thinks that consciousness comes out of matter. But the followers of the revealed truth do not believe in that. They say that consciousness is all in all, and everything is floating on the ocean of consciousness. That is subjective evolution. Darwin talks of objective evolution, but the Vedic Scriptures say that everything comes under the category of subjective evolution. As Bishop Berkeley, one European philosopher said, "It is not that the mind is in the world, but the world is in the mind." Everything is floating in the plane of consciousness. Consciousness presupposes everything.

Darwin's section say that in the beginning was the fossil. But what is a fossil? A fossil means a particular conception, and that is a part of consciousness. Therefore, we contend that consciousness is the most original subject. Whatever you may say to be the beginning, before that, consciousness existed, otherwise you cannot give any statement about anything. So, the Vedic truth states that *Brahman* – the all-pervading impersonal aspect of the Absolute – is the source of the souls, and above the soul, *atma*, is the Supersoul, *Paramatma*. In the mundane worlds all development is in the black side, but there is also a bright side: the eternal world, which exists with so many joyful activities – so many waves in the ocean of blissfulness and joy.

In this way we are to understand what should be our duty in this life, what is the special importance of the human life, and how to utilise that. There are so many religious opinions, but we seekers after

truth shall have to find a harmonising solution amongst them, and for that we are to enter into some comparative study.

It is mentioned in the Scriptures that we should not change our position very easily. For example a commander will say to his army, “Don’t change your position. Rather, die to keep it.” But when the chance will come, he will say, “Go forward.” Similarly, the *sastra*, the Scriptures, have told, “Wherever you are born according to your previous *karma*, wherever you have taken your stand, don’t try to leave there otherwise there is the possibility you will go down.” But at the same time, when a proper chance comes, they say, “March on towards the Absolute! Make further progress.” So, in *Bhagavad-gita* it is given, “Don’t easily lose your present position acquired by your previous action – rather, die there!” But then again, Krsna comes to say:

*sarvva-dharmman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja*

When you get the chance of marching towards the Centre, you must do it at all cost.” This is the revolutionary method. There is the constitutional method and the revolutionary method. The revolutionary method is to take the risk of anything and everything and march on, march forward towards the central truth, and, because this human life gives the best opportunity, we shall do whatever is necessary for that.

Only in the human life do you practically have the use of your discrimination and decision. If you lose this position and go to animal life or vegetable life, no one knows when you will again come back to be able to take independent and voluntary decision. Therefore this human life is most important and you should not misuse it only in the practices of animal life: *ahara*, *nidra*, *bhaya*, *maithuna* – to eat, to sleep, to be under apprehension at every minute, and to have sense pleasure, because this you will get everywhere.

If you will become an animal or go anywhere else – to become a bird, a worm, an insect, etc. – you will get all these enjoyments, but to culture about your soul, about religion, about your proper function, that chance you will not get anywhere else other than in the human

form of life. In the company of the saints the entire position may be discussed, in this way you can make progress in your life and save yourself. But if having received a human birth, you lose this chance, you are committing suicide, or even more than that! One commits suicide who having received the chance of a human birth does not try to help himself properly, to try for his wholesale relief.

Ocean of Nectar



By Srila B.R. Sridhar Maharaj

Preface

With the fast growth of the computer and the common use of telecommunication systems via satellite, the ,global village' has become a practical reality. For instance, nowadays major brokers simultaneously keep track of the main stock exchanges around the world, with their computers instantly checking price fluctuations, tirelessly analyzing trends Within split seconds they may sell in London, buy in Tokyo and hold their ground in Sydney, Hong Kong and New York. And it simply doesn't stop in the jet-setting world of high finance.

Our society has reached a very advanced stage of technological development, providing high living standards considered by most to

be unprecedented. All sorts of technological wonders are now an integral part of our lives, making things easier, more pleasurable.

The electronic 'global village' sits right in our living room, bringing us local and world news as they happen. The television has become a permanent guest in our homes, filling the gaps, helping fight boredom, and of course, canvassing so many attractive objects and appealing situations that could make us happy. Because we want to be happy, don't we? So, we yearn, we work, we dream, we endeavour, we hope, we buy ..., but, somehow or another, happiness seems to be always just beyond the reach of our fingertips.

Why is happiness eluding us? Because we are never satisfied. No matter how much we get, we always hanker for more. Everyone, in all fields and walks of life. Such is our nature. How then could finite material objects and flickering bodily or intellectual pleasures satiate our infinite hankerings?

For as long as we go on searching for happiness within the material plane, our efforts and endeavours are destined to be irrevocably frustrated. Due to their natural limitations, material objects and goals simply cannot satisfy our limitless hankerings. Only by seeking out the beauty and love of the unlimited spiritual realm can we hope to be successful in our common quest for lasting happiness.

In this book, Swami B.R. Sridhar begins by elucidating the qualitative differences in the happiness to be obtained at various levels of existence within the material plane. Then, in a concise masterpiece of comparative ontology, the author takes us through higher and higher levels of spiritual consciousness, up to the realm of mercy and beauty, where we can find fulfilment to our innermost hankerings.

Showing the chanting of the holy names to be the most effective process of God realization in this age, Swami B.R. Sridhar offers the true seeker a golden opportunity to make swift, tangible progress towards a worthwhile goal, towards the unbounded *Ocean of Nectar*, where sweet, everlasting happiness is to be found.

The Editors

We offer our loving respects unto Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami, whose countenance is very beautiful and kind, and who is able to present the highest ontological truths in the most pleasing poetic style.

His transcendental figure is decorated with fine garments radiant like the newly risen sun. He is the spiritual storehouse of concentrated ecstasy, a true saint chosen by the honest devotees.

His renunciation and knowledge are comparable to a vast ocean. He is the fathomless reservoir and protector of the illustrious conclusions of pure devotion.

Resplendent in pastimes of loving dedication, radiant with the highest mellows of conjugal love, he is the foremost amongst those endowed with divine intelligence, and the greatest general leading the renounced order. Freely granting our true fulfilment of life, he is our only shelter.

Introduction

From a lecture delivered by Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur in 1896 at Dinajpur, West Bengal.

We love to read a book we have never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it and with such acquirement our curiosity stops. This mode of study prevails amongst a large number of readers, who are great men in their own estimation, as well as in the estimation of those who are of their own stamp. In fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and statements made by other people. But this is not study. The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention. Students, like satellites, should reflect whatever light they receive from authors, and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the magistrates imprison the convicts in the jail!

Thought is progressive. The author's thought must have progress in the reader, in the shape of correction or development. He is the best critic who can show the further development of an old thought, but a

mere denouncer is the enemy of progress and consequently of nature. „Begin anew,“ says the critic, „because the old masonry does not answer at present. Let the old author be buried because his time is gone.“ These are shallow expressions. Progress is certainly the law of nature and there must be corrections and developments with the passage of time, as progress means going further or rising higher.

If we follow our foolish critic, we are to go back to our former terminus and make a new race, and when we have run half the race another critic of his stamp will cry out: „Begin anew, because the wrong road has been taken!“ In this way our stupid critics will never allow us to go over the whole road and see what is in the other terminus. Thus the shallow critic and the fruitless reader are the two great enemies of progress. We must shun them.

The true critic, on the other hand, advises us to preserve what we have already obtained, and adjust our race from that point where we have arrived in the heat of our progress. He will never advise us to go back to the point whence we started, as he fully knows that in that case there will be a fruitless loss of our valuable time and labour. He will direct the adjustment of the angle of the race at the point where we are. This is also the characteristic of the useful student. He will read an old author and will find out his exact position in the progress of thought. He will never propose to burn a book on the ground that it contains thoughts that are useless. No thought is useless. Thoughts are means by which we attain our objects. The reader who denounces a bad thought does not know that even a bad road is capable of improvement and conversion into a good one. One thought is a road leading to another. Thus the reader will find that the thought which is the object today will be the means of a further object tomorrow. Thoughts will necessarily continue to be an endless series of means and objects in the progress of humanity.

The great reformers will always assert that they have come not to destroy the old law, but to fulfil it. Valmiki, Vyasa, Plato, Jesus, Mohamed, Confucius and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu assert this fact, either expressly or by their conduct.

Subjects of philosophy and theology are like the peaks of towering and inaccessible mountains inviting attention and investigation. Thinkers and men of deep speculation take their

observations through the instruments of reason and consciousness, but they take different points when they carry on their work. These points are positions chalked out by the circumstances of their social and philosophical life, different as they are in the different parts of the world.

Plato looked at the peak of the spiritual questions from the West and Vyasa made the observation from the East. Confucius did it from further East and Schlegel, Spinoza, Kant and Goethe from further West. Their observations were made at different times by different means, but the conclusion is all the same, in as much as the object of observation was one and the same. They all hunted after the Great Spirit, the unconditioned Soul of the Universe. They could not but get an insight into it. Their words and expressions were different, but their import is the same. They tried to find the absolute religion and their labours were crowned with success, for God gives all that He has to His children, if they want to have it. It requires a candid, generous, pious and holy heart to feel the beauties of their conclusions.

The true critic is a generous judge, devoid of prejudices and party spirit, that great enemy of truth, will always baffle the attempt of the enquirer and will make him believe that Absolute Truth is nowhere except in his old religious book. What better example could be adduced than the fact that the philosopher of Benares will find no truth in the universal brotherhood of men and the common fatherhood of God? The philosopher, thinking in his own way of thought, can never see the beauty of the Christian faith. The way in which Christ thought of his own Father was love absolute, and so long as the philosopher will not adopt that way of thinking, he will ever remain deprived of the absolute faith preached by the Western Saviour. In a similar manner, the Christian needs adopt the way of thought which the Vedantist pursued before he can love the conclusions of the philosopher. The critic should, therefore, have a comprehensive, good, generous, candid, impartial and sympathetic soul.

The Bhagavata, the revealed scripture of the Vaisnavas, does not allow its followers to ask anything from God except eternal love towards Him. The kingdom of the world, the beauties of the local heavens, and sovereignty over the material world are never the subject of Vaisnava prayer. The Vaisnava meekly and humbly prays, „Father, Master, God, Friend and Husband of my soul, hallowed be Thy name!

I do not approach You for anything which You have already given me. I have sinned against You and I now repent and solicit Your pardon. Let Thy holiness touch my soul and make me free from grossness. Let my spirit be devoted meekly to Your Holy service in absolute love towards Thee.

„I have called You my God, and let my soul be wrapped up in admiration at Your greatness. I have addressed You as my Master, and let my soul be strongly devoted to Your service. I have called You my friend, and let my soul be in reverential love towards You, and not in dread or Fear. I have called You my husband, and let my spiritual nature be in eternal union with You, forever loving and never dreading or feeling disgust. Father! Let me have strength enough to go up to You as the Consort of my soul, so that we may be one in eternal Love! Peace to the world!“

The spirit of this text goes far to honour all great reformers and teachers who lived and will live in other countries. The Vaisnava is ready to honour all great men without distinction of caste, because they are filled with the energy of God. See how universal is the Vaisnava religion! It is not intended for a certain class of Hindus alone, but it is a fight to man at large, in whatever country he is born and in whatever society he is bred.

In short, Vaisnavism is the Absolute Love binding together all men in the Infinite, Unconditioned and Absolute God. May peace reign forever in the whole universe, in the continual development of is purity, by the exertion of the future heroes who will be blessed, according to the promise of the Bhagavata, with powers from the Almighty Father, the Creator, Preserver and Annihilator of all things in Heaven and Earth.

Chapter One

Higher Satisfaction

By using the atom bomb America conquered Japan and intimidated the world. Superficially they enjoyed the pleasure of defeating the world, but that is only apparent. Internally the

apprehension is there: „Reaction may come.“ Such a disastrous action is self-condemned; a heinous crime. But it is just the collective result of our karma. None to blame.

To parody the old saying, “A bad workman quarrels with his stools.” As we eat, following our system, stools come. It is not the stools crime; they are necessary product of the food. Karma is like stools: as we do, we earn the environment and the reaction; as we act, reactions similarly come, sometimes individually and sometimes collectively. They are like stools – all the results, the environment. We have earned such an environment.

So none to blamed, but everywhere the grace of the Lord to be traced. The Lord is always there, even in the worst period of our lives. He is waiting, waiting to help us. We must only look up for His grace. With sincerity, with all sincerity. He is everywhere, waiting; “My boy, look at Me. Don’t make much of the external environment. I am here, very near to you. You have cast your focus aside, you have cast your consciousness outside. Make it internal and you will find I am here. Make it above. You are looking down to secure servants and comforts, but if you look up, for existence higher than you, you will find Me in that plane. Look up! Don’t look down, searching for servants.”

You want to become a master and thus are searching for servants, hunting after things for your service. Take the opposite course, become a servant and search for your master, your Lord. Then you will be uplifted, taken up to a higher domain. If you want to live in a higher domain you will have to serve. If you want to be a master, then you will have to come down in the lower zone, where you can be a master.

This is neither exaggeration nor imagination, it is something scientific. You can enjoy only those that are of lower position. So, by attempting to enjoy, mean association becomes inevitable. Only by preparing for higher service will you be able to come in contact with your soul’s higher position.

Sacrifice – by sacrifice you go up; by enjoying spirit you will have to go down. We are to understand what is exploitation, enjoyment, and what is higher service. Devine service is pure, and in that service there is also a pure type of joy, ecstasy. By giving we become gainers and by extorting we become losers. This scientific truth should be understood.

Robbing things someone can find superficial satisfaction, but underground there is some suspicion that the result won't be very good, "the reaction will come to attack me." To exploit by stealing provides some sort of enjoyment, but the big donors, patrons, give some charity and thereby also enjoy happiness. There is a difference in quality between these two sorts of happiness. We are to distinguish between them.

In different planes there are different conceptions of happiness, and a comparison is to be drawn between the qualitative differences in the pleasure derived. We are to conceive different planes of life. The life of higher service is divine life. The Absolute God is there. Everything is for Him. All these things are for His pleasure.

But, in which way can we attain divine life? What is mundane? What is divine? We are to differentiate between them. We have to examine them in order to accept the divine life.

What is God? God is not an order supplier. If I am sick, "Oh God, cure my sickness!" If I am poor, "Oh God, give me money!" This kind of mercenary connection is not very happy, but still it has some meaning, because they think that there is some supernatural power, and that He can do wonders.

However, it is better if we want God and do not expect anything mundane from him. To want God, who is the source of all this opulence. To want him, and not anything else which you consider valuable. To depend on Him: "Oh Lord, give me what is good. I am an imperfect being. I do not know what is good and bad. Please, provide whatever You consider to be good for me." This is an improvement.

But then we accept the creed of unalloyed service to the highest, that is the best: "I want You, my Lord, nothing else." And what will be my connection with Him? Service. "I want only Your service.

At the beginning we might think we are being losers, but ultimately we will gain. Apparently we are giving ourselves, we are sacrificing our selfish interests, but in the subtle sense we gain thereby. This ontological truth should be appreciated. It is neither a dogma, nor blind faith. It is based on higher unprejudiced reasons.

Our life is unfulfilled and we want fulfilment, there is no doubt. But, what type of fulfilment should we hanker for and search after? We know we are in want, and at the same time we feel that we yearn to

remove our want and obtain satisfaction. No doubt this is so for everyone. But how to make progress from unfulfilled life towards fulfilment? That will take searching for God, searching after God.

The present civilization is searching after subtle power. They want to be masters of the subtle potencies or powers to control the environment, to lord it over everything. These followers are very eager to reign in hell. Satan said: "It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." These followers of Satan want to reign in hell, but we assert just the opposite: "It is better to serve in heaven than to reign in hell." That is our aspiration; to service in heaven, higher heaven. If we are to have a higher connection, we must approach Him as a small person. That cannot but be.

There, in the world of service, there is also gradual development from gross to subtle, from lower to higher degree of independence and ecstasy. Love is such. Love gives independence to the servitors, when it is mixed with *anuraga*, free spiritual love.

In the lower stages, service is always controlled by the regulation of the scriptures, "Do this, don't do that." But as we progress towards our position in the higher plane, it becomes free. Your heart will ask you, "Do this." No scripture will come to regulate you, but your heart will tell you what to do, what service you are to do.

When there is full faith that you are a bonafide servant, then the type of service will be left to your consideration. "Do whatever you feel to be best." There will be no restriction upon you. It is the land of spontaneous service; you will do according to your inner sagacity, and that will be accepted. The hearty thing, the sincere flow of service. No thrust from outside, no regulation. "You must do this, you must not do that." That sort of law will be withdrawn from you, when you reach the plane of spontaneous service.

After passing for sometime through the progress of regulated devotional service you will feel: "This higher plane is my own land. This is my home." In that plane you will find the freedom, sweetness and comfort of your own home. All doubts will be cleared, eliminated. The previous tendencies will also disappear. Any lower propensity will vanish, and in the sealed portion of your heart, that can connect with the higher divinity, the seal will be broken. The inner wealth is there, within, but it is sealed. The seal will be broken and you will

have full satisfaction in an all-loving engagement, in your eternal function, your sweet eternal function.

So, from uncertainty to surety; from dissatisfaction to satisfaction; from want to fulfilment. From the temporary conception we will come into the eternal flow. By eliminating the provincial and local flow we will come into the eternal flow of life. As we make advancement, our conception of Godhead will change. It will gradually come to the Krsna conception, because in the plane of love God comes as Krsna, descends as Krsna.

The renowned German scholar May Muller commented that a single drop of the Ocean of Nectar contained within the sacred Upanisads of India could easily satiate the innermost hankerings of the whole universe.

The Kalisantarana Upanisad recommends the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* as the most effective process of God realization, specially meant for the present age. This mantra can be chanted silently, mentally or aloud.

**Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare**

Chapter Two

Primordial Sound

Sri Rupa has written, „Oh holy name! The trips of the toes of Your lotus feet are eternally worshipped by the glowing effulgence radiating from the gemmed chapters of the Upanisads, the crest jewels of the Vedas. You are eternally adored and chanted by great liberated souls like Narada and Sukadeva Goswami. Oh holy name! Clearing myself of all offences, I take complete shelter of You.”

Sri Rupa says that so many liberated souls worship the holy name of Krsna, offering their respects from all sides. He explains that the greatness of the holy name may not be found in the ordinary

scriptures, but if you study all of them as whole, you will find the very spirit of the holy name. Ordinary people may not find this in their study, but there are those who can collect the real substance, the real purpose from those vast writings, and detect the greatness of the holy name as the whole purpose of all the main Vedic scriptures.

The Vedas are giving hints about the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. The Vedas naturally tell us that we can approach the supreme reality only through sound. Otherwise they would be suicidal. If they do not say that by sound only we will attain the truth, then what is the necessity of the Vedas, which are only embodied sounds? So, if we can trace their real characteristic, we shall find that the real characteristic, we shall find that the principal Vedas say that by the cultivation of sound we can attain the Lord. Absolute sound alone can deliver reality.

So Rupa Goswami says that a superficial study of the Vedas will only frustrate us. But if we search with a positive mind, by the grace of the saints, the spiritual masters and the great souls, we will find that the principal sound forms of the revealed truth are leading us towards the conception that the whole object of all the Vedic sounds is that central sound: the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

There are so many sections of the Vedas that have come to distribute the tidings of the absolute realm, but there must be a centre. So, the principal sounds are all emitting light, like a torch, to show us that they have a central sound which represents the supreme whole, and that sound is 'Kṛṣṇa'. So many liberated souls are all around, offering their respects to the name of Kṛṣṇa, that central sound from which all Vedic *mantras* have come to give us some idea of the sound aspect of the absolute centre. This is Sri Rupa's argument.

The branches of the Vedas are all sounds, and so many sounds must come from a central position. They cannot but direct one who has a proper eye towards that fountainhead of sound, saying, "Go! Run towards that direction! In our source you will find everything. We are all partially representing so many things, but we have a centre, we have a fountainhead, Go in that direction and you will find the sound that can sufficiently satisfy you, and you may also be introduced to other aspects of that sound."

The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is most important; it is no less than Kṛṣṇa Himself. It full represents the whole. Sri Rupa says, "O holy name, I take refuge under Your lotus feet. You are the grand, central sound

who has given cohesion to all the sounds in the revealed scriptures.” And Sri Sanatana, who is the spiritual master of Sri Rupa, says: “Let ecstasy in the service of the divine name be victorious. If somehow we can come in contact with that sound then all our other activities will be paralyzed; we will have no necessity of performing any other activity. Our many variegated duties will have no importance to us at all if we can achieve the service of the divine name of Kṛṣṇa.”

The holy name will take us to the perception of Kṛṣṇa’s own abode, where we will have to completely retire from any work, even if it may be done for Kṛṣṇa. We will have to give up internal meditation and calculation, and even worship in awe and reverence. The holy name will stop all these tendencies and we will find so much sweetness in chanting the name that we won’t be able to give attention to anything else.

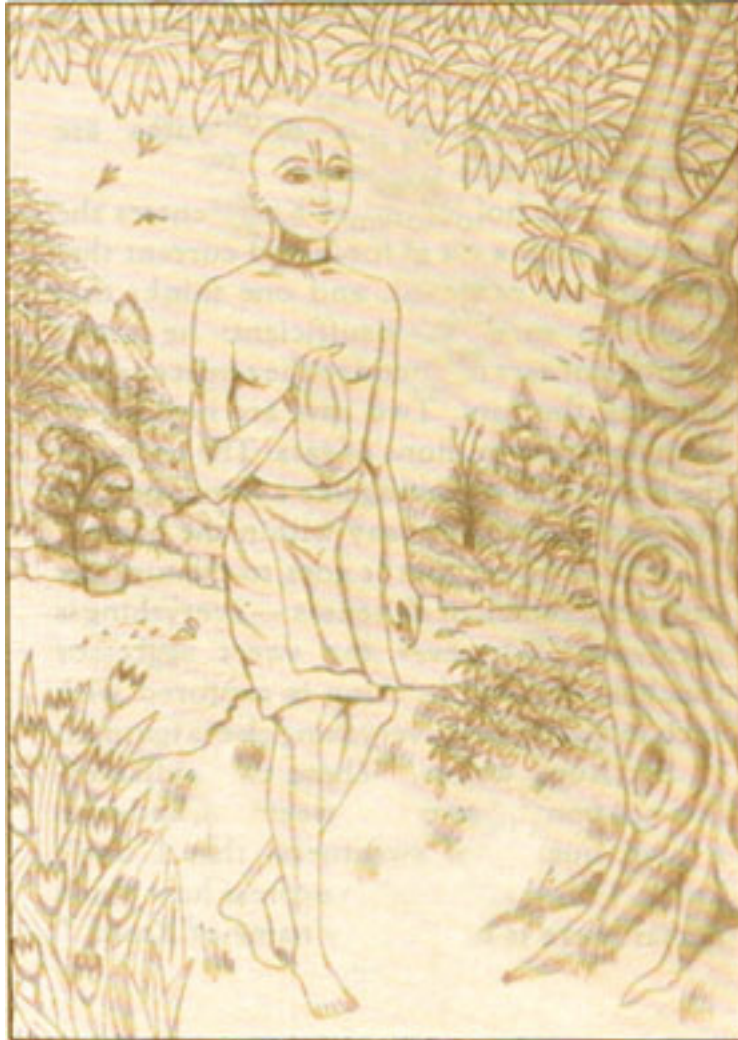
When we really come in contact with the sound aspect of the absolute, then all our enthusiastic endeavours and functions will be paralyzed. We will be unable to attempt them: we will take to the name only. Then, when the name allows us to perform other service again, we will be able to do them. The name has such power, such high degree of potency, that it will stop all other branches of service and charm you.

When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa descends and captures the tongue and the lips, it controls them so strongly that it engages them in chanting the holy name as if the lips and tongue have gone mad. In this way, the power of the name descends in them and one feels that only one tongue and one mouth are not enough; thousands of mouths are necessary to taste the name.

Then the holy name of Kṛṣṇa enters the ear with such a great force and current that the ears are captured, and one thinks that only two ears are insufficient; he wants millions of ears to attend to the sweet current entering the ears. Two ears are nothing to him; he wants millions of ears. The nectar of the holy name is coming like a flood through his ears, pushing its way within the heart.

It is so sweet that it goes to capture the heart, the centre of all senses—everything is paralyzed. Wherever the sweet aggressor touches, the whole thing is captured with such intensity that everything else is ignored.

Sri Rupa writes, “These two syllables (krs-na) contain so much sweetness, and such a high quality of sweetness, that I don’t know, I can’t say, I fail to express how much nectar there is in the holy name of Krsna.”



Srila Rupa Goswami

“...such a high quality of sweetness that I fail to express how much nectar there is in the holy name of Krsna.”

Chapter Three

Divine Service

The name of Sri Krsna is so powerful it does not care for the capacity of the soil. It may be sown anywhere, and it will sprout. Such a

powerful seed! Very easily it can drive away, brush away, sinful tendency.

If anyone comes in connection with the name, he will get the benefit. The nature of Krsna's name is such; autocratic and boundless mercy. The transaction may go on in any place, any time. The transaction may go on in any place, any time. Where all have failed, Krsna's name has His glorious wave. No adverse circumstance can produce any obstacle to this.

The only condition is that to have the real thing we must have a proper connection. It must be the name of Krsna and not an imitation. So, it is said that the physical sound may appear, an imitation, but it is not effective, because that is not Krsna.

Our attainment of the goal is not assured simply by increasing the number of times we repeat the name; only by increasing the quality will we reach success. There are so many sayings in the scriptures to encourage our realization of the holy name in different ways, but Sri Rupa has given us a central thought, He quotes the Padma Purana: "Our senses, physical or mental, are ineligible to come in touch with the transcendental." The name is nonmaterial, without mundane limitation. It belongs to another plane.

So, nothing about Krsna – His name, form, qualities or pastimes – can be touched by our physical or mental senses, but when we have a serving attitude He comes down to us of His own accord. Only then can our tongue really pronounce the name of Krsna, otherwise only the physical sound of the letter of the name can be produced.

Our tongue, our hands, physical sound, all these mundane things cannot come in touch with Krsna. Some intervening medium is necessary to connect this body with the supramundane, and that connection is our earnest desire to serve Krsna, to satisfy Him.

A bulb won't light if there is no electricity. Only when the electrical current is there will the bulb be illuminated. So, the name may appear on the tongue and in the ear, in the mind or in writing, but we must have the connection from the transcendental realm to this mundane world, and that connection is devotional service, a functional serving attitude. That alone can connect the physical realm with the unlimited spiritual world.

Krsna will appear of His own accord. He will descend upon your tongue and then your tongue will be able to chant the name of Krsna.

A gun that has no bullet, but only a blank, may make some sound, but no bullet is actually fired. Similarly, chanting the name of Krsna without an attitude of service produces sound, but that is only tongue deep. It is like firing a gun with blanks instead of bullets.

Our chanting of the holy name of Krsna must be surcharged with a serving temperament, the tendency to satisfy Krsna. Otherwise the sound we produce is bogus. It is only an imitation, or a permutation. The holy name cannot be experienced by our senses. It is supramental and transcendental. An ordinary sound of this mundane world cannot be the name of Krsna. Our ear cannot even hear the name if that mediator, the serving attitude, is not there. The earnestness to satisfy Krsna's will must mediate between Krsna and the ear, through the mind. Then only will Krsna's name enter our ear and reveal to us His form, qualities and pastimes.

The holy name is not physical, it is transcendental, supramundane. Only through our service attitude will it come down to this mundane world. Only through service can we directly come in contact with Krsna. The real point is to practice to attain the spirit of service. The devotee is doing service and we must imbibe from him the methods of attaining this serving attitude.

Chapter Four

Sri Siksastakam

*Diving deep into the reality
of His own beauty and sweetness,
Krsna took the mood of Radharani,
and garbing Himself in Her brilliant lustre,
appeared as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.*

*For the last twelve years
of His manifested pastimes
he was deeply absorbed
in union and separation
and shared His heart's inner feelings
with His most confidential devotees.*

*In the agony of separation from Sri Krsna
torrents of ecstasy flowed from his heart
and His teachings,
known as Sri Siksastakam,
appeared from His lips
like eight unbounded rivers
of Golden Nectar.*

The Holy Names of Krsna

*ceto-darpana-marjanam
bhava-mahadavagni-nirvapanam
sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam
vidya-vadhu-jivanam
anandambudhi-varadhanam
prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam
sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate
sri-krsna-sankirtanam*

cetah - of the heart; *darpana* – the mirror; *marjanam* -cleansing;
bhava - of birth and death; *maha-davagni* - forestal conflagration;
nirvapanam - extinguishes; *sreyah* - real fortune (gradual opening of
the soul's inner treasure); *kairava* - the evening lotus; *candika* - the
moon's cooling rays; *vitaram* - blossom; *vidya-vadhu-jivanam* - a
life of unconditional surrender in conjugal love; *ananda* - of extatic
joy; *ambuddhi* - the ocean; *vardhanam* - ever-increasing; *pratipadam* -
again and again; *purna-amrta* - of full nectar; *asvadanam* - tasting;
sarva-atma - all phases of the self; *snapanam* - satisfied, purified and
conquered; *param* - the topmost; *vijayate* - auspicious; *sri-krsna* -
of Sri Krsna; *sankirtanam* - congregational chanting of the holy name.

*The holy name of Krsna
cleanses the mirror of the heart
and forever extinguishes*

*the fire of misery,
that great conflagration
in the forest of birth and death.*

*As the evening lotus blooms
in the moon's cooling rays,
the heart begins to blossom
in the nectar of the name.*

*And at last the soul awakens
to its real inner treasure –
a life of unconditional surrender
for Krsna's sweetest pleasure.*

*Again and again tasting nectar,
the soul dives and surfaces
in the ever-increasing ocean
of ecstatic joy.*

*All phases of the self
we may conceive
are fully satisfied, purified,
and at last conquered
by the all-auspicious influence
of the holy name of Krsna.*

Unlimited Names of God

*namnam akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis
tatrapita nyamitah smarane na kalah
etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah*

namnam – the holy names; *akari* – revealed; *bahudha* – different types of; *nija-sarva-saktih* – all kinds of potencies; *tatrapita* – allotted therein; *nyamita* – restriction; *smarane* – chanting (the holy names); *na* – not; *kalah* – time, (place and circumstances); *etadrsi* – so

much; *tava* – Your; *krpa* – causeless mercy; *bhagavan* – Oh Lord; *mama* – my; *api* – but; *durdaivam* – misfortune; *idrsam* – such; *iha* – for them; *ajani* – innate; *na* – not; *anunaragah* – hankering and love.

*O my Lord, Your holy name
bestows auspiciousness upon all;
and You have unlimited names
by which You reveal Yourself.*

*In Your many holy names
you have kindly invested
all Your transcendental potencies;
and in chanting these names
there are no strict rules
concerning time or place.*

*Out of Your causeless mercy,
you have descended
in the form of divine sound,
but my great misfortune
is that I have no love
for Your holy names.*

Humbler Than a Blade of Grass

*Trnad api sunicena
taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena
kirtaniyah sada karih*

trnat – ablade of grass; *api* – more than; *sunicena* – lower; *taroh* – tree; *api* – more than; *sahisnuna* – forbearing; *amanina* – humble; *manadena* – giving honor to others; *kirtaniya* – chanting; *sada* – always; *harih* – the holy name of Krsna.

*One who is humbler
than a blade of grass,
more forbearing than a tree,
who gives all honour
to others without desiring it
for himself,
is qualified
to always chant
the holy name of Krsna.*

Unalloyed Devotion

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani janmanisvare
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*

na – not; *dhanam* – the wealth which comes from following one’s prescribed duties; *na* – not; *janam* – popularity and followers, or physical comforts provided by wife, and children; *na* – not; *sundarim* – association of beautiful ladies;

kavitam – liberation, like poetry, of very high value, but only in words; *va* – or; *jagad-isa* – O Lord of the Universe; *kamaye* – hankering; *mama* – my; *janmani* – birth; *janmani* – birth; *isvare* – the Supreme Lord; *bhavatad* – let there be; *bhaktih* – devotional service; *ahaituki* – unmotivated; *tvayi* – to You.

*Oh Lord, I don’t want to enjoy
the wealth which comes
from following
my prescribed duties.*

*I have no attraction
for popularity or followers,
or for the comforts*

*of a physical relationship
with wife and children.*

*I do not desire
the company of beautiful ladies,
nor do I aspire for liberation.*

*Oh Lord of the Universe!
I only pray for unmotivated
service to You,
birth after birth.*

King of the Land of Love

*ayi nandana-tanuja kinkaram
patitam mam visame bhavambudhau
krpaya tava pada-pankaja
sthita-dhuli-sadrisam vicintaya*

*ayi – oh, My Lord; nandana-tanuja – the son of Nanda maharaj, Krsna,
King of the land of love; kinkaram – servant; patitam – fallen; me – I;
visame – terrible; bhavambudhau – in the ocean of birth and death;
krpa – mercy; tava – Your; pada-pankaja – lotus feet; sthita – at;
dhuli-sadrsam – as a particle of dust; vicintaya – please consider.*

*Oh son of Nanda Maharaj,
I am Your eternal servant
yet because of my misfortune
I have fallen
into this terrible ocean
of birth and death.*

*Under these
adverse circumstances
I invoke Your grace:*

*please consider me
a particle of dust
at Your lotus feet.*

Higher Hankerings

*nayanam galad-asru-dharaya
vadanam gadgaya-ruddhaya gira
pulakair nicitam vapuh kada
tava name-grahane bhavisyati*

nayanam – the eyes; *galat-asru-dharaya* – incessantly shedding tears;
vadanam – voice; *gadgada* – trembling; *rudhaya* – suffocated; *gira* – words; *pulakaih* – standing of the hair due to devotional ecstasy;
nicitam – covered; *vapuh* – the body; *kada* – when; *tava* – Your; *nama* – holy name; *grahane* – chanting; *bhavisyate* – will there be.

*O Lord,
when will
incessant waves
of tears
flow from my eyes?
When will my trembling voice
be suffocated
in ecstasy,
and the hairs
of my body
stand on end
while chanting
Your holy name?*

Forever Without You

*Yugayitam nimesena
Caksusa pravrsayitam
Sunnyayitam jagat sarvam
Govinda-virahena me*

Yugayitam – like forever; *nimesana* – a moment; *caksusa* – from the eyes; *pravrsayitam* – torrents of tears; *sunnyayitam* – empty; *jagat* – the world; *sarvam* – the whole; *govinda-virahena* – separation from Govinda, Lord Krsna; *me* – me.

*O Govinda!
Without You
the whole world
appears
empty...*

*Tears
are flooding
my eyes
like torrents
of rain,
and a moment
seems
like forever.*

My Eternal Lord

*aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam
adarsanam marma-hatam karotu va
yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato
mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah*

aslisya – embracing with great affection; *va* – or; *pada-ratam* – who has fallen at the lotus feet; *pinastu* – let Him trample; *mam* – me;

adarsanat – by being absent of indifferent; *marma-hatam* – brokenhearted; *karotu* – let Him make; *va* – or; *yatha* – whatever; *tatha* – so; *va* – or; *vidadhatu* – let Him do; *lampatah* – seducer of many women; *mat-prana-nathah* – the Lord of my life; *tu* – but; *sah* – He; *eva* – only; *naparah* – not anyone else.

*Krsna may embrace me
in love
or trample me
under His feet.*

*He may even
break my heart
by being indifferent
to me.*

*Let that seducer do
whatever he likes –
He will always be t
he only Lord
of my life.*

Chapter Five

Ocean of Nectar

*What strength does
the name of Krsna hold?
Like a desert scorched
by the rays of the sun,*

*my heart always burns in the fire
of desire for worldly enjoyment;
but the holy name,
entering through me ears,
floods my heart with unparalleled
nectarine bliss.*

*He speaks from within the heart,
moves on the tip of the tongue
and dance on it.*

*My voice becomes choked,
my body shivers,
my feet cannot remain firm.
My eyes are full of tears,
there is sweat all over my body,
my skin is thrilled with joy,
my whole body becomes colourless,
my mind faints
and there is universal destruction:
my person is shattered
by a variety of emotions.*

*Making so much oppression,
the divine name of Krsna
showers nectarine ambrosia
in the heart
and throws me
in the ocean of divine bliss;
allows me not
to understand anything,
makes me mad
and steals my heart and wealth.
Such is the conduct of the One
in whom I have taken shelter!*

I simply cannot describe all this.

*The holy name does everything
at His sweet will.*

*Whatsoever makes Him happy
is the sources of my happiness.*

*The name is
the bud of divine love,
the source of extraordinary
divine bliss.*

*He exercises such strength
that being His own form and qualities,
steals my heart
and takes it to Krsna.
Being fully developed,
destroys my existing mundane body,
gives me my own
transcendental divine form,
takes me to Braja,
shows me His own love dalliance
and keeps me near Krsna.*

*The holy name of Krsna
is the philosopher's stone,
the storehouse
of eternal spiritual ecstasy,
ever free,
full of the pure elixir
of divine bliss.*

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur

Commentary

In this poem of his book *Saranagati*, Srila Bhaktivinda Thakura has explained the *Namastakam*, eight prayers in glorification of the holy

name, written by Rupa Goswami. The whole thing is described there very beautifully. He writes, “My heart is just like a desert, hot with the rays of the sun. This is my internal mental condition. The desire for mortal things cannot satisfy me, because by nature they are death-producing; and not one or two, but thousands of such death-producing desires have taken shelter in my mind. So, my subconscious region is always burning. This is my condition.”

“But somehow, by the grace of *sadhu* and *guru*, the holy name of Krsna, with its infinite prospect, has entered through my ears and reached the plane of my heart. And there, with some peculiar hope, with infinite, auspicious possibilities, it touched my heart with a new kind of nectar.”

“New hope is aroused by that sound. Then by force, it comes from the heart towards the tongue. Not that by the endeavour of my tongue I am producing that sound. No. What came from the heart, forcibly appeared upon my tongue, and began to dance.”

That is the holy name proper. It descends from above. It cannot be produced by the material form of the tongue. Its source is above.” And through an agent of the absolute it comes through the ear to the heart. From the heart it gathers some sympathy, then the holy name of Krsna forcibly appears upon the tongue and begins to dance. With great force it comes to the end of the tongue and that sweet sound begins its dancing.”

The real effects of the divine name have been described here. If it is a living and real name, the voice will be choked up, there will be shivering in the body, and the legs will be unable to stand. Sometimes tears will flow in a current on the body, and one’s hairs will stand on end. Sometimes changes of colour will be found in the body, and we will be unable to find any trace of the mind or consciousness. We may fall in a swoon. The whole body and mind will appear as if it is being attached: shivering and influenced in different ways. Apparently, it may seem that so many troubles are created in the body and the mind, but the real heart is overflowing with a particular kind of stage, sweet juice.

Sometimes he thinks, “I am in an ocean of nectar. My whole existence is within an ocean of nectarine liquid. I am beside. Myself. I can’t understand where I am. Where am I? What is this? What is all about me? It has almost made me mad. Am I a madman? Where is my past

experience, my seriousness, my gravity? Where are thy? What am I? I have been converted wholesale by a foreign thing. I am a doll in the hands of a great force, which is also so affectionate to me. I can't ascertain how it is possible that by my faith I have entered this great, unknown environment, unexperienced before."

"And at least I find that I am captivated. My entire being, within and without, has been captured by a particular sweet force. I can't help being prey to such a sweet power. I can't give any proper description of this. I came to take shelter under Him and accept him as my guardian, and now at His hand I am being dealt with in such a merciless and despotic way. Still, I feel that everything is very pleasing, beyond my experience. What is this?"

"I can't resist anymore. I am fully captured. Let my fate go anywhere. I can't come out. I am captive in the hand of a sweet friend; my whole independence is gone. There is no way left to me but to surrender. I am unable to describe my real position. I find that He is an autocrat. Whatever He likes to do, he will do. Since it is not possible for me to give any resistance, I must surrender. Let me also cooperate with whatever He is pleased to do. Otherwise, what can I do? I am helpless."

"Sometimes I find that the sweetness of the name is condensed like a blossoming flower and very wonderfully streams of sweet current are flowing from it. The holy name contains so many sweet variegated forms of current within Him and He is wonderfully expressing Himself in different ways. Sometimes He emanates a peculiar type of colour and figure and disappears."

"So many charming aspects are shown as if to my eyes within, and He forcibly takes me to surrender at the foot of that altar. He shows Himself in his full-fledged form, in Vrindavana, in His Braja lila, with Radharani, and He takes me there. I find that I am in the midst of His peculiar, very sweet and loving paraphernalia. And He says, 'You see! I have so many wonderful things. This is your home. I am not merely imagination, but concrete reality. You will find there that the environment is very favourable and sweet. You are to live here.'

"I see that there He is dealing in different ways with His associates in different *rasas*, and I find that I have another body that has emerged from my previous one, and that has a permanent place here in His service. Such a new life I find here, and then I find ultimately that all

consideration of my past life and experience has vanished. And it is true; my real life is there. This is proper, and that was a sham, that life has vanished. Then I find that chanting the holy name has given me new encouragement, a new prospect, and new hope”

Whatever we want, whatever is our internal demand, it is supplied by the holy name. If we take the holy name, all our internal hankerings will be fulfilled. It is eternal, it is the purest of the pure, and it is full of ecstasy.

The Author

The author, known to his disciples as Srila Guru Maharaj, appeared in this world at Hapaniya, in the motherland of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

From early childhood Srila Guru Maharaj was constantly immersed in the devotional conclusions of the Srimad Bhagavatam, the most revered Vedic scripture. His inborn hankering for the highest degree of dedication, naturally drew him to his eternal spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, who gave him initiation and also conferred upon him *sannyasa*, the renounced order of life, during the last part of September 1930.

Ornamented with over 60 years of pure service at the feet of his own spiritual master, Srila Guru Maharaja is today the loving instructing guru of the followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In his many Sanskrit poetic compositions, brimming with the highest devotional realizations, all sincere souls can clearly perceive his position as the living protector and distributor of Sri Rupa Goswami’s wealth.

A prolific devotional author, Srila Guru Maharaj’s works include *Ambrosia in the Lives of Surrendered Souls*, *Kirtan Manjusa*, *Prema Dhama Deva Stotram*, *Search for Sri Krsna-Reality the Beautiful*, *Sri Guru and His Grace* and *Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*.

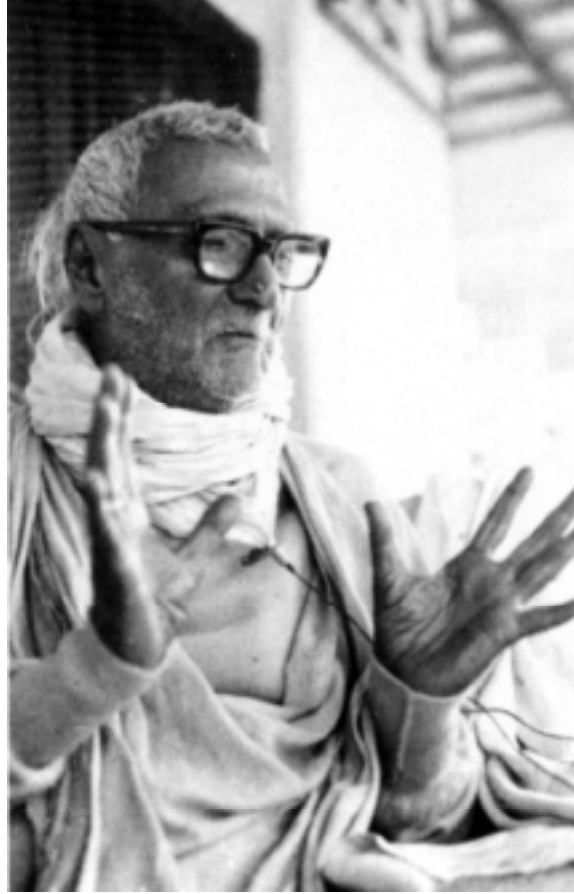
Srila Guru Maharaj’s eternal godbrother and friend, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, previously inundated the Western World with the first instalment of Krsna Consciousness – the chanting of the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* and devotional service to Sri Krsna. Srila Guru Maharaja has now brought that tide of golden nectar to its

highest level, by establishing in five continents the fully-fledged conception of the followers of Sri Rupa;

*mahaprabhu sri chaitanya
radha-krsna nahe anya
rupanuga janera jivana*

“Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is no other than Radha and Krsna combined. This is the life and soul of the Rupanuga *sampradaya*. ”

AWAKENING TO THE ABSOLUTE



DEDICATION

With eternal loving gratitude to His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Grand Ambassador of Lord Chaitanya and the Holy Name to the Western world, and our 'Siksa-Guru'.

Dedicated as an offering to Sri Acaryyadeva His Divine Grace Sri Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj through whom the disciples and followers of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat lineage continue to receive inspiration, strength and nourishment in their aspiration towards the noble ideals shown by the Great Preceptor and Founder of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math His Divine Grace Om Visnupad Sri Srimad B.R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

*kamasya nendriya-pritir
labho jiveta yavata*

*jivasya tattva-jijnasa
nartho yas ceha karmabhih*

“Life’s desires should never be directed toward sense gratification. One should desire only a healthy life, or self preservation, since a human being is meant for inquiry about the Absolute Truth. Nothing else should be the goal of one’s works.
(*Srimad Bhagavatam 1.2.10*)

INTRODUCTION

It is my great pleasure and fortune to be able to present this short talk by His Divine Grace Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, in written form.

For the sincere student of the teachings of Krishna consciousness as delivered by the Supreme Lord Himself, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj requires little introduction. Disciple of the great pioneer of the teachings of pure devotional theism in the present age, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada (1874-1937), Srila Sridhar Maharaj was named by his Gurudev as the ‘Guardian of Devotion’ and his life and teachings – his immense scriptural knowledge, oral and written contributions, and depth of realisation – have touched innumerable hearts, of godbrothers and disciples alike.

Following the departure from the world of his beloved godbrother, Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977), the great ambassador of Krishna consciousness to the Western world, Srila Sridhar Maharaj’s very presence in the world brought new life, light, and hope to many of Srila Swami Prabhupada’s disciples. Though Srila Sridhar Maharaj himself disappeared from mortal vision in 1988, after having appointed his most beloved disciple Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj as his successor, that presence continues shine brightly both in the hearts of his disciples, grand-disciples and followers all over the world, and at his place of *bhajan* (worship), the beautiful Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math at Nabadwip.

‘Awakening to the Absolute’; is an extract from a talk which was delivered in 1982 during the first months of that year when devotees, seeking guidance and nourishment for their spiritual lives amidst turbulent times, were visiting Srila Sridhar Maharaj at Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math. Actually we had known about this wonderful gem for a long time, and had intended to publish it much earlier but were unable to locate the tape-recording. During a visit to Norway in 1997, a video film of Srila Sridhar Maharaj was being shown in one devotees’ home, and lo! We were blessed. Subsequently we were given an audio copy of the same, from which the present offering was transcribed.

Previously, two booklets also containing excerpts from Srila Sridhar Maharaj’s talks, entitled “Home Comfort” and “Inner Fulfilment”, were published. Although intended as introductions to the spiritual life of devotion, and suitable for public distribution, these also contained conceptions of much greater depth and were in fact of great value and much loved by practicing devotees all over the world.

“Awakening to the Absolute” may perhaps be seen as completing this trilogy of booklets. Herein is shown, how the Absolute Truth in its fully revealed aspect is Krishna, and therefore Krishna consciousness is the *summum bonum* of all spiritual search. Taking the basic theme of those previous books – the search innate in every living being for fulfilment, which can be finally realised in the human form – the development of this search in a progressively specified form, blessing the soul with greater and greater fulfilment in the life of divine service, is shown.

Though it is certainly true that sincere faith (*sraddha*) is the first and foremost qualification – or ‘pre-qualification’ – and necessity for the spiritual aspirant, it is incorrect to assume that spiritual aspirant, it is incorrect to assume that spiritual life is somehow haphazard or ‘unscientific’. By authentic spiritual practice under expert guidance, and with the help of Divine Grace, the goal is realised by stages – awakenment of the soul is such. The Lord Himself says “Of all kinds

of wisdom, of all sciences, I am the spiritual science of the self – the knowledge of the soul.” (*Bhagavad-gita* 10.32)

However, with this science the results are not, cannot be verifiable in the empirical sense because here the work – the ‘experiment’, if you will – is performed not on, or with, any external apparatus, but on and with the experimenter himself. The results therefore are necessarily subjectively (in the subject, self) realised. That is why, to the uninitiated, religious experience always seems an impenetrable mystery. Indeed, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna:

“While spiritual awareness is like night for the living beings enchanted by the material phenomena, the self-realised soul remains awake, directly relishing the divine ecstasy of his uninterrupted spiritual intelligence. On the contrary, the wakefulness of materialistic persons addicted to sense-enjoyment – infatuated by fleeting mundane fancies devoid of spiritual joy – is night for the self-realised person who is completely indifferent to such pursuits.”

(*Bhagavad-gita* 2.69)

The serious inquirer, if it is his fortune to appreciate this truth, would naturally wish to seek out the living representative of such, as advised by the Lord in the *Bhagavad-gita* to His dear disciple Arjuna:

*tad viddhi pranipatena,
pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam,
jnaninas tattva-darsinah*
(*Bhagavad-gita* 4.34)

“You will be able to attain all this knowledge by satisfying the enlightened spiritual master with prostrate obeisances, relevant enquiry, and sincere service. Great souls who are most expert in scriptural knowledge and endowed with direct realisation of the Supreme Absolute Truth will teach you that divine knowledge.”

Characteristically, in this talk His Divine Grace takes as his basis a verse from scripture, and then explains it line by line and word by word, revealing the inner meaning in its beautiful, living form. Here we have a scientific, clear and impartial exposition of the development

of consciousness from self-realisation – *brahma-bhuta prasannatma* (*Bhagavad-gita* 18.55), up to the soul’s location in eternal divine service, *muktir hitvanyatha rupam, sva-rupena-vyavastitih*: the gradual awakening of the soul, in stages, to its acme, a “life of love with Krishna” – hence the book’s title.

In transcribing the text we have tried to be faithful to the spirit, the ‘mood’ and ‘flow’, of Srila Sridhar Maharaj’s delivery, as it was originally given. We have made adjustments only where unavoidably necessary, to show the meanings in the text as clearly and accurately as possible, (especially) for the reader unfamiliar with Srila Sridhar Maharaj’s particular spiritually-charged, charming and poetic manner of speech.

At the end of the book we have also included some verses on chanting the Holy Name, the *yuga-dharma*, or recommended means for spiritual realisation in the present Age.

The subject matter of Srila Sridhar Maharaj’s talk is so essential, in fact, that we were surprised that the talk had not been brought out earlier in the original excellent publications explaining the Krsna-conception, as produced by Srila Sridhar Maharaj’s disciples in the early 1980’s. But then, there is such a wealth of material available (it has been estimated that the recorded informal discourses over nearly nine years (1979-1988) would fill 80 books!); and of course, it is a great fortune that by that arrangement, our humble self might be given the chance to do this service.

Without further ado then, we happily present His Divine Grace’s talk. May the kind reader forgive us for any mistakes appearing in the present offering, despite our every effort to eradicate them.

B.S. Tridandi Swami

Festival in remembrance of Sriman Mahaprabhu’s *sannyasa-lila*
15th January, 1999

*pramanais tat sadacarais
tad abhyasair nirantaram
bodhayann atmanatmanam
bhaktim apy uttamam labhet*

“Supreme Devotion is attained by gradually increasing perception of one’s intrinsic self through constant self-cultivation following authority, virtuous practices and practicing spiritual life”
(*Sri Brahma-samhita* verse 59)

PART ONE

WAKING FROM THE DREAM

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: We find this verse in *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

*avismrtih krsna-padaravindayoh
ksinoty abhadrani ca sam tanoti
sattvasya-suddhim paramatma-bhaktim
jnanam ca vijnana-viraga-yuktam
(Srimad Bhagavatam 12.12.55)*

(“For one who remembers the lotus feet of Krishna, all inauspiciousness soon disappears, and one’s good fortune expands. In other words, one becomes free from all material contamination, one attains liberation from repeated birth and death, and one’s real spiritual life begins. As one’s heart becomes gradually purified, one’s devotion for the Lord within the heart awakens, and one realized the *Paramatma*. Thus one gradually develops knowledge (*jnana*), realization (*vijnana*), and renunciation (*vairagya*).”)

Krishna consciousness, remembrance of the divine feet of Krishna – *krsna-padaravindayoh* – will dissipate, destroy the *abhadr*, what is undesirable, what is not good in us. That which is nasty, which is impure within us, will be destroyed by the continuance of Krishna consciousness. In any stage of its development, even in its lower stage, its slightest, ‘negligent’ connection can destroy our

undesirable connection with the things of lower nature. And, it will promote goodness within us: *sattvasya-suddhim*, the substantial character of our existence, will be improved; our soul-existence, that will be purified. Our standpoint, our understanding, our aspiration – everything, will be purified. And, *paramatma-bhaktim*: we shall attain devotion, attachment to the super-subjective realm; and our knowledge, our conception about that – *jnanam ca* – will improve. And that knowledge – the conception about Him – will develop to *vijnana*, a proper conception, and will effect in us *viraga-yuktam*, apathy to this mundane world.

At any cost, we are to maintain our Krishna consciousness. The advice is: try to maintain Krishna consciousness, it is *the* medicine. And there is no other medicine which can produce Krishna consciousness, which can cure our disease and discover Krishna consciousness within us.

Light from Light

Krishna consciousness is the cause of Krishna consciousness! And we have to get help from the *sadhu* who has got Krishna consciousness within them. Just as, from one candle another candle may be lit. A candle cannot produce light from within, but it is to be lit from another candle – it is something like that. We are to awaken our buried Krishna consciousness, which is covered by ‘*anyabhilasa-karmma-jnana*’ (fruit-seeking, selfish work, the result of the attempt to satisfy material desires, both fleeting and ‘organized’; and the search for philosophical/spiritual knowledge, devoid or independent of devotional service.); so, that light, that association, will come to help the sleeping Krishna consciousness within us, and our consciousness will arise from its sleep and show itself, as it is. So, the method is that: to take *sadhu-sangha* – *krsna-bhakti janma-mula*, *haya sadhu-sangha* – association with the *sadhu*, devotee of Krishna, is the root-cause of Krishna consciousness.

At the same time, it is told that Krishna consciousness is *ahaituki*, causeless. How are we to harmonise these truths? – *Krsna-bhakti*, faith in Krishna, or devotion to Krishna, we can get from the *sadhu*; at the same time it is told that it is ‘causeless’.

In this connection, Visvanath Cakravarti Thakur has explained the meaning of *ahaituki* in this verse from *Srimad Bhagavatam* (1.2.6):

*sai vai pumsam paro dharmo
yatho bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati*

(“The supreme occupation (*dharma*) for all humanity is that by which man can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be causeless and uninterrupted, to completely satisfy the self”) –

He explains that here, *krsna-bhakti* is described as *ahaituki*, causeless, and also *apratihata*, continuous – so when it is awakened in our heart, we can feel that our heart is getting wonderfully satisfied, *yayatma suprasidati*. The satisfaction is produced in our heart, we can feel it. *Ahaituky apratihata*: it has no cause; and it cannot be checked, cannot be opposed, opposition cannot have any effect there – it is such. *Bhakti* comes from *bhakti*. In this way it is *ahaituki*. Just as, the light is there and another candle is lit from it. From light, light is coming. In this way we are to trace it out, to understand it: the original Light, that is eternal, self-existent, and is extending itself, so it has no cause, it is ‘causeless’. The cause is there eternally, and it is extending itself.

Connection with the Causal Plane

And, *bhakti* is *apratihata*: temporarily, it may seem to be opposed, or apparently checked, but: *nehabhikrama-naso 'sti pratyavayo-na vidyate* – (“Even a small beginning in this devotional service can never go in vain nor can any loss be suffered.” *Bhagavad-gita* 2.49) – It won’t leave you! For the time being it may be suppressed a little, but it cannot be finished – it is of eternal character. It is of eternal character: it has got connection with the eternal aspect of the universe. So, it is ‘*apratihata*’. We are to come near such sort of existence, we are to come in connection with that plane of life – a

particular plane, plenary existence, acquaintance, or nature. It is there; only we are to have our connection with it.

Systematic Knowledge

So, in this verse from *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

*avismrtih krsna-padaravindayoh
ksinoty abhadrani ca sam tanoti
sattvasya-suddhim paramatma-bhaktim
jnanam ca vijnana-viraga-yuktam
(Srimad Bhagavatam 12.12.55)*

We find here, *jnanam ca vijnana viraga-yuktam* – ‘*jnana*’ means direct knowledge of a thing, and ‘*vijnana*’, systematic knowledge. In *Bhagavad-gita* also, we find this ‘*vijnana*’:

*jnanam te ‘ham sa-vijnanam,
idam vaksyamy asesatah
yj jnatva neha bhuyo ‘nyaj,
jnatavyam avasisyate
(Bhagavad-gita 7.2)*

(“Now I shall fully describe to you, with the taste of the flavour of divine sweetness, this knowledge of My grand majestic splendour and opulences. After knowing all this, absolutely nothing will remain for you to know, being situated on this beautiful, joyful and victorious path”) –

Here we find that *jnana* means a general knowledge, of the whole, and *vijnana* means the knowledge of its constituent parts – as a system, systematic knowledge. So:

Jnanam ca vijnana-viraga-yuktam, you will attain the knowledge of the Absolute as a ‘system’ – of parts, in gradation, a hierarchy.

Adjusted Attraction

And, ‘*viraga*’ – *viraga* has a twofold meaning: one ‘negative’, and the other ‘positive’. The negative meaning is : you will have no attraction for ‘non-God’, that is, you will have no mundane attachment, no attraction for mundane ‘necessity’. And positive: *visisyate-raga* – you will have excellent (*visisyate*) attachment (*raga*) – that kind of attachment which is accepted through the process of ‘selection and elimination’, attachment located in its proper place. Your attraction (to Him, to God) will not be through a raw or approximate estimation: “This is good; that is bad; this is a mixture”; but you will have progressively eliminative attraction, adjusted attraction. This is the meaning of *viraga-yuktam*.

So, this knowledge is such: ‘*jnanam ca vijnanam-viraga-yuktam*’: knowledge that is supported by (based on) attraction, and also, by experience of the ‘system’, that knows how much attachment – more attachment, or less – is necessary in any part of it. Discriminative attachment: “attachment for the eye, attachment for the hand, they should not be equal”; an adjusted attachment, in a particular system. The attachment should be well-adjusted: wherever, and how much, attention is necessary – the criterion is according to that. So, “The head is more important, and the leg, a little less”. In this way, you will gradually acquire properly adjusted attachment for the systematic whole.

First it is hazy, a ‘mass of attraction’, and then the attraction will be systematised. As much as you will come in connection with the other side – the object of your attachment – in a systematic way, so much you will be able to realise (Him).

Clearer Conception

So:
avismrtih krsna-padaravindayoh
ksinoty abhadrani ca sam tanoti

In a general way, the path of good advancement is given here. And, then, ‘*sattvasya-suddhim*’: your understanding, in its progress, will have its undesirable portion eliminated. Your conception will become more clear – clearer and clearer. With that clarity, undesirable things from your conception will gradually vanish, and your progress

will lead you to the perfect conception: *sattvasya-suddhim*. In the beginning, that ‘*sattva*’ (truth) is what you come to understand in an approximate way, to be ‘eternal’, or *sat-cit-ananda* (eternal truth, consciousness and bliss), but there will be gradual development in your understanding; it will become more clear and more pure.

So, the development towards Krishna consciousness is such. First, a ‘mass of light’; then the figure; then the potency; then the ‘*lila*’ (pastimes) with the potency. In this way your approach will be closer and closer, and many things, the closest and minutest things, will come to your view. The minutest part also, the most detailed things – the whole *cit-vilasa* (the spiritual variegatedness of the conscious plane) will be very close to you. You will be led higher and higher, closer to the specified, differentiated view of that plane. In this way there is progressive development – progress in *bhakti*, devotion.

PART TWO

THE PATH OF THE HEART

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Any question?

Disciple: In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna says:

*bahunam janmanam ante,
jnanavan mam prapadyate
vasudevah sarvam iti,
sa mahatma sudurlabhah
(Bhagavad-gita 7.19)*

(“After many, many births, the *jnani*, person in knowledge (who happens to achieve the association of My pure devotee) finally comes to understand that the whole universe of moving and stationary beings is of the nature of Vasudeva, alone, in as much all are subordinate to Vasudeva. (I, as Vasudeva am the source and substance of all that be.) Having grasped this conception, he surrenders unto Me. Know such a great soul to be extremely rare.”)

What exactly is the meaning, here?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: From '*brahma*' conception, the different instalments follow. In *brahma* realisation, there is a 'mass' of consciousness: 'all-consciousness'. Then, the next step will come: the consciousness is of individual character – with deeper vision, individuality is added to consciousness. There is consciousness plus individuality.

Consciousness and Personality

In fact, no consciousness can exist without individuality, without personality. So, the consciousness is personal: personality and consciousness, they cannot be separated, one from the other. What is differentiated from personality, that is only the halo of the personality – it is something like that. And that 'halo' that *brahma* – is also the combination of minutest personality, of souls.

Substance is of two kinds: *ksara*, or changing, perishable; and *aksara*, unchanging, eternal. In the *Bhagavad-gita* (15.16) Lord Krishna says: *ksarah sarvani bhutani* – whatever we see in the changing aspect of the world, that is called *ksara*. And what is unchangeable is called *aksara*. Then, He says:

*yasmat ksaram atito 'ham
aksarad api cottamah
ato 'smi like vede ca,
prathitah purusottamah
(Bhagavad-gita 15.18)*

“My existence transcends both of these two substances, *ksara* – *aksara*. So, I am *purusottamah* – My name is 'Purussottama'. My glories are sung in the world and in the scriptures, as Purusottama, the Supreme Person.”

'Purusottama' means Vasudeva. So, *bahunam janmanam ante...*; after many births, when the *jnanis*, those of the impersonal school, come to understand that the Prime Cause of the consciousness of their quest is a personal one, then they come to conceive of Vasudeva.

Real Devotion – Most Rare

But such *jnanis* are very rarely to be found. Mostly, *jnanis* cannot cross this line. They are lost there:

*ye 'nye' ravindaksa vimukta-maninas
tvayy asta-bhavad avisuddha buddhayah
aruhya krcchrena param padam tatah
patanty adho 'nadrta-yusmad anghrayah
(Srimad Bhagavatam 10.2.32)*

(“O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe penances and austerities to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence remains impure. They simply speculate in various ways and do not seek the means to take shelter of You. Because they have no regard for Your lotus feet, they simply fall down from their position of imagined superiority into material existence again”).

Generally, it is the fate of the *jnanis* to climb up to the highest position with great effort, and then, when they cannot grasp that “consciousness means ‘person’” – they cannot cross that understanding – they have to revert back. They have to come back, fall back. And for those who can cross this line, who can understand that: “Yes, consciousness means person – a Big Personality, I am small”, *bhakti* begins there. The relation of subordination of the lower to the Higher, that comes into effect. And, *sa mahatma sudurlabhah* – such a person among the *jnanis* is very rarely to be found, who can take the positive connection of the higher aspect of life. Mostly they come back, they have to come back from there. After much penance, they climb up to that high mark, but they cannot accommodate that “the higher Entity must be dealt with devotion”, so they have to come back.

Personality with Potency

But those who realise: *vasudevah sarvam iti*, that Vasudeva – Purusottama – is personal, they can ‘cross the line’ and enter Vaikuntha, the service area proper.

And there, we are told, gradually as their vision grows more and more, they can find potency on the side of the personal God. Then they become the devotee of Laksmi-Narayana, and enter completely into Vaikuntha-seva. And in that service, we find awe, reverence; there are *sastric* (scriptural) rules, and also examples of the higher-realised souls, to guide them.

The Search for Full Engagement

And in that Vaikuntha-seva, if the soul does not find the whole of his innate nature having full engagement, there will be some sort of thirst, some inner tendency which cannot find any corresponding relation to satisfy itself. And when he feels this kind of urge from within, he has to search after another *rasa* (a soul’s specific service mood/relationship with the Lord, and the ‘taste’ derived therefrom.), for a purer, more friendly service than the filial service (*dasya-rasa*).

And ultimately the *madhura-rasa* service – the sweetheart’s service, in consorhood – urges him to go up. It urges him to go up, and to go deeper. And gradually, by coming in contact with such (*madhura rasa*) agents, he finds his own heart blossoming. And blossoming to its fullest extent, his heart takes him gradually towards Goloka Vrndavana (the supreme spiritual planet, abode of Lord Krishna).....

The Service of Reality the Beautiful

Then he can see that what was (initially realised as) ‘*brahma*’; then *Paramatma*, or Vasudeva; then Laksmi-Narayana – that has gradually come to him as Krishna consciousness, not Narayana consciousness. Superceding Narayana consciousness, he comes in contact with Krishna consciousness of the Reality. He is awakened – he finds himself awakened in a plane where he see the all-connecting, all-harmonising principle is no longer Narayana, but Krishna – He is showing Himself as Krishna. Then he is fully awakened. His heart is fully awakened, and at the same time he sees that the environment,

and the object of his search, is also fully equipped. This is full-fledged theism.

Full-fledged theism – where the theistic conviction receives its satisfaction in the fullest way. Just as, with the opening of the eye we can see the world, and according to the degree of our sight we come to see the subtlest thing of the environment, so also, by our inner awakening of the fullest type, we come to a particular world, environment, and that is Vrindavana – Goloka Vrindavana, the land of love. And movement there is spontaneous; and all around, we find the environment only friendly. It is so simple, so friendly; and the dealing of all who are there are filled with so much intimacy.

And in Vrindavana we will find that our thirst for any higher change of environment, of association, no longer needs to be quenched; but there is thirst, eternal thirst, for coming in closer relation with them, closer connection with them. There is no possibility of any higher change of environment – where he has reached is almost final – and now the only remaining thing, is how to come into a more and more close connection with the environment. And that becomes the initiative of our movement there: more and more intimate connection with the environment. The environment is eternal, but in the intimacy of connection – the ‘competition’ (in loving service), the movement, is there. And the guidance is given according to that.

Merging in Krishna Consciousness

In this way, there is progress. There is some sort of ‘necessity’, by which the service is moving. And, there is repetition – a kind of ‘repetition’, but it is ever-fresh, ever-new! It is ever-new, and it is only a question of the time. For example, every day when I am hungry, in the morning, food is tasteful to me, and not always – by the movement of the time, it is like that. In this way, everything is palatable, not stale. In that plane, there is movement of time, but it is eternal. It is managed by *yogamaya* (the internal potency of Lord Krishna, who arranges and conducts His *lila*) in such a way.

And finally, there we will attain the fullest satisfaction of all the inner parts of our system, the wholesale satisfaction of every atom of every constituent part of our spiritual body: *priti anga lage kale, priti*

anga mora – “Every part of my every limb, cries for union with the corresponding part of every limb of the other side”. *Sambandha* – relationship with the environment – may come to such a stage, that every atom constituting my spiritual body and mind, will aspire after union with every corresponding part of the environment.

In this way, in such a friendly way, so many are moving there, and it is adjusted accordingly by *yogamaya*. And this is the highest conception.

Priti anga lage kale, priti anga mora – “Every atom of my existence is in loving aspiration with the environment, and that is Krishna. Krishna consciousness has surrounded me.” ‘Surrounded me’ means, “From all sides it has embraced me; I am lost in the thought of Krishna consciousness, with its detailed, elaborate acquaintance. I am merged, merged in the deepest part of Krishna consciousness, where I shall find “Krishna has captured every atom of my existence. Every atom is feeling as if it is experiencing separate pleasure by His embracing....”

This is possible only in consortherhood relationship, where every atom has been embraced, captured, by coming into the most intimate connection with Him. It is called *adi-rasa*, or *mukhya-rasa*. The name of *madhurya-rasa* is *adi-rasa*, that is, it is the most original, it is the source of all other *rasas*, and all other *rasas* are dependent on it. So it is called ‘*adi-rasa*’. And, *mukhya-rasa*: the sum total of all ‘*rasas*’ – their gist, their essence, is represented there. We are told like that.

And Mahaprabhu came with this gift – *madhurya-rasa*. It is *anarpita carim cirat*, “that which was never distributed before” – that of which, it is considered, any distribution was not possible previously, before Him.

Highest Revelation

In Bhaktivinod Thakur’s book *Jaiva Dharma*, we find that one Vaisnava is asking his Gurudeva, “Devotion, it is eternal; but why do you say that it came from Mahaprabhu?” Then his Guru, Paramahansa Babaji, is saying, “I visited Vrindavana and asked the eternal servitor of Sri Caitanyadeva, Sanatana Goswami: “This *anarpita carim cirat* – “which has never been dealt with before” – what is the meaning underlying it?” Then Sanatana Goswami replied:

“Bhakti is eternal; in ‘*Narada-bhakti-sutra*’, ‘*Sandilya-sutra*’, all such scriptures, this has been given – but the type of devotion which Mahaprabhu came with, which we meet after the advent of Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanyadeva, that was not previously at any time open to the ordinary person. So, it is called ‘*anarpita carim*’. And what is that standard of devotion? It is this: complete surrender to Krishna in consorhood, where every atom of the jiva-soul gets welcomed and embraced by the corresponding atom of Krishna consciousness – *madhura-rasa*. That was not open to the public before. This is my finding, my faith. You may accept, or not accept ...” Sanatana Goswami told like this to that Vaisnava: “This is my private conception – you may take it, or not”. This was his reply.

The World of Dedication

So devotion has its beginning; the beginning of devotional life is here, where Krishna says ‘*vasudevah sarvam iti*’ (*Bhagavad-gita* 7.19) (“I, Vasudeva, am the source and substance of all that be”). Then, the beginning of bhakti, the primary admission into the devotional school above ‘*jnana*’ – knowledge - and *vairagya* – renunciation, that is *santa-rasa* (‘passive’ relationship with the Lord.) And from there the gradation: *dasya-rasa* (servitude); then *sakhya-rasa* (fraternity); then *vatsalya-rasa* (parenthood); then *madhura-rasa* (conjugal). All this is given in details in ‘*ramananda-samvada*’.

In this way, *bhakti* is going up. Systematically, we are to understand, and digest, digest what is ‘*bhakti*’. But, in the beginning, we are to have a broad conception of the positive world, the world of dedication.

Epilogue

This famous discussion (*ramananda-samvada*) is recorded by Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in his sublime account of the life of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta*, (*Madhya-lila*, Chapter 8: “Talks between Sri Chaitana Mahaprabhu and Ramananda Raya”). It is mentioned in this talk only briefly by Srila Sridhar Maharaj, but we give its reference for the reader, because this

‘*ramananda-samvada*’ was most beloved to, and often quoted by Srila Sridhar Maharaj. On the order of his Guru Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, Srila Sridhar Maharaj discovered the location where this historic discussion took place, on the bank of the Godavari river (Andhra-Padesh, India) and established a Temple there. He many times pointed out that the entire theological basis of Gaudiya (Caitanyite) Vaisnavism is contained therein.

The Golden Gift

*sri-krsna-caitanya prabhu nityananda,
sri-advaita gadadhara
srivasadi-gaura-bhakti vrnda*

golokera prema dhana, harinama-sankirttana:

The Golden Gift brought to this world
From the topmost planet of the spiritual sky,
Goloka dham, by the Golden Lord
Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – the Hare Krishna
Mahamantra (Great Chant for Deliverance):

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare

*harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam,
kaulau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva gatir anyatha*

“The Holy Name! The Holy Name! The Holy Name! Without chanting of the Holy Name, in this age of Kali there is certainly no means of deliverance. There is no other way. There is no other way.”

(Brhan-naradiya-Purana, 38.126)

“Those who are actually advanced in knowledge are able to appreciate the essential value of this age of Kali. Such enlightened persons worship *Kali-yuga* because in this fallen age, all perfection of life can easily be achieved by the performance of *sankirttana*, the congregational chanting of the Lord’s Holy Names.”

Sri Karabhajana Muni
(Srimad Bhagavatam 11.5.36)

*trnad api sunicena taror abi sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirttaniyah sada harih*

“One who is humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree, who gives due honour to others without desiring it for himself is qualified to always chant the Holy Name of Krishna”

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu
(*Siksastakam*, 3)

*sri krsna caitanya-
radha-krsna nahe anya,
rupanuga janera jivana:*

“Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is none other than
Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, the life and soul
Of the true followers of Srila Rupa Goswami

(Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

“As much as you surrender to the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga,
you’ll find yourself safely situated in the service of
Sri Sri Radha-Govinda.

Don’t try to approach Them directly.
If you do, there may be some difficulty.
But the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga will take you there safely.”

(Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami)

prabuddhe jnana-bhaktibhyam
atmany ananda-cinmayi
udety anuttama bhaktir
bhagavat-prema-laksana

“When transcendental experience awakens
by means of Knowledge and Devotion,
the highest Devotion symptomised
by Love for the Supreme Lord,
Sri Krishna, the Beloved of the soul,
awakens in the devotee’s heart.”

(Sri Brahma-samhita verse 58)

Divine Guidance

by

His Divine Grace

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswami Maharaj

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

Divine Guidance

From Holy Lectures and Letters

by

His Divine Grace

Srīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswami Maharaj

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Founder Acharya:
His Divine Grace
Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar
Dev-Goswami Maharaj

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Foreword

This is the third book in the *The Divine Servitor* series. The first two books of the series—*The Divine Servitor* and *Dignity of the Divine Servitor*—were particularly intended as a substantial means of glorifying our Śrī Āchāryyadev Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj on the occasion of his Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 1990 and 1991.

1992 saw a marked increase in mail, and written offerings by the many devotees. Consequently a separate *Śrī Gauḍīya Darśan* book of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā offerings was published for the satisfaction of our Śrīla Āchāryyadev and the devotees of this Mission.

This present book—*Divine Guidance*—is compiled exclusively from lectures and letters by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. I pray that it may be accepted by His Divine Grace as well as by the devotional community worldwide.

All credit goes to His Divine Grace for his perfect capacity and intention for our spiritual advancement.

Also to Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj for his invaluable advice and energy throughout; to Śrīpād Bhakti Svarūpa Tridaṇḍi Mahārāj for his long hours of transcribing; and to Śrīpād Mādhavānanda Prabhu and the many devotees who have given considerable assistance in so many ways.

If anything is lacking in this book, please know clearly that it is due only to my own failings. But certainly within these pages there is much of eternal value, and I request the reader to focus upon the substance given by our Divine Master, and overlook the shortcomings in its being relayed in the printed form.

Asking that all the Vaiṣṇavas may accept my obeisances,

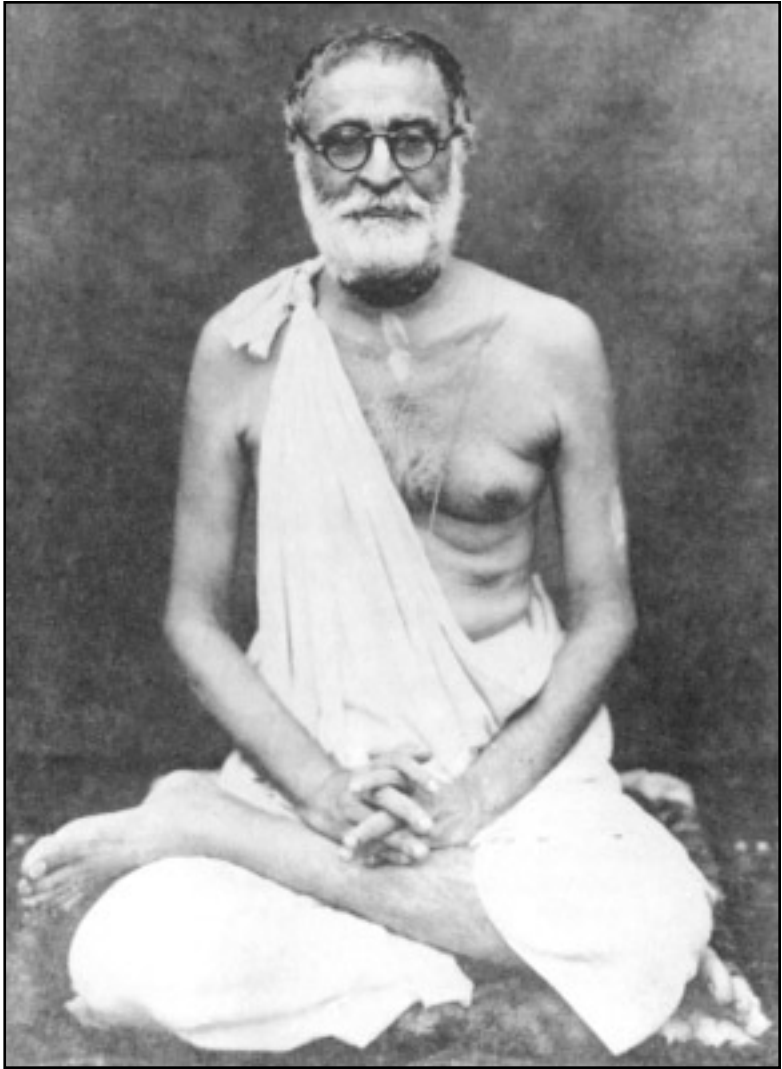
Humbly
Mahānanda Dāsa Bhakti
Rañjan
Kṛṣṇa-Ekādaśī,
May 1993



His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
President-Sevāite-Āchāryya of
Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp
with branches world-wide



His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
the Founder-Āchāryya,
Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh



His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura



Śrīla Gaura Kisora Dāsa Bābajī Mahārāj



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura



Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh,
Nabadwīp

Divine Guidance

First Section

Lectures

by

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Chapter One

Utilising Our Fortune

A lecture by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

By the mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu we are all now present at His place of pastimes, Śrī Nabadwīp-Dhām, a very auspicious and transcendental place. Mahāprabhu appeared in Śrī Māyāpur and played here in the nine islands of Nabadwīp: Antardwīp, Śimantadwīp, Godrumadwīp, Madhyadwīp, Koladwīp, Modadrumadwīp, Jahnūdwīp, and Ṛtudwīp. These are the nine islands and everywhere here Mahāprabhu's pastimes are going on, they are eternal. Vṛndāvan Dāsa Ṭhākura said:

**adyāpiha caitanya ei saba līlā kare
yā'ra bhāgye thāke se dekhaye nirantare**

Those pastimes of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu are still going on, and those who are very fortunate can see that through their transcendental vision. Everything is always covered by illusion, Māyā, and to our eyes this Nabadwīp-Dhām is also covered by that illusion. There are two types of Māyā: Yogamāyā and Mahāmāyā. Yogamāyā is always giving nourishment to her Lord, whereas Mahāmāyā prevents any disturbance from entering that plane.

Our soul is now covered by illusion: we are attracted by the *Chāyā-śakti*, the shadow-power of Kṛṣṇa, therefore we now live far from that transcendental world. But when Kṛṣṇa will

bestow His mercy upon our head, Māyā will remove the illusion from us and we will be able to see the transcendental *Dhām* and we shall also be able to serve there.

The Māyā-*śakti* is very heavy for us because we are very tiny souls. She is always attracting us through her illusion. In one way, it is for our rectification, no doubt, but it is not a happy position for the conditioned souls. However, we will get relief from this environment if we try to know our position, and what is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we do this, then by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotee we will get strength to come out from the illusory environment, and, when we try, Kṛṣṇa will help us. That assistance comes to us through His devotees.

Everything comes through the proper channel. Sometimes direct mercy comes from the upper level, but normally, or generally, it comes through the established proper channel:

**sādhū-śāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha hay
sei jīva nistare, māyā tāhāre chāḍaya**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līla 20.120*)

The mercy of the *sādhū* and Guru takes us to the transcendental level. When we can stand firm in our position there, then Māyādevī will leave us. It is necessary to try to preach this type of conception. As much as we have it ourselves, we are to distribute this clear vision and give it to others. Everywhere there is some possibility, from the lowest level up to the highest; everyone can try to give some good to others. Actually our only life's goal is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is coming through *sādhū*, Guru and Vaiṣṇava. It comes from their mercy through our sincere activity of service to them.

You are fortunate to be connected with such knowledge. Somehow or other, you have received some experience and

inspiration, and that is why you have come here, and you are trying to increase your mood of devotion as much as possible. Many devotees constantly feel disturbances from many things. From within themselves they are subject to *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *mātsaryya*: lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness, and jealousy. The only way to gain relief from such a position has been given by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu:

**vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viṣaheta dhīraḥ
sarvvām apimām pṛthiviṁ sa śiṣyāt**
(*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*)

It is necessary to try to control these tendencies within us, and it is only possible through service. When the mood of eternal service to Kṛṣṇa will reveal itself in our heart, then everything else will leave us. At that time our intention will always be directed only for the service of Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava.

The Scriptures say, *sādhū-saṅga*! A *sādhū* is one who is a perfect servitor. He is always engaged in service to Kṛṣṇa with his full energy. One who has no desire for himself or anything except service to Kṛṣṇa—he is a real *sādhū*. *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* says:

**kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niṣkāma, ataeva ‘śānta’
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali ‘aśānta’**
(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.149*)

Aśānta means people who are always disturbed by the illusory environment. However, one can automatically get relief from the reactions of his bad activities if he can have no desire for his own purpose but can constantly try to give satisfactory service to *sādhū*, Guru and Vaiṣṇava.

Many of our friends always feel disturbances from their mundane activities. But they can control them very easily; the method is to try very intensely and exclusively to engage themselves in service to Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. Such service goes directly to Kṛṣṇa. If they try in that way they will get relief from the illusory environment.

We are always between hopefulness and hopelessness! Hope comes when we are correcting ourselves in line with the transcendental world, but when we are disconnected from that level, then a hopeless position comes to us. It is, therefore, always necessary to keep connection with that transcendental level, and if we try in the way of service we will gain relief very easily.

**kāma eṣa krodha eṣa, rajoguṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahā-śano mahā-pāpmā, viddhy enam iha vairiṇam**

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 3.37)

There are three kinds of qualities or modes of nature (*guṇas*) always playing within our body and mind: *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*. Of these, *sattva-guṇa* sometimes can give a good result for our practising life, but the true practising life is mainly beyond the three qualities of nature, and that is called *nirguṇa*. Kṛṣṇa advised in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*: “You always try to stay in the level of *nirguṇa* where these three, *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*, have no play.”

Sattva-guṇa can give us auspiciousness and take our mind to an auspicious level, but Kṛṣṇa consciousness lives beyond even that. Attachment to Kṛṣṇa is necessary. Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu quoted:

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate**

**tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

Hankering is the main thing necessary to gain that transcendental knowledge. When that will reveal itself in our heart fully, other disturbances will automatically leave us, just as when the sun rises in the east, all darkness is dispelled from our section of the Earth. So it is necessary for us to have hankering for *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

We can see in the *Vedas* many varieties of auspicious practising moods. The *Vedānta*, *Purāṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, etc. are all always indicating the *nirguṇa* plane and trying to take us to that level. If we cannot stay in that *nirguṇa* level we will not receive the full result, therefore our activity, mood, and everything, whether *viddhi* or *rāga*, should always be such as to try to take us to that higher level. But we must *want* it, then we can go there, otherwise not.

**bhukti-mukti-sprhā yāvat
piśāci hṛdi vartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra
katham abhyudayo bhavet**

When attachment and attraction for mundane things live within our heart, they are called *pīśāci*, witches. If witches have us under their spell, then how can *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* live there? Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī says it is not possible. Still, if we try with our best mood of service to attain that position, we must get it. It may be sudden or it may be after a long time, but if we try we must get that position, there is no doubt. That attempt is called *sādhana*. *Sādhana* is 'the means to the end.' Generally our *sādhana* guides us to the upper level, and prevents us from falling down to a lower level.

Śravaṇam-kīrttanam, etc. is *bhakti-sādhana*, but other kinds of *sādhana* exist under the guidance of different departments of Vedic knowledge, such as *yoga-sādhana*, *jñāna-sādhana*, *karmma-sādhana*, etc. The intention of all these types of practice is to take us to a higher position. But the topmost position, and the actual need for our supreme transcendental benefit, is only *bhakti-yoga*. Without *bhakti-yoga*, other kinds of *sādhana* such as *bhukti* or *mukti* cannot give us the proper result. So if we try to practise *śravaṇam*, *kīrttanam*, *smaraṇam*, *vandanam*, etc.—the nine kinds of *bhakti-sādhana* under the guidance of a proper *sādhū* then we will easily receive the good result.

This *navadhā-bhakti-pīṭha* is Nabadwīp-Dhām. Each of the nine islands of Nabadwīp gives some special facility for our practising life. This place, Koladwīp, is called *pāda-sevana kṣetra*, the place where we can gain direct connection with Kṛṣṇa through the worship of His lotus feet. But if we really want that then we should sincerely try to get it through the expert—then easily we can have His connection.

In the Scriptures we can see that Kṛṣṇa's devotee always tries to satisfy the devotees. That position is the supermost position, but at present we are living in another position, that is, *mano-jagat*, which means the mental world; and that mental world has grown up from the *Māyā-jagat*, the illusory environment. First we must try to disconnect ourselves from the mental world, and fully surrender to Kṛṣṇa, then we will receive help from Him.

**kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane**

From Kṛṣṇa comes inspiration to attain the transcendental world. He will send a *sādhū*, a Guru, a Vaiṣṇava, and through them we will receive some light and strength—easily we shall

be able to practise with their help, and attain our destination.

There is no doubt that all of you here are fortunate to have a connection with the transcendental world and to have hankering, otherwise why would you have come here? You must try to achieve that transcendental plane through your mood of service, and you will get it very easily if you try in the proper way. The proper way is to satisfy Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas.

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj established this Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh he simply wanted a place to practise devotional life along with a very few followers. But now it has grown in a very big way, and day by day in order to help others, it is growing bigger. But the line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is a very exclusive devotional line.

If we want to serve Śrīla Guru Mahārāj exclusively and not see anything else, we will be relieved of all troubles. We must try to serve Guru very attentively, for only then will we get that chance, otherwise we will be cheated. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was very simple-hearted. He did not want to cheat anyone, and that is why he did not make many complications. In his life he only showed Kṛṣṇa and *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. We are also trying to proceed within the line of his vision, but if his mercy will not act within us, we will not get that. So in an exclusive way we must try to satisfy Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Then he will be very happy.

Under the guidance of our mind we may try many things, but that is not really *bhakti*. Our mind is always going this way and that way. The fickle and mad mind can do anything, but a good result will not always come from that. If we do good things then a good result will come to us, if we do not, then a bad result will come to us; such is our position. We will gain relief from the illusory environment only if in an exclusive way we try to follow our Gurudeva.

Many people can say many things, also the *śāstras* are very vast! All the Scriptures are full of knowledge no doubt, but they are so vast that we cannot discover from them what is good for us. But the *sādhū*, Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas simply try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, and if we follow them, we will easily get the full result of all scriptural advice. Therefore we shall try to proceed in a simple way. Mahāprabhu has also instructed us that it is not necessary to do many things—just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, engage in Vaiṣṇava-sevā and do *Prasāda-sevā*:

**sādhū-saṅga, nāma-kīrttana, bhāgavat-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrttira śraddhaya sevana**

**sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga
kṛṣṇa-prema janmāya ei pañcera alpa saṅga**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 22.128 & 129)

Try to satisfy the servitors of Kṛṣṇa and you will easily receive the result—*Kṛṣṇa-prema*, through them. This path is very simple—chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*, and engage in *Vaiṣṇava-sevā*. Don't look this side or that, but give your attention only to the service of Gurudeva and the Vaiṣṇavas, and that will be helpful for you.

Devotee: In the West one of the most common questions the devotees ask is how they can have a service connection. What service can they do? We tell them that they can help the *Maṭh* in various ways and give some service donation and in this way engage themselves in connection with here. But especially in the West, life is very full and there is always the opportunity of complete engagement in *Māyā*—there are newspapers, television, radio, etc. The devotees have their work, their family, and so many things. So they want to know how they can feel they have a constant *sevā* connection; some *bhakti* connection

going on daily. As well as giving to and helping the Central Maṭh, what can they do?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: I am thinking they know better than myself—that is, they are doing it, and they are trying to serve! Still, it is true: how will they feel connected? In which way will they serve? And what is that service?

It is necessary first to surrender to Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, and second, to follow their directives. Service is: “What they advise me to do—I will do that.” And, what is necessary for the satisfaction of Guru? Guru is always giving some instructions to the disciple and if the disciple tries to serve his Guru accordingly then he will receive the desired result. If my Guru will say, “You preach village to village,” if I go village to village, that will be service for me. If Gurudev says, “You try to make a centre here for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness,” and I try to do that with heart and soul, that is my practising life. Everything depends on the satisfaction of Guru.

In the same way, where there is no Guru present but other Vaiṣṇavas are there, service to the Vaiṣṇava will also go to Guru, and he will be pleased by that. The Guru must be perfect, otherwise the result will not come out perfectly. So when the devotees are working in their country, they should try to follow the instructions of Guru. They will try within their circumstances to do as much as possible for the satisfaction of Guru and Vaiṣṇava. Otherwise, what will they do?

Everyone everywhere spends their life for eating, sleeping, enjoying, fearing and protecting themselves, and then dying—taking birth and dying. But that is not really life.

Real life is that we can do something of eternal value. If anyone can do something in connection with the eternal world, they will receive an eternal result. That connection

comes through transcendental knowledge, consciousness and activity; so we have no other way than to follow the instructions of Guru.

If I think the eternal life is good, and I want it, I must follow my instructor. If he is a perfect devotee, what he will say will be good for me; otherwise, if my instructor is not perfect, the result also may not be good.

So, East or West, South or North, everywhere it is necessary to follow Gurudeva as perfectly as possible. ‘Follow’ means that his order is sufficient for me: “Do this, and you’ll be satisfied.” But strong faith is necessary there, otherwise it will not be possible to follow in a perfect way.

Everything is connected with faith. The Guru is connected with the faithful plane, and when he will give that connection to his disciple, that is also within the faithful plane. Otherwise, so many things can give an auspicious result and a pious future birth, but *bhakti* is not of that character.

bhaktis tu bhagavat-bhaktah saṅgena parijāyate

It will grow with the activity of the *ātmā*, so now our activity will be to follow the practitioner’s life.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj—Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda—said, “First you chant the *Mahāmantra* without counting; then chant by counting on beads, then take *Harināma*. Before taking *Harināma* you must first practise for six months or one year.” But actually this is not the real position of the practitioner. The real process is that when you get the beads from a perfect Guru, from there you will get the power of the *mantra*—the *Mahāmantra*—and his order will give you strength to chant. If you engage attentively in that chanting, you will get a good result. But when he wanted to advise the general mass to chant, but they did not know anything—

they had not even heard 'Hare Kṛṣṇa' before—what was he to do? Some sort of practising was necessary.

When a young boy first tries to write something, he just makes a mark or a line, then he gradually gains some finer control of his hand and soon we can see an 'A' or a 'B' taking its proper form. Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj tried to encourage the Westerners in this way, and no doubt it is one kind of process. It depends upon the mood of the practitioners, and if they will get some clear feelings then immediately they will try to chant the *Mahāmantra* perfectly, and at that time help will come from the upper level—Kṛṣṇa will help in the form of Guru.

So for one who is very active and tries always to be engaged, the instructions of Guru give some work to him, and through that work his mood to practise and increase his *bhakti-yoga* will develop. That work can itself immediately be in the category of *bhakti-yoga*. If someone can practise properly, and if his inner hankering wants that; immediately that job can be transformed into *bhakti*.

Everything depends on the mood of the devotee. Someone may go for collection, someone else may cook, another may clean, but everything depends on the individual's mood whether it will be *karmma* or *bhakti*. If someone will follow his Guru's instructions in a surrendered mood, it will be *bhakti*, otherwise it will be pious *karmma*. If anyone will follow the instructions of the Scriptures and Guru he will always receive a good result, but that is not necessarily *bhakti*. It is a big difficulty for everyone if they are not conscious of their purpose. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj always emphasised the word 'consciousness'—everything is living within consciousness.

The result depends on the devotee's mental position. So first he must try to cleanse his heart. Kṛṣṇa said in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

**yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi, yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya, tat kuruṣva mad arpaṇam**

Kṛṣṇa has clarified everything for us and given us a very easy way: “Everything you do, and everything you want to do—whether eating, sacrificing, going anywhere, etc.—connect everything with Me, then that will be *bhakti*.” First it is necessary to finalise what our need is, and what is the process to achieve it. If we need *bhakti-yoga* to Kṛṣṇa, and if we do not want to stay within the illusory environment, and if we feel the necessity to go to the transcendental world—our own home—then with full heart we must try to achieve that. We shall try to search out that place where it is available and whole-heartedly try to follow the instructions we receive there. This is the main thing for everyone, but circumstances can take us in many ways and to many places. We must try to proceed steadily within our track and not allow ourselves to go out of the track. This is our necessity.

Devotee: Mahārāj, I have a question. When Śrīla Prabhupāda left the world, many of his disciples in the name of exclusive worship of him went on with their devotional service, but they made many mistakes and their service sometimes went in a wrong way. Later, many persons in the name of exclusive worship of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj also made many mistakes and sometimes their actions went in a wrong way.

So, I want to know from you, what does it mean to serve the *uttama-adhikārī* devotee? Why do those persons make such mistakes, and how can we properly understand the correct position?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: It is in some way coming from one’s fortune. One who has good fortune will not leave his track. What he received from his Gurudeva, he will try to follow, and

his endeavour will always be within the proper track.

Your question is good for everyone: after Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj left, why have some of his devotees gone out from their track? Also after Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, some are going out of track. But why?

It depends upon their *sukṛti*—their spiritual fortune. We see that they served Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj or they served Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but actually they did not get the proper way, the real service connection. At that time, however, by the influence of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj that shortcoming was covered. The disciples did many activities enthusiastically but they actually did not know what devotional service is. When Gurudeva disappeared, his influence of covering the shortcoming in the disciples also withdrew with him. At that time some of the devotees got back their previous subtle position, and they became confused. Ultimately it depends upon their own *karma*, their good fortune, and also the quality of their practising life—these three will contribute towards a good result.

It is necessary for the devotees to know very clearly what they want to practise, then they will not go off the track—and in that also their own good fortune and good activities are necessary, otherwise they will not reach their goal. We must be able to recognise what is what. It is a fact that even when Kṛṣṇa was present, not everyone could understand Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śiṣupāla and Dantavakra had the chance to be with Kṛṣṇa but they could not understand who He was. Also many saw Kṛṣṇa on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, but they did not understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So some fortune must work behind ‘seeing’.

After Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj left, the illusory environment

came with more force. When Kṛṣṇa left from this mundane world, at that time also the illusory environment again asserted itself strongly. Whenever a great soul disappears, some disturbance is caused by the illusory environment and it tries to catch and conquer the heart of the weak devotees—not only the weak devotees, but the good workers also. It will try to conquer them. But those who are fully surrendered to their Guru will not be captured by that illusion, and those who are good followers will also not fall into that illusion. Those who are not settled within their own track will easily leave their position, and to some degree this has happened.

We can live with a *sādhū* and take his association, but we may not get real *sādhū-saṅga* merely by living with him. Bugs may live in the bed of a *sādhū*, lice may even be so close to him that they live in his hair and take his blood, but they are not engaged in *sādhū-saṅga*! So, the unfortunate souls leave the track. Otherwise the true path is a very easy thing.

One instruction Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used to always give me when I first came to him was: “What I shall instruct, you will follow, and what your mind will say, you don’t follow.” But I thought; “My mind is not always giving me bad advice, sometimes it is giving good suggestions to me.” But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj told me not to follow even what I thought was the good advice of my mind. “That means you must fully depend upon me. My need is that you must fully depend upon me.” Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said in this way, “What does your mind tell you? You think it sometimes says good advice and it sometimes says bad. But you are not to follow even the apparently good advice. If you take the association of your mind, you must give some return to him; therefore it is not necessary to take association of your mind, instead take my instruction for yourself.”

It is a very easy instruction but we cannot always follow

it, therefore we receive some trouble. When we forget Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's order we receive much trouble. Behind this, two things are acting: one is fortune, and the other is our activity. Good fortune is necessary, and that comes through *sevā*. Good fortune grows through *sevā*. One who can do real *sevā* will receive a good result. However, one who does 'sevā' but is always thinking about his own interest must be ignored by *bhakti*, and *bhakti* will not go to him. He may live so long and stay for many years in the Gauḍīya Mission, but he may not get that *bhakti*.

There are many examples not only in the Gauḍīya Mission, but such disturbances can be seen everywhere in history. It is present in Christianity, in Mohammedanism, etc. And in Hinduism there are many channels: Śrī Rāmānuja, Śaṅkarācāryya, etc.

There is a famous story of how one day Rāmānujācāryya's *sannyāsi* disciples quarrelled over something which appeared very big, but actually was very small. It was a very small matter, but they quarrelled fiercely. Someone had moved around the clothes the *sannyāsīs* were to wear. One of them became very disturbed and a quarrel began. Rāmānuja then showed through the example of a *gr̥hastha* devotee how one should serve his Guru. In the Scriptures we can see this and many other examples. Śaṅkarācāryya also showed a similar example.

Actually, our spiritual journey depends upon clear consciousness. One who has some clear consciousness from his Guru will not leave the track; otherwise everyone has some possibility of deviating.

It is necessary to stay within the proper line of knowledge. We must have the conviction "We shall follow our Guru blindly." We hear from many places that, 'What our Guru gave

is sufficient; it is not necessary to take advice from others.’ And it is mainly very true. If I have no big idea, and no big, wide vision, then I must follow my Gurudeva in a very simple way. Sometimes that will work very nicely, but it is not always true—because if a Guru will say one thing, or give one advice, then there is no doubt that if there are five disciples, each will take it in a slightly different way. Each of their minds will play upon that idea in a slightly different manner, so they will understand it in five ways. Maybe in the beginning they were not very different from each other, but whatever small differences exist will become more prominent as it comes down through three or four generations. By that time it may even become completely separate from Śrī Gurudeva’s conception. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has mentioned:

**evam prakṛti-vaicitryāt bhidyante matayo-nṛṇām
pāramparyyena keṣāñcit pāṣaṇḍa-matayo pare**

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has given a very good example of this: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. When Guru gives some knowledge, that is the thesis, but when that knowledge has come out from Gurudeva, an antithesis must also come out from some other quarter. With the thesis, the antithesis will also grow, side by side. And synthesis comes when both will come into harmony. The synthesis then becomes established as the thesis, and again an antithesis will grow to oppose it. In this way, if five disciples hear from one Guru, five kinds of ideas will grow. Their ideas also depend upon their *sukṛti*. If they do not go off the track we can say they have good *sukṛti*, and that *sukṛti* comes through their service. Therefore Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “What I shall instruct, you follow that, and what your mind will say, don’t follow it!”

It was for this reason that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not recommend us to read many things. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also discouraged much reading. Also, especially for those in the *Maṭh*, there is no excess time for reading. Our time is all service time. There is no excess time in our hand, so how shall we try to earn ‘other knowledge’ and how can we spend our time for collecting that knowledge?

Someone is studying in Sanskrit, someone in Bengali, someone else is studying in English—and spending time. They are showing a post-dated cheque, that “After getting that knowledge I shall serve!” But before that it is possible you may die, so why don’t you think like that? Therefore Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not give us the chance to study.

At first Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did give some chance to me because I was unqualified. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave me some opportunity to study, but when some proper knowledge came to me, then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said it was sufficient: “It is not necessary to read more, now you do *sevā*.”

We tried to do *sevā* as much as possible, heart and soul, and we have seen that gradually everything is revealing itself in our heart. We are not trying to collect knowledge from the Scriptures. I read *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* only a few years ago but I joined over forty-five years ago! It was just during the last days of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that I read *Brahma-saṁhitā*.

One day I put the question to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: “Mahārāj, in which way does the *jīva*-soul come out from the *Taṭasthā-śakti*?” I heard the reply many times, but I could not catch it, so I again questioned Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: “The creation of the world, and the creation of the *jīvas*—in which way does it happen, Mahārāj? Again please explain this to me.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “Oh-oh, have you not read *Brahma-saṁhitā*?” I replied, “No, Guru Mahārāj, I have not

read it." I knew many *śloka*s from *Brahma-saṁhitā*, having heard them from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but I had not read the book. Then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, "Read it and you will see the answer to your question very clearly explained there in the first section." He also gave a brief explanation.

That question was very difficult. The *jīva*-soul is transcendental, but the *Māyā-śakti* produces material things. Her activity is always within the material world but the *jīva* is transcendental, and Kṛṣṇa is transcendental. So in which way can the transcendental and material combine together to produce the creation? That was the question. But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj replied with this *śloka*: *tal-liṅgaṁ bhagavān śambhuḥ*. Kṛṣṇa throws the vision, and *prakṛti* is impregnated—*mayādhakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ, sūyate sa-carācaram* (Bg. 9.10). And in the middle position, that 'throwing' is done by Śambhu. That is his position.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj instructed, "Read *Brahma-saṁhitā*, you will be able to see everything explained there." And when I read *Brahma-saṁhitā* I was surprised to see: "Oh, all knowledge is inside this book, but I did not read it before. The whole of the knowledge that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is giving us—everything is contained here." Then the idea came to me that we must try to publish this *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* and we shall distribute it to everyone.

Actually, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj emphasised service to Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, and by their mercy that knowledge will reveal itself in our heart. We can say that now we know something of the news of the transcendental world. 'Know' means 'feel.' We can say we have some feeling, and by following the process you must also get those feelings.

I believe that everyone has some feelings, otherwise

they cannot come in this line, especially in the *Maṭh* of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—the line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. The devotees have feelings, but perhaps they cannot always feel them clearly. Feelings must sometimes come to all of you, otherwise it is not possible to remain in this devotional track. But the main thing in the teachings of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is to serve the Vaiṣṇavas, and to follow your Guru; in this way you will get everything.

Many disciples of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj lived within his Mission. When they came in the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu they were very fortunate no doubt, but later their activities sometimes caused them much trouble. Sometimes they did not know what was what and sometimes they did not receive guidelines directly from their Guru. They had heard some things, but not others, so they lost the proper devotional temperament, and what they were doing began to go in the chamber of *karma*, but not in the chamber of *sevā*. In that way they thought, “We are satisfied. This is transcendental knowledge!”—easily some of them were cheated by Māyā.

One who always thinks: “There exists more than this, and I need that,” and who always tries to search for it and try to get it, such a person will not be cheated.

In the time of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, everything went on under his influence, and at that time very few could understand what their actual position was. He told: “I am ISKCON; you follow me,” and they tried to follow him but they did not know which part they should follow, this part or that part! As his mission became larger, the devotees’ mood of service was not always steady. It was a great difficulty for many of them. Sometimes they were very sad, sometimes very enthusiastic—many stages are there. The different stages a devotee goes

through are given in the Scriptures: *utsāhamayī, ghanataralā, byūrabikalpā, viṣayasaṅgarā, niyamākṣamā, taraṅgaraṅgiṇī,*

In the beginning the practitioners feel much enthusiasm and do many types of service, but later their service mood goes flat. Then some wave may come in their mind and by that wave some mood of suspicion arises. After that comes some connection with the plane of mundane enjoyment, and, side by side with it, a connection with the transcendental world. They then become somewhat confused. Crossing that stage, first *niṣṭhā*, steadiness, and then *ruci*, taste, comes and they gain more strength. At that stage all hindrances go behind them and they can proceed steadily. These stages of devotion are explained in the Scriptures.

So, we may feel or see outwardly that someone may be doing *sevā*, service, but it is not always actual service. *Sevā* gives more *sevā*, so why is more *sevā* not coming? Seeing the symptoms, we can say that some were not doing actual *sevā*, therefore after the disappearance of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj they underwent some difficulty.

We must be conscious, therefore, about our position and about our service, then we will not be deviated from our position. But even if some deviation does come, if we are sincere we can emerge from that position also.

**bhūmau skhalita-pādānām, bhūmir evāvalambanam
tvayi jātāparādhānām, tvam eva śaraṇam prabho**

When a baby tries to walk, he sometimes falls down on the ground, but by taking help from the ground, again he tries, and after a few days he can walk very easily. Not only that, but after growing up more he will be able to run very fast. He gets everything; but first he must try, otherwise he will not gain anything.

When we live within this body, there is the possibility of deviation everywhere. Deviation will not come to attack us if we do not listen to the demands of our mental and physical bodies—otherwise, deviation is possible for everyone.



Chapter Two

On the Way to Śrī Purī-Dhām

A lecture by
His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Tomorrow you are going to a special place of pilgrimage. There you will see that the servitors of the Jagannāth temple, known as *Pāṇḍās*, hold a very special position. There is a saying, ‘if you love me, love my dog.’ It means, if you love me, you will also show your love to my dog; then I will know that you really love me. Lord Jagannāth has given the *Pāṇḍās* the position of controllers there, so whatever they do, we have no say in that.

Mahāprasāda is available all over the world, but in Jagannāth-*kṣetra* it is different. There the *Pāṇḍās* don’t let just anyone go inside the temple. They especially do not let anyone enter the temple whom they consider to be low-class or *mlecchas*. But when *Mahāprasāda* comes out of that very same temple, then they will eat it out of the hands of the most low-class people, the *mlecchas*. This means that they follow some customs. They follow a custom that was introduced by Lord Jagannāth.

Rāmānujāchāryya wanted to break that custom, but what was the result of that? Rāmānujāchāryya wanted the worship of Lord Jagannāth to be done in the *vidhi-mārga*. There are some rules and regulations in the *Vedas*, and especially in the *Manu-saṁhitā*, and he wanted the worship to be done in a bona fide way following these rules and regulations. He

thought the way the *Pāṇḍās* were doing the worship was not the customary way, the *mantras* they were using were not the right ones, and he wanted that the worship be done in the right way. All the scholars there were defeated by him. The next day, the final meeting was supposed to take place, and the King would have been forced to introduce the Vedic way of worship. While Rāmānujāchāryya was sleeping that night, his bed was thrown three hundred miles away to Kūrmakṣetra. In the morning he wondered where he was, and found that it was Kūrmakṣetra. In those days there were no aeroplanes. It was not possible that someone chloroformed him at night and carried him away by aeroplane. But Rāmānujāchāryya really saw that he was in Kūrmakṣetra, with his whole entourage; Lord Jagannāth had transported them Himself. Lord Jagannāth also gave him a dream in which He told him, “The way I am being served here will continue. Please do not interfere. Go from here.”

It is hard to find accommodation in a special place like this. But by the influence of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and the mercy of Lord Jagannāth we found some accommodation there, and now we have been able to acquire a bit more space. Now Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s desires are fulfilled, so we can see that Lord Jagannāth has some special goodwill towards us. Before, I could not go there in spite of a lot of effort, but now Lord Jagannāth is dragging me there every now and then.

I do not know if tomorrow I will be able to go with you. I am praying to Lord Jagannāth, because I know I will only be able to go if He takes me there, not otherwise. But He has attracted all of you. That is why you have all come here, and joining with the *sādhus* and the devotees of this *Āśrama*, you have found the opportunity to go there. You see, money is needed in every situation in life. To survive and go through

our daily lives, money is always spent. Yet money is not everything. There is no guarantee that if I have money I will be able to go. This is a truth that has been proved many times in my life. You all pray to Lord Jagannāth that He will take us safely there, and then bring us all back safely to where we are doing our respective *sevā*. This is our only prayer today. We have nothing else for which to pray.

We are not going sightseeing but we are going to a place of pilgrimage, a holy place. Going there will purify us—body, mind, and soul. We are going to the shore of the sea. Mahāprabhu has said, “From today this ocean has become a *mahā-tīrtha*.” As it is, the ocean is a great place of pilgrimage, because the waters of all the holy rivers merge there. In addition to that, at the disappearance of Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākura, Mahāprabhu danced with his body in His arms, and when He bathed his body in the ocean, Mahāprabhu said, “From today the ocean has really become a great place of pilgrimage.” Why?

It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

**bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās
tīrthi-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthi-kurvanti tīrthāni
svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhr̥tā**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.13.10)

Those who always carry Gadādhara, the Supreme Lord, in their heart—if they cannot purify the places of pilgrimage then who can? They are places of pilgrimage personified, and they have no need to go on pilgrimage.

Then why do they go to places of pilgrimage? The really sinful people contaminate the places of pilgrimage. Everyone and everything has a particular capacity. We also have a par-

ticular capacity, that is, the burden of our sin is so great that even a place of pilgrimage cannot digest it. This is how a place of pilgrimage automatically becomes contaminated. At that time the great personalities who carry the Supreme Lord in their heart, appear there. As soon as they bathe in the holy water, the water becomes clean, as if a purifying agent has cleansed it. That is their natural capacity. Mahāprabhu has demonstrated the supreme example of this. Mahāprabhu said that the ocean at Puri became the greatest place of pilgrimage when He bathed the body of Haridās Ṭhākur there. Haridās Ṭhākur used to chant three hundred thousand names of the Lord every day. He even purified the animate and inanimate environment around him when he chanted aloud. His purity was beyond question.

The Western devotees who have come to India will not be allowed to enter the Jagannāth Temple, but still they go there again and again, because they are attracted by Mahāprabhu's Pastimes in Jagannāth-Dhām.

Of all the places, Mahāprabhu chose Jagannāth-Dhām, which is non-different from Kurukṣetra. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur has said that Kurukṣetra is the highest place of worship for us. Why? Where the hankering is greatest, that is the highest place of fulfilment. If you do not have hunger, you will not be able to enjoy even a sumptuous feast. If on the other hand you are starving, even rice with salt or spinach will taste like ambrosia. In my childhood I had malaria, and my doctor recommended something called, '*poḍer bhāt*.' Do you know how *poḍer bhāt* is made? A little bit of rice is boiled over a fire that is fuelled with a few cow dung patties, and it takes a very long time to boil. So the rice was boiling for hours and I was looking at it, thinking when I will be able to eat it.

This demand that comes from inside is the highest thing

for us. This is called hankering, and this is *rāgānugā-bhakti*.

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

The kind of devotion which is, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ* in which one's entire consciousness is soaked in the nectar of loving devotion for Kṛṣṇa—is not ordinary devotion. The demand of such love is also not a small demand.

The Lord Himself says,

**sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ
sādhūnām hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti
nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 9.4.68)

The Lord is telling Durvāsā Muni, "There is nothing I can do. My pure devotees have bound Me with their love, and I have also bound them with My love. Thus we are indebted to each other. I cannot be impartial."

In more recent times Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj said this: "I cannot be impartial because I have taken *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj." Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj was a Godbrother to our most worshipable Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Before he took *sannyāsa* he was a very famous and influential *brahmacārī* called Vinoda Brahmachārī. When some *brahmacārīs* wanted to take over our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Maṭh, there was need for a mediator. So they decided to request Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj to become a mediator. When they went to Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj with that request, he told them, "You are all my

Godbrothers, and so is Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. But I have done something, I have taken *sannyāsa* from him. I have offered my head at his lotus feet, therefore I cannot be impartial. So how can I be a mediator?"

Then they said, "Then you should know there will be bloodshed there. We are ready to give our lives."

Hearing this, Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj said, "If you are ready to give your lives, then someone there will also be ready to take your lives, because I won't be able to be impartial, as I have already sold myself to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj."

Then they went to Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj, but still their purpose was not served. Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj told them directly, "If you bring two Nepalīs, I will bring fifty Sikhs. I have taken *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, therefore I am indebted to him."

The Supreme Lord is indebted to His devotees in the same way. He cannot be impartial.

**mayi nirbaddha-hṛdayāḥ
sādhavaḥ sama-darśanāḥ
vaśe kurvanti mām bhaktyā
sat-striyaḥ sat-patīm yathā**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 9.4.66)

Kṛṣṇa says, "My devotees charm Me with their *sevā*. Their only demand is to serve Me. They don't want anything else." If in the process of *sevā* they feel some joy or happiness, then they think they have committed some offence; they feel they are probably in the mood of enjoyment. Just to see that, Kṛṣṇa gives them a lot of *sevā*. He gives them so much *sevā* that they become intoxicated with it. Kṛṣṇa thinks, "What is this? Rādhārāṇī becomes so ecstatic by seeing Me? What is the

depth of that ecstasy? How can I measure it? I cannot measure it, because I cannot become Rādhārāṇī.” Then:

**śri-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kidṛśo vānyaivā-
svādyo yenādbhuta-madhurimā kidṛśo vā madiyaḥ
saukhyam cāsyā mad-anubhavataḥ kidṛśam veti lobhāt
tad-bhāvādhyah samajani śacigarbha-sindhau harinduh**
(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, 1.6)

(“What is that great glory of Śrī Rādhā’s Love? What is My extraordinary loving sweetness and charm that Śrī Rādhā enjoys? And what is the joy Śrī Rādhā feels by experiencing My sweetness and charm? Yearning to taste these three sentiments, the moon—Kṛṣṇachandra—was born from the ocean of the womb of mother Śacī.”)

In order to taste Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s highest *Rasa* of *Vipralambha*, Mahāprabhu went to Jagannāth-Dhām, which is Kurukṣetra. Why? Because there Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is thinking, “My Lord is tearing My heart apart.” Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī knows that Kṛṣṇa is Her life and soul. But there She sees that He is surrounded by His children, friends, relatives, and queens, and they are all swarming over the whole place. She is just a simple milkmaid who would generally not be given any attention in such a royal gathering. But they gave Her attention, and in a very special way. They requested Her to show them the *Rāsa* dance, which is performed only in Vṛndāvan. When they saw that, they were amazed. They said, “We have never experienced anything so wonderful.” Then Rādhārāṇī smiled. She said, “What have you seen? You have seen a headless body, a dead thing. You have not seen the real thing: that you can see only in Vṛndāvan. Where is that Yamunā? Where are the groves of *kadamba* trees? Where is the chirping of the

peacocks and parrots? And where is the Lord of our hearts, Kṛṣṇa, who plays the flute and herds the cows? None of those things are here, so how can you see the *Rāsa* dance here? What you have seen is the shadow. If you want to see the real thing, you have to go to Vṛndāvan."

On another occasion Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava what the high-est fulfilment of *bhakti* is.

**na tathā me priyatama ātmayonir na śaṅkaraḥ
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr-naivātmā ca yathā bhavān**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.14.15)

("My dear Uddhava, even Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, the goddess of fortune Lakṣmīdevī and indeed My own self are not as dear to Me as you are.") But Uddhava himself was thinking,

**āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāt,
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajam svajanam āryya-pathaṁ ca hitvābhejur
mukunda-padaviṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.48.61)

When Uddhava went to Vṛndāvan he was so charmed by seeing the *Gopīs'* love, their devotion, their attraction, and their affection for Kṛṣṇa, that he said, "For life after life, I only desire one thing: I want to become a speck of dust in Vṛndāvan. Not only that, I want to be one of those who are worthy of receiving that dust, the plants and creepers of Vṛndāvan, and live here for all eternity. Here in the land of Vṛndāvan, Kṛṣṇa has performed His Pastimes, and His companions, the *Gopīs*, also roam around here. If I can be born as a small creeper so that I may get the dust of their lotus feet on my head, that will be my highest fortune."

Such are the glories of Kṛṣṇa, and the intense feeling of separation from Him—*Vipralambha*. Mahāprabhu has shown us the highest limit of that *Vipralambha* in Śrī Nīlācala-Dhām.

Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit, who kept Mahāprabhu in the depths of his heart, and performed the supreme *sevā*, also lived there. Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* and went to Jagannāth Puri, and by His desire Lord Gopīnāth became manifest. When you go to Puri you will all see Lord Gopīnāth there. Both the feelings of Mahāprabhu and the feelings of Gadādhara Paṇḍit were described in a beautiful *śloka* by our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

**niḷāmbhodhitāṭe sadā svavirahākṣepānvitam bāndhavam
śrīmad-bhāgavatī kathā madirayā sañjivayan bhāti yaḥ
śrīmad-bhāgavatam sadā svanayanāśrūpāyanaiḥ pūjayan
gosvāmi-pravaro gadādhara-vibhur bhūyād mad ekā gatīḥ**

The lotus feet of Gadādhara Paṇḍit are our sole treasure. He resided by the ocean of *Vipralambha* which was manifest by his life and soul, Lord Gaurāṅga, who took everything from him. Mahāprabhu was suffering separation from Kṛṣṇa, and His feelings of separation were so intense, that sometimes His body became elongated, sometimes He retracted His limbs like a tortoise, and sometimes His joints became separated.

So Mahāprabhu, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, suffered intense separation from Kṛṣṇa, and He was enlivened by hearing topics about Lord Kṛṣṇa from Gadādhara Paṇḍit: When a person is in intense grief, what does he do? He becomes blinded by his grief, and he cannot decide how he will find some peace, so he drinks alcohol. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit provided such intoxication for Mahāprabhu by enlivening Him with the intoxicating topics of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is how he served the Lord of his heart.

And how were Gadādhara Paṇḍit's own feelings of separation? He is seeing that his beloved Lord is in front of him, and his Lord is suffering so intensely that He is becoming unconscious now and then. All the eight symptoms of separation can be seen in His body, such as perspiring, trembling, tears, becoming stunned, changing of bodily colour, etc., but there is nothing he can do about it. Lamenting this, continuous floods of tears flowed from his eyes.

Whenever Gadādhara Paṇḍit read the *Bhāgavatam*, he became so mad with feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa that his tears would wash away the letters on the page. The proof of this is, when Śrīnivāsa Āchāryya came to him to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Gadādhara Paṇḍit told him, "My dear son, when I was reading *Bhāgavatam* to Mahāprabhu, all the letters in my book were washed away, therefore I cannot now read to you from this book. Please find a book somewhere. Mahāprabhu instructed me in my dream, saying you were coming. But you need to have a book. I have memorised everything, but you need a book also." Gadādhara Paṇḍit thus worshipped the *Bhāgavatam* with his tears. Is it necessary to have any ingredients to worship? One's own tears are the best ingredients.

The lotus feet of this Gadādhara Paṇḍit are our ultimate destination. Our worshipable Deities are Gaura-Gadādhara, and the supreme demonstration of their *Vipralambha* was seen in Nilācala-Dhām.

In *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāj has given such deep meanings of the *śloka*s of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and he has exposed such great inner wealth from them that it is beyond our imagination. When Mahāprabhu sees Lord Jagannāth in *Rathayātrā*, He prays like this:

āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam
 yogēśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
 saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
 geham juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 10.82.49)

("O lotus-navelled one, Your lotus feet, eternally held as the object of meditation within the hearts of the greatest *yogīs* of profound intellect, are the only resort for delivering those souls fallen into the well of material life. May those holy lotus feet graciously appear within the hearts of we ordinary household ladies.")

And in *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* we find these ślokaś:

anyera hṛdaya—mana, mora mana-vṛndāvana,
 'mane' 'vane' eka kari' jāni
 tāhān tomāra pada-dvaya, karāha yadi udaya,
 tabe tomāra pūrṇa kṛpā māni

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.137)

("Speaking in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, 'For most people, the mind and heart are one, but because My mind is never separated from Vṛndāvan, I consider My mind and Vṛndāvan to be one. My mind is already Vṛndāvan, and since You like Vṛndāvan, will You please place Your lotus feet there? I would deem that Your full mercy.'")

prāṇa-nātha, śuna mora satya nivedana
 vraja—āmāra sadana, tāhān tomāra saṅgama,
 nā pāile nā rahe jīvana

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.138)

("My dear Lord, kindly hear My true submission. My home is Vṛndāvan, and I wish Your association there. But if I do

not get it, then it will be very difficult for Me to keep My life.”)

**pūrve uddhava-dvāre, ebe sākṣāt āmāre,
yoga-jñāne kahilā upāya
tumi—vidagdha, kṛpāmaya, jānaha āmāra hṛdaya,
more aiche kahite nā yuyāya**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.139*)

(“My dear Kṛṣṇa, formerly, when You were staying in Mathurā, You sent Uddhava to teach Me knowledge and meditation. Now You Yourself are speaking the same thing, but my mind doesn’t accept it. There is no place in My mind for all these superficial things. You are artful and gracious, and You know well my heart—it does not befit You to speak to me in this way.”)

**nahe gopī yogeśvara, pada-kamala tomāra,
dhyāna kari’ pāibe santoṣa
tomāra vākya-paripāṭi, tāra madhye kuṭināṭi,
śuni’ gopīra āro bādhe roṣa**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.141*)

(“The *Gopīs* are not like the mystic *yogīs*. They will never be satisfied simply by meditating on Your lotus feet and imitating the so-called *yogīs*. Teaching the *Gopīs* about so called meditation is another kind of duplicity. When they are instructed to undergo mystic *yoga* practices, they are not at all satisfied. On the contrary, they become more angry with You.”) What intense feelings of separation the *Gopīs* had! “What are You saying to whom?”

**deha-smṛti nāhi yāra, saṁsāra-kūpa kāhān tāra,
tāhā haite nā cāhe uddhāra**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.142*)

The *Gopīs* are saying, “People worship You to be delivered from material existence, but that is not our kind of worship. We do not want to be delivered. We do not even remember our bodies. What do we care about material existence? And You are saying we will be delivered from material existence!”

Āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam yogeśvarair hṛdi vicinityam agādha-bodhaiḥ: “Those processes are only for people who want to be delivered. Your lotus feet are our only goal.” *Tāhān tomāra pada-dvaya, karāha yadi udaya, tabe tomāra pūrṇa kṛpā māni.*

In Nilācala-Dhām, there has been the utmost cultivation of such intense feelings of *Vipralambha*.

caṇḍidāsa, vidyāpati, rāyera nāṭaka-gīti,

karnāmṛta, śrī gīta-govinda

svarūpa-rāmānanda-sane, mahāprabhu rātri-dine,

gāya, śune—parama ānanda

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 2.77)

(“He also passed His time reading the books and singing the songs of Chaṇḍidās and Vidyāpati, and listening to quotations from the *Jagannāth-vallabha-nāṭaka*, *Kṛṣṇa-karnāmṛta* and *Gīta-govinda*. Thus in the association of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu passed His days and nights chanting and hearing with supreme ecstasy.”)

So tomorrow you are going to that place. Lord Jagannāth has attracted you by His mercy. We will all feel our goals fulfilled there, and if we can humbly offer ourselves, then we will become complete.

om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam

pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate

**pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate**

(Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Invocation)

We may be very small, but He is infinite. If we can establish a relationship with the infinite, then just as when you subtract zero from zero, zero remains, similarly when you subtract infinity from infinity, infinity will remain. So we can become complete. So please go to Jagannāth-Dhām with such feelings in your heart.

There is happiness and misery everywhere—at home and outside. I definitely know that you do not care too much about such things. But still, at times such feelings come to us because we have material bodies. This body is like a spoiled brat that does not like to tolerate any inconvenience. The more comfort it gets, the more comfort it wants. But comfort is our enemy. There is no need for such comforts in our life.

As elephants, we have eaten so many jungles, and our hunger was not satisfied. As pigs, we have eaten mountains of stool, and our hunger was not satisfied. For life after life we have searched for comfort, but we have not found it. So now we must separate ourselves from such comforts and search for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Ocean of Pleasure, the Personification of all Mellows. We can have Him in our vision by initiating ourselves in *bhakti-yoga*. This will fulfil our highest mission, and this should be the object of our greatest desire.

Please, you all go there with such desires in your heart. I am sure there will be some inconveniences. Our *brahmacārī* Prabhus are all very respectable and affectionate, and they will try their best to give you all facility, but still you may face some austerity.

Please go with such desires to Lord Jagannāth, that by His mercy He will appear in our vision, and He will give us the dust of His Holy Dhām, so that we can travel there. This is our only desire and prayer.

**vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ**



Chapter Three

On the Way to Śrī Vṛndāvan-Dhām

A lecture by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

When Mahāprabhu would hear the name of ‘Vṛndāvan,’ He would become ecstatic in *Bhāva*, in *Prema*, and would lose His senses in Divine Love. While describing His travels in Vṛndāvan, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāj Goswāmī said, “I cannot even express His mood.”

When Mahāprabhu was in Purī-Dhām during the time of Lord Jagannāth’s *Rathayātrā*, Svarūpa Dāmodara would sing and the Lord would dance in ecstasy. Mahāprabhu Himself would not sing so much, but Svarūpa Dāmodara would sing, and He would dance.

In one way Vṛndāvan is a very difficult place—whether going, leaving, moving around or living there, everyone must be very careful. When Jagadānanda Prabhu wanted to go to Vṛndāvan, Mahāprabhu gave him four instructions:

**śighra āsiha, tāhān nā rahiha cira-kāla
govarddhane nā caḍiha dekhite ‘gopāla’**

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 13.38)

“If you want to go to Vṛndāvan, you can go, but don’t stay too long. Don’t climb upon Govarddhan Hill even to see the Gopāla Deity there, and always stay with Rūpa and

Sanātana. Take their guidance and don't leave their association." These were three of His directives and the fourth was, "Don't imitate the *Vrajabāsīs*."

Jagadānanda Prabhu was Mahāprabhu's good friend and is considered an incarnation of Satyabhāmā. He was extremely attached to Mahāprabhu and sometimes would show his affection in unusual ways. Mahāprabhu instructed him: "Don't imitate or intimately associate with the *Vrajabāsīs*."

Jagadānanda Prabhu knew everything about the rules and regulations for living in the Holy Dhām but Mahāprabhu showed Himself as thinking he was not so qualified. He therefore gave some instruction, "Jagadānanda wants to go to Vṛndāvan alone but I do not feel that it is good." In this way He checked him many times.

Lastly Jagadānanda was very sad to see Mahāprabhu's renounced mood. He could not tolerate it, so he did not want to always stay with Mahāprabhu. Instead he wanted to go to Vṛndāvan. At that time Mahāprabhu gave these four directives to him and gave him permission to go: "You can go, but do not stay for long because everywhere there is some work of illusion, Māyā. Māyā covers everything in this mundane world. It may be Vṛndāvan, Nabadwīp, or Purī, but everywhere there is some covering of Māyā, and if you stay too long in such places you may be attracted by Māyā's work and so make some offences to the *Dhām*."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says in his book *Śrī Nabadwīp-bhāvataṛaṅga: jaḍamaya bhūmi jala dravya yata āra*. What we see in Nabadwīp-Dhām, that is all *jaḍa*, mundane. But actually inside of that mundane form, when Māyā will mercifully remove the cover, we will see the real form of the *Dhām*.

Even to see the outside of the *Dhām* is beneficial, but if we make *aparādha*, offence, it is detrimental to our spiritual life.

And if we cannot see properly the real transcendental *Dhām*, at least we should try not to see the opposite thing—to see it as only mundane.

When Mahāprabhu experienced *Mahābhāva* for seven days in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit's house, the different devotees saw Him in different Forms. Devotees of Rāmachandra saw Mahāprabhu as Rāmachandra, devotees of Viṣṇu saw Him as Viṣṇu; others saw Him in the Form of Nṛsimhadeva, and yet others saw Him as different incarnations of Viṣṇu.

In that gathering Mahāprabhu restricted Mukunda Prabhu: "I shall not give you *darśan*."

Mukunda remained outside the house, weeping. Seeing him crying, the devotees reported to Mahāprabhu, "Mukunda is very sad and he wants to end his life by drowning in the River Ganges. He does not want to maintain his body if he cannot see Your Form. He is continually crying outside."

Mukunda sent a message with the devotees asking Mahāprabhu, "When shall I see Your Form?"

Mahāprabhu answered, "After crores of births he will be able to see Me."

Hearing this, Mukunda became very happy and began dancing outside the entrance, "Oh, after only crores of births I will again see Mahāprabhu! Therefore I have no problem. Crores of births I can tolerate to again have His *darśan*."

Hearing that, Mahāprabhu was happy and said, "Now he has already crossed those crores of births and he can see Me—he can come immediately."

So the devotees called Mukunda: "Oh Mukunda, come, Mahāprabhu is calling you."

But Mukunda said, "Mahāprabhu said 'after crores of births,' then how can I go there now? If I go now I will not be able to see the real Form of Mahāprabhu. Only after crores of

births shall I be able to see, but not now—if I ‘see’ Him now, that will not be really seeing Him, it will be illusion. So why shall I go there? I do not want to go there now.”

Real vision is necessary, and that is the main thing. Otherwise, seeing the Deity, the *Dhām* or anything else is only an exercise of the eye; it is not actual vision and we shall not gain real benefit from that. But Mahāprabhu said, “Now his crores of births have gone, and he can come and see Me.”

Mukunda very much chastised himself that he had done wrong, and so had caused Mahāprabhu to at first refuse him entrance. Mahāprabhu then showed His real Form to him.

The main thing is that without devotion and transcendental knowledge we can neither see the real Vṛndāvan-Dhām nor the real *Nāma*, *Rūpa*, *Guṇa* and *Līlā* (Name, Form, Qualities and Pastimes) of the Lord. All these are transcendental, therefore we cannot see them with our mundane eyes—that is the main thing.

If we go to Vṛndāvan or stay in Nabadwip the same is true, but still these places are Holy *Dhāms* and they emanate auspiciousness. We can touch a drop of that if we stay there without offence. In that way we can touch the glow of that *jyoti*, that effulgence. The *Dhām* is covered by illusion, but even so, there is some brilliance, and that glow or brilliance of the *Dhām* may touch us if we stay there without offence. But if we stay there too long we may become overly familiar and then that glow may leave us. That glow is something like light, but it is more than that, it is the transcendental world and it is fully conscious.

It was for our instruction that Mahāprabhu advised Jagadānanda, “Do not stay in Vṛndāvan for a long time as there is more possibility of making offence, and do not go upon Govarddhan Hill because this Hill is a form of Kṛṣṇa.”

In the Scriptures it is mentioned that Govarddhan has

two forms: one is as a servitor, and the other form is as Kṛṣṇa Himself who accepts service from the devotees. So Mahāprabhu instructed Jagadānanda, “Don’t go upon Govarddhan Hill, and when you stay in Vr̥ndāvan you must stay with Rūpa Goswāmī and Sanātana Goswāmī. Under their guidance no problem will arise and there will be less chance to make offence. If you stay with them, you will not make any offence there. Staying with Rūpa-Sanātana is also a great responsibility, but by My order you can stay there securely and follow their guidance.”

Later there was a Pastime where Jagadānanda became very angry with Sanātana—but that is their *Līlā*. Actually, Jagadānanda Prabhu is a *pārṣada* (eternal associate) of Mahāprabhu, but Mahāprabhu is always teaching us through His devotees.

The main principle is that when we go to Vr̥ndāvan, we must follow a devotee. To keep ourselves within the proper conception we must take the shelter, *āśraya*, of a real devotee, otherwise if we think, “I will do *bhajan* alone in Vr̥ndāvan,” it may be most unbeneficial.

Many of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s disciples wanted to do *bhajan* there, but Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not agree with that. Not only that, but after he himself went to Vr̥ndāvan, he expressed: “I am very unfortunate, I did not see there even one proper, perfect devotee.”

There were many *bābājīs* in Vr̥ndāvan at that time, many of whom were famous and widely acclaimed to be *siddha-mahāpuruṣas* (perfected souls). But, with his hands held to his forehead, Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, “I did not see any perfect Vaiṣṇava in Vr̥ndāvan. This is my misfortune.”

So we must be cautious with our knowledge. Knowledge is

a type of power and should be used wisely. This caution has been given to us in the books. But transcendental knowledge is another thing; still, if we can use even mundane knowledge wisely we must gain some benefit. It was for this reason that Mahāprabhu told Jagadānanda Prabhu: “When you are in Vṛndāvan use your knowledge wisely and you will be benefitted. Follow Rūpa and Sanātana Goswāmī; not by imitating their practising life, their *sādhana*, but by following their directives.”

The Scriptures advise us, “You must follow what Kṛṣṇa says, but you are not to try to imitate what He does.”

The advice of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is, “Do not even think to imitate Kṛṣṇa or His powerful devotees. Lord Śiva digested an ocean of poison, but you have no capacity to do that. If you try, you will die.”

We have much news of the transcendental world such as through the Scriptures, but only when we can use that wisely and properly will we be benefitted, otherwise we will be the losers. Everywhere there is some danger, so we should always exercise caution.

Vṛndāvan-Dhām is transcendental, though the word ‘transcendental’ does not seem sufficient to properly describe it. We can say ‘spiritual world’ but that is also insufficient. Vṛndāvan-Dhām is *Cinmaya-dhāma*, it is *transcendental*, it is *conscious*, but it is also more than that.

Rūpa Goswāmī gave a very nice *śloka* about that world and that type of ecstasy:

**vyatītya bhāvanāvartma yaś camatkāra-bhārabhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bāḍaṁ svadate saraso mataḥ**

He says *vyatītya bhāvanā*, that plane is over and above whatever we can reach with the fullest extent of our knowledge. It is far beyond our understanding; it is inconceivable to

us, but at the same time it is so nice that we cannot even imagine it. But it is our own property and we can get it. Not only can we get it but we *must* get it one day, otherwise we have no hope. Today or tomorrow, or maybe after millions of births, but we must get that. There is no other way for us.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says:

**nṛ-deham ādyaṁ sulabhaṁ sudurllabhaṁ
plavaṁ sukalpaṁ guru-karṇadhāraṁ
mayānukūlyena nabhasvateritaṁ
pumān bhavābद्धiṁ na taret sa ātmahā**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.17)

We must utilise this chance of our human birth immediately. We now have this human body and it is very suitable for practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness. With other bodies like those of cows, horses or trees, consciousness is insufficient. We are fortunate because now we have a human body—not only a human body, but a civilised human body with developed consciousness having taken birth in a suitable place. We are not as jungle-men. Therefore having this human form with developed consciousness, one who does not take the opportunity to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a suicidal person. There is no certainty whether we will get another chance, so we must immediately take advantage of this opportunity.

Devotee: Śrīla Mahārāj, in the English civilisation we never heard before about Goloka, or *Cinmaya-dhāma*. In English there are no words to properly describe these things. So, how are we to suitably express them?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: In some way we shall try to give a description. We shall try to give some general direction. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī did that also in his verse:

**vyatītya bhāvanāvartma yaś camatkāra-bhārabhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bāḍaṁ svadate saraso mataḥ**

It is beyond your intelligence, beyond your whole civilisation, everything. Perhaps we can know up to the fullest extent of our civilisation, but it is beyond that.

Devotee: Rūpa Goswāmī can express this using Sanskrit and Bengali words, and Your Divine Grace can also. But how shall we translate the word *divya*? If we say *divine*, that indicates only heaven; and if we say *consciousness*, that is only general consciousness. There is no word for Goloka, and no word for *cinmaya*. We need to translate into English, but we don't have the appropriate words, then what shall we do?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: We will always try our best to express everything properly according to our capacity.

Even our own understanding may not be real, actually, although our feelings tell us it is. In my own childhood when I used to hear songs about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *Līlā*, sometimes I would sit as if unconscious while imagining those Pastimes. I would visualise what is happening there, what Kṛṣṇa is doing, what His associates are doing, and many things. Now I think differently, but at that time I thought what I saw was real. And when I would hear or sometimes sing the *Goṣṭhya-līlā* songs (songs about Kṛṣṇa's cowherding Pastimes), I became fully attracted—not only attracted but completely charmed. Captured by that illusion I considered myself as also going with that party for herding cows. That is an auspicious thing, no doubt, but now I can understand it was one kind of illusion, and by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj I was protected from being too much involved with it. In this way no bad reaction came to me.

Now I am worshipping from a distance the whole of that

realm, but at that time I was thinking, and very heavily feeling also, that I was actually part of that *Līlā*. Now I can understand it was something, but not the real thing. So there may be many things, but everything is mixed with the mundane conception.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīpād Jājāvar Mahārāj used to talk together, and sometimes those talks were very heavy. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj always supported the consciousness line whereas Śrīpād Jājāvar Mahārāj always analysed and categorised everything—he would see things from an analytical viewpoint. Analysing may not always be bad; but when you want to stand in the plane of consciousness, and if you can stand there, then you can see everything, otherwise not. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

**vicakṣaṇa kari', dekhite cāhile
haya āṅkhi agocara**

If you want to analyse everything, it will disappear from your view. When you go to put your eye to that subject to look, scrutinise and analyse, it will then disappear. If you take that approach, it will be very difficult for you. But if you stay in the real conscious plane everything will appear before you.

There are two kinds of appearance—real appearance and illusory appearance. Where there is mundane consciousness, something is appearing, but we can say that is illusion. That illusory appearance may sometimes be achieved by the application of the power of the *yogīs*, or by the use of drugs, but it is all illusory. By controlling the senses the *yogīs* can stay in some plane of consciousness but that is not the real Kṛṣṇa conscious plane.

**yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ, kāma-lobha-hato muhuḥ
mukunda-sevayā yadvat, tathātmāddhā na śāmyati**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.6.35)

What we may see through the practice of yoga—*yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, etc.—is also the shadow, not the real thing. Through yoga, at best we can see only the light of Paramātmā and have some connection with Him. But we cannot attain to the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and the world of Kṛṣṇa through that method.

In *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*, it is said:

**premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi**

“When my heart is full with *Kṛṣṇa-prema* and my eyes are decorated with the love of dedication and they get that transcendental vision, then I shall be able to see in my heart and everywhere those Pastimes of Vṛndāvan.”

Devotion is the necessity. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī clearly says that only by devotion is one able to feel and see everything.

Sometimes devotees would ask Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “What should I think about when I chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*? Should I think of the Deity, or the devotees, or their paraphernalia?”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would reply, “No, nothing—you only pray to *Śrī Nāma*, ‘Please show Your Form,’ and chant without offence. When that transcendental *Nāma-prabhu* will appear in your heart, your body will also become transcendental, *cinmaya-deha*.”

The Scriptures give us many directions about how to practise devotional life. They are something like instructions from an expert who can make a particular thing. An expert in electronics can build several tape-recorders or radios every

day. It is very easy for him. He is qualified so he can give instructions to others about how to do it: “If you do like this, and this, you will also be qualified and you will find it to be a very easy thing.”

The Scriptures come to us in a similar way. Vyāsadeva and other *ṛṣis* and *munis* are very expert and they express, “If you try to practise in this way, it is very easy.” But actually to go to that plane is very hard. We see that there are many disturbances, many offences, and other obstacles.

When one tries to start a generator, it is first necessary to do some cranking. A lot of power is required and it is troublesome and difficult, but once the generator is running, it can produce full power—maybe a thousand kilowatts or more. At first though, when one tries by hand to start it up for generating power, it is difficult. Similarly, our present stage is hard for us, no doubt, but once we get going it will be easier. In the practising stage one feels something: some happiness, cleanliness, enthusiasm, and many things.

The first class stage, the highest stage, is when we can firmly stay in the plane of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that is the *paramahansa* stage. In many places it is recorded that everything comes from Kṛṣṇa and everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. To be fully in that consciousness is the *paramahansa* stage. When that consciousness will come we shall easily harmonise with everything. In the midst of the whole environment, we shall be able to tolerate everything.

When Kṛṣṇa established the Pañca-Pāṇḍavas in their kingdom, He said to Kuntidevī, “Now everything is settled here. Stay here happily. I am going to see My Dvārakā, My kingdom, and see how things are going on there.” Kṛṣṇa was ready to leave by chariot, and while standing in front of everyone, Kuntidevī approached Him and prayed:

**vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śāśvat
tatra tatra jagad-guro
bhavato darśanaṁ yat syād
apunar bhava-darśanam**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.8.25)

“My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are thinking we are very happy now, but actually it is not so. We are very sad because You are going back to Dvārakā. I do not want this kingdom. I can leave everything if only You will stay here; but now You won’t stay, so rather I am praying that those earlier days of danger will again come to us, and that these present ‘happy’ days will leave! I want those dangerous times because during danger we get Your presence, and with Your presence comes all auspiciousness. Whoever sees Your face will not take birth in this mundane world again.”

The main point is that at first when we start in our devotional life some trouble must come, but once we are running we will go very easily. We shall feel it to be a very easy thing to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When we are established in the faithful plane we will have no problem. Only it is necessary to stay in the faithful plane and then our chariot will run. However, the beginning part is difficult because our soul is covered by *ahanikāra* thus we cannot differentiate between the *ahanikāra* and our soul. It is therefore necessary to engage in the initial cleansing practices in order to differentiate properly.

**ahanikāranivṛttanām, keśavo nahi dūragah
ahanikāra-yutanām hi, madhye parvata-rāśayah**

(Brahma-vaivartta Purāṇa)

The obstruction is our ego, *ahanikāra*. *Ahanikāra* means false ego, but that definition is not very accurate. *Ahanikāra* means a

particular kind of world—a whole world with so many things within it. “My mother, my father, my brother, my wife, my house, my garden, my everything.... And: I can do this, I can do that, I have done it; and before me, my father did this and that....” The *ahaṅkāra* world is a very big world! It is not only ego; to say only ‘ego’ is not sufficient, but it is an expanding world. If we can detach ourselves from that egoistic world then immediately we can establish ourselves in the faithful plane, and after that we will have no problem. Therefore I described the *paramahansa* level as the plane from which, in our earlier analogy, the ‘generator’ is already running. Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came into this world to teach us the practical *paramahansa* class by his conduct, writings and speech.

Many things may be wrong according to the mundane law, but everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (18.17) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna:

**yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo, buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatvāpi sa imāṇī lokān, na hanti na nibadhyate**

(“He who is free from egotism (arising from aversion to the Absolute), and whose intelligence is not implicated (in worldly activities)—even if he kills every living being in the whole world, he does not kill at all, neither does he suffer a murderer’s consequences.”)

The point Kṛṣṇa is making is that no sin will touch you if you stay in that faithful plain of the transcendental world.

Many symptoms come in a practitioner’s life. The first symptom is enthusiasm—and by the inspiration of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj many newcomers were very eager in their peaching: “My Guru said I must preach and he said everything

belongs to Kṛṣṇa, everything is Kṛṣṇa's property and we are the servitors of Kṛṣṇa so we must use everything." In this way they very enthusiastically preached in the West. Within our mundane law it is offensive to take property from a hotel, for instance, but some of them did not care for that. They thought, "They are making offence because they have the mentality, 'It is my property, it is my hotel.' But actually *they* are all thieves, *we* are not thieves."

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj gave the real conception of Kṛṣṇa consciousness no doubt, and if we are one hundred percent pure then we shall have no problem. But if we are not cent-percent pure and if there is any tendency to imitate, some problems must come. Imitation is hard to recognise—and if we cannot recognise what is imitation and what is pure, we will be faced with problems. So it is necessary to differentiate between what is imitation and what is pure.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj spread the wave of Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, and now the time has come for preaching the conception of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. My hope is a very deep hope—I am always hoping in a very big way—and I am always surprised to see in which way Kṛṣṇa consciousness is spreading all over the world.

Mahāprabhu said:

**prṭhivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma
sarvvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 17.203)

"My Holy Name will be preached in every town and village of the world." It is a miracle that it has happened in only a few years. If we think about it we cannot believe how it is possible. Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj tried very hard for his first year in

America, but he could not successfully achieve anything. For one year he tried so hard to get that generator going; but when it started, then immediately the whole world lit up through Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Maybe sometimes we make some offences, perhaps even forty percent of the time we are making some offence. It is our birthright! Because we have taken birth in this mundane world, we can't help but do some imperfect work. But with so much offence in the world we are astonished and cannot guess in which way Kṛṣṇa consciousness has spread all over the world. Seeing the result of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's preaching we are very much enlivened.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also tried very hard to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When the Gauḍīya Maṭh first started, all the imitation *sampradāyas* became very fearful and they wanted to kill Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mission, and wanted to kill him also, but they were not successful. He tried very hard and established sixty-four centres in India and also sent his devotees outside India to Germany, England and America. He tried in that way but he was not so successful with the overseas preaching. After his disappearance some disturbance came to his mission, but still some of his disciples, like Śrīpād Ban Mahārāj and Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj tried very hard to preach.

Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj was sent by Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to London. At one stage he had no money at all, not a farthing. He had a stove in which it was necessary to put four pennies in order to cook, but even that money he didn't have. He thought, "What shall I do now?" Soon afterwards the cleaner gave him an envelope and explained he had found it under the table, or perhaps in the door, "Please see

what it is.” Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj opened it and saw a cheque for 1300 pounds. He was surprised!

Previously he had written to the Mahārāj of Baroda: “I am in much trouble for lack of money, please send me something as a donation”—and now that money had come. His immediate concern was for some breakfast, otherwise with no food he would get sick, but how to realise the money? That morning, as soon as the bank opened, he went to cash the cheque, but as he had no account, the bank clerk asked him for some identification: “You are Mr. Goswāmī? Can you show that?” He had no proof of identity and also being Indian he was perhaps not very conscious about that. However, the previous day he had attended a meeting and his photo was published in that day’s newspaper. Suddenly he saw the newspaper lying on the counter and he pointed it out to a bank official, “I attended that meeting, look there is my photo.” Then that man immediately gave him the money!

Anyhow, Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj tried very hard in London but was not so successful. Maybe he planted some seeds in the soil of England, but it is very true that he was not successful in achieving anything substantial. Also Śrīpād Bon Mahārāj tried in Germany, France and America but he also wasn’t so successful.

Many years later, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj tried and he was successful. He had also tried to preach in India but without much success, but his intention had always been to go to the West to preach and he eventually did so. That history you know: for one year he tried to generate something there. Then it took off by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and Nityānanda Prabhu and its light spread all over the world in such a short time. I am very surprised, and also full of joy in my heart. I

am thinking, “How is it possible?”

When Buddhism, ‘Śāṅkarism’ or whatever other ‘ism’ appeared, it took such a long time before they were accepted by the people. Or it would sometimes take the influence of a king or some special event to help a particular conception to spread and be preached widely. In whatever way, it generally took a very long time. But within five to ten years Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj was able to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. And Mahāprabhu foretold it:

**pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma
sarvvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma**

When we see this we feel very happy in our heart and think, “Here a transcendental thing must be present!” We may be able to see or not see, that is another thing, but we can feel it is present there.

So, I am not immediately looking at any fault of the devotees. What the devotees either in the West or East are doing I am thinking they are doing very nicely. I immediately remember Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and feel, “Maybe they are doing a little wrong, but that is no problem.”

I do not know what is the will of Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu now, but real Kṛṣṇa consciousness has spread, no doubt, so there is a substantial serving chance for the conditioned souls. And I think that in some way or other it must spread more, and everyone will be benefitted in that way.

We see many *Āchāryyas* in this world. Perhaps they are not all perfect but somehow they are trying and at least they are doing some raw, first cultivation. When cultivating crops there must first be ploughing, then planting the seed, then watering, etc. In that way we can say the work is going on very nicely.

When there is a war, many soldiers die. Also many women, children, property and other things are lost. In a war it is inevitable, it must be so. So this is also one kind of war—with Māyā, Durgā. It is a revolt. Some revolutionary environment has been created by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and others. So some will die or be injured but the gates of Durgā's prison-house have been broken. Otherwise, how is it that people all over the world are chanting 'Hare Kṛṣṇa'? The revolution has already erupted and in the fighting some may be injured and some may die, but the gate has been broken and the prisoners are running to Vaikuṇṭha.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur described the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī in a very respectful way. From his writings we can understand what is our highest destination. At the present time there may be some difficulty in different ways for many people, but this special type of knowledge, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness, will come to the prisoners sleeping under Māyā.

The prisoners were sleeping but now with this consciousness they have woken up, a revolt has broken out in the prison and they are escaping. We are so fortunate that in our time it has happened and we are seeing it. It could have come in the past or it could have come in the future but we are so fortunate to see the revolution happening now. We have seen many things and we have had the association of the Generals and soldiers—that also is our fortune. Now if we can proceed to our destination in a harmonised way that will be ultimately fruitful for us all. Hare Kṛṣṇa.



Chapter Four

Within the Holy Dhāma

Introduction and welcome lecture in Govarddhan,

Śrīla Ragunātha Dāsa Goswāmī always prayed to Girirāja Govarddhan: *nija-nikaṣa-nivāsaḥ dehi govarddhana tvam*. And Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu also said:

**vaikuṇṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād-
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govarddhanah
rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryyād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevām viveki na kaḥ**

At first we can see Vaikuṇṭha-Dhām as being a very high place, but above that, the more important place is Mathurā—*janito varā madhu-purī*. Why? Because Kṛṣṇa Himself is born there, that is His *Līlā* there. Nārāyaṇa, though, does not take birth. He has no birth, He has no father and no mother, but Kṛṣṇa has His father and mother—that is within His *Līlā*. And, *vaikuṇṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād...* better than Mathurā is Vṛndāvan, where Kṛṣṇa has His Pastimes with the *Gopīs*. And over that place, is the highest place, Śrī Govarddhan—Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur says; *giridhārī-gāndharvvikā yathā kṛiḍā kaila*.

The most worshipful place, at the foot of Govarddhan, is Rādhā-kuṇḍa; there Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī have Their highest *Prema-līlā*. One who has a little intelligence, he must try to stay in Govarddhan; and if possible, he can stay at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Everyone, though, cannot stay at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, but they can stay at the lotus feet of Govarddhan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Thākura said that we can stay at the lotus feet of Govarddhan and every day go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and serve Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, etc. The devotees will stay at Govarddhan and render service in their *Gopī-bhāva*, their transcendental service mood form of a *Gopī*.

The *Gopīs* also stay in Govarddhan. The *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs* stay in Govarddhan, and everyday for their service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa they go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In the night they do not all stay with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; only a few stay, and the others return to Govarddhan and spend the night there up to three o'clock in the morning. Then at four o'clock they start their *sevā* again at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and spend the whole day there. When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa go to sleep, they again return to Govarddhan. At that time only a few, like Rūpa Mañjarī, stay for the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, in order to massage Their lotus feet and give Them some nourishment.

At night They are engaged in Their *Līlā*, and the *Mañjarīs* also help that, but the *Sakhīs* cannot enter that place. Only the *Mañjarīs* can go there at that time. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa is tired and very much in need of a glass of water, but nobody can go inside at that time—only the *Mañjarīs* can go. That is a very high thing, and it is not a matter discussable by us, but it is happening.

Ourselves, we will stay at the lotus feet of Govarddhan and pray to Kṛṣṇa, or rather, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. All the group at Govarddhan are serving Rādhārāṇī—they actually have no connection with Kṛṣṇa. From Govarddhan they go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa and arrange many things. The *Aṣṭakālīya-līlā* happens there, not elsewhere, and one who exclusively wants to serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa will think about these Pastimes. But we shall not think of such things now—with our mundane body and mind we cannot think about that.

**dhāmera svarūpa sphuribe nayane
haiba rādhāra dāsī**

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said that while chanting, chanting, chanting we will forget our body consciousness, and at that time our main form as a servitor to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī will manifest. That is a very high thing; but immediately we will not consider such things because we are sure to make offence to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the devotees. We say ‘Vṛndāvan,’ but Vṛndāvan means all associated places combined—that is Vṛndāvan.

**jaya rādhe, jaya kṛṣṇa, jaya vṛndāvan...
śyāma-kunḍa, rādhā-kunḍa, giri-govarddhan
kālindī jamunā jaya, jaya mahāvan...**

All these places and more are included in Vṛndāvan. And in this village of Vṛndāvan, Kṛṣṇa is engaged in many different types of *Līlā*. In this place Kṛṣṇa’s *Līlā* is going on in many areas. We are here in Vṛndāvan and praying that we may find somewhere for our ‘Śrīla Śrīdhara Swāmī Sevāśram.’ I do not know where Rādhārāṇī will give us a place, but it is approachable only by prayer. We can only pray: “Please, give some entrance.”

Actually, Rādhārāṇī does not give entrance. Admission is granted by the *Sakhīs*, the girlfriends of Rādhārāṇī. Especially, we are in the group of Lalitādevī and in that group, Rūpa Mañjarī is the head of the *Mañjarī* section, and Lalitādevī is our Mistress. Our prayer is that she will take us and engage us in service. We are very hopeful because Lalitādevī’s mood is very open, something like that of Nityānanda Prabhu. She is very affectionate with all, and she is the head of all the *Sakhīs*.

The *Aṣṭa-Sakhīs*, the eight principal *Gopīs* are: Lalitā, Viśākhā, Citrā, Campakalatā, Tuṅgavidyā, Indurekhā, Sudevī and Raṅgadevī. Lalitādevī is the leader of that group. She has

a special group and through them she arranges for maintaining the service to Rādhārāṇī. She is the head Mistress of our spiritual form. We are now in mundane bodies so we will not think of that, still that is our goal of life. Therefore we must worship that with our full regard, and we must not make any offence in the *Dhām*.

It is very difficult to stay in Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We must have an exclusive service mood to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and that can give us some place here. By the mercy of Lalitādevī, through our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Rūpa Goswāmī, it is possible to get that. And if in that way we try to see everything, then no problem will come to us.

We are so fortunate that we have reached, by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Vṛndāvan-Dhām. Actually Vṛndāvan is in the transcendental world and we cannot reach that transcendental plane with our mundane body. But here we have some special facility by the mercy of Mahāprabhu as well as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. We are like bees who try to take honey from a tightly sealed honey pot; but they may give us some chance to attach with that transcendental world. The pot is solid and the bees cannot remove the seal and take the honey. This is an example only, but still, from it we can understand what our position is like. The bees are on the outside of the bottle, and our position is similar—but we are also near the honey!

We can enter Vṛndāvan-Dhām by the mercy of Rādhārāṇī. But She is engaged with the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and She has no time to see to us, but by the mercy of Her finest, closest and topmost associate, Lalitādevī, we may gain a chance to enter. Lalitādevī is the leader of the group of *Sakhīs*, the friends of Rādhārāṇī; she is very merciful and can give us admission to Vraja-Dhām, Vṛndāvan-Dhām.

But here is one question. Do we want that or not? We hear

about Vṛndāvan-Dhām, but we hear through our mundane senses and with our mundane feelings. Some essence, however, is coming through that and we express, “We like Vṛndāvan-Dhām.” But, like *Śrī Harināma Mahāmantra*, Vṛndāvan-Dhām is also transcendental. If we want to enter there, we need some special mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī through Her associates, and we can only get that with our super-hankering mood.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī said;

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.70*)

We can do many auspicious services to the Lord but that is not the cause of the real hankering necessary for service to Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We need to have the association of the associates of Vraja-Dhām, hear the *Līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, and engage in *śravaṇam*, *kīrttanam*, *viṣṇoḥ-smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, etc. With that kind of activity in our devotional path, inspiration can come to us, and by the causeless mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, that kind of devotional hankering can enter our heart; *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ*. It is very rare in this mundane world, but that is our super goal of life. We need it. We cannot touch that ecstatic *Līlā* through our mundane body, but we may understand it a little through our preceptorial Masters' line, the *Guru-paramparā*.

**iśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarvva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam**

(*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1*)

“The Supreme Lord, the embodiment of truth, consciousness and joy, is Govinda, Kṛṣṇa. He is beginningless, the origin of all that be, and the cause of all causes.”

That is His position.

**nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigraha
pūrṇa śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma nāmiṇoḥ**

The Holy Name and Kṛṣṇa are non-different. Both are transcendental, therefore through our mundane knowledge and mundane activity we cannot touch that ecstasy. In the *Upaniṣads* it is said:

**nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūrṁ svām**

(“The Supreme Lord is not attained by preaching, by vast intelligence, nor by knowing very expertly the *Vedas*. He is attained only by one who He Himself chooses. To such a person He manifests His own Form.”)

When from the upper level causeless mercy comes and touches a fallen soul, he can understand: “Something is touching me, and that thing is very exalted and auspicious.” An example is that if an ant is running past me and I touch it, the ant can understand it is being touched. All is under my control, not his. When I lift my finger he then thinks, “Oh, whatever came and touched me has now gone away.” In this situation he has no possibility to exert his personality, he has no free-will to control the situation.

Kṛṣṇa is like that. When that Transcendental Knowledge Himself comes down and touches us, at that time, we can understand it, otherwise there is no possibility for us to under-

stand. It is not mechanical. One possibility is there—*yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas* if we take shelter with our full unalloyed devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa must be merciful to us; and that gives us some hope. It is up to the sweet will of Kṛṣṇa, but in this way we can gain some position and enter into the transcendental world.

Why are we doing other types of activities such as worshipping, etc.? It is our practice for devoting everything, including ourselves, unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. In this way we are trying to practise.

But Kṛṣṇa said in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

**sarvva-dharmmān parrityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarvva-pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

“Totally rejecting all kinds of religion, take shelter of Me exclusively. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins. Do not despair.”

**yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi, yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya, tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam**

(“Oh Arjjuna, son of Kuntī, whichever action you perform, whether general or scriptural; whatever you eat; whatever you offer in sacrifice; whatever you give in charity; and whichever austerity you perform or vow you keep, all that you perform should be as an offering unto Me.”)

There are many *ślokas* like this. Another one is:

**daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etām taranti te**

“This other-worldly, supernatural, external potency of Mine composed of three modes of nature most certainly is difficult to cross. However, those who take shelter exclusively in Me alone, and who completely surrender unto Me, they certainly are able to surpass this almost insurmountable illusion.”

Kṛṣṇa wants full surrender unto His lotus feet, and if we do this He will take our full responsibility, and when He takes us our bodies will become transcendental.

**dikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama**

**sei deha kare tāra cid-ānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tānra caraṇa bhajaya**

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 4.192 & 193)

When the conditioned soul takes shelter unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa takes him and provides for him whatever he may lack. He gives to him whatever is necessary, making him complete in that transcendental position. The main thing is devotion. A fully surrendered soul has no responsibility for himself.

**mānasa, deho, geha, yo kichū mor
arpiluṇ tuwā pade, nanda-kīśor
sampade bipade, jīvane-maraṇe
dāy mama gelā, tuwā o-pada baraṇe...**

(Śaraṇāgati)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Whatever I have, everything I am offering unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. I do not know what I have, but whatever it may be please take that for Your service, from this day on I have no responsibility for myself. You may maintain this body or not, this is Your matter not

mine. I shall only try to serve Your holy lotus feet.”

When the conditioned soul takes shelter under the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa takes that conditioned soul as His own property.

**rakṣa karabi tuhuṁ niścaya jāni
pāna karabuṁ hām yāmuna-pāni**

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said in Śaraṇāgati, “You must save us. It is your duty, I know, so what fear can I have? I can jump into the polluted waters of the Kālīya Lake without fear—I can do anything.”

Here we can see the main thing: faith in Kṛṣṇa. The faithful world, that is the real transcendental world. In that world, faith is the very ground—the very foundation. When we live there with our full faith, we will attain the highest result of highest benefit in life.

One example you may have heard. If a police officer chases some thieves but mistakenly kills someone, all liability for his actions, even his mistakes, goes to the government and not to the police officer. His responsibility is only towards capturing the thieves—that is his duty. This is the main point.

After self-surrender, the result of what we do goes to Kṛṣṇa and does not come to us, but that surrender must be perfect. This is the first quality of the conditioned soul. After that, everything depends on Kṛṣṇa; and only He knows in which way He will take the charge of the conditioned soul.

Through the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees you can understand what is the will of Kṛṣṇa, and what is not. If you try to gain that knowledge and maintain your devotion within that environment, you will have no fear from anywhere.

This advice comes within the category of our primary and secondary education. But the super-position comes by

the mercy of the associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. If we have super-hankering, then it will come to us. Who has some special quality of hankering—hankering for *Madhura-rasa*—he will get it. It is true. Only hankering after that *Līlā* can give us a little chance.

In the pastimes of Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī we can see:

**āsābharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratañ hi
tvañ cet kṛpam mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiñ me
prānair vraje ma ca baroru bakārināpi**

Śrīla Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī passed his life, some eighty years, in Vṛndāvan-Dhām with this special type of hankering. He showed by his position and through his *līlā* how this mood of hankering can come to the *jīva*-soul—and in what a super way it can come.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu showed all kinds of *Bhāvas*, including *Mahābhāva*, in this mundane world. He tasted it, Kṛṣṇa Himself tasted it, and the auspicious souls can see it as well as His paraphernalia and His associates. For the auspicious soul, everything shows him in which way he will proceed to his destination.

Dāsa Goswāmī said, “I am only waiting for Your mercy. Oh, Rādhārāṇī, if You do not give that, I think my life is spoiled in Vṛndāvan-Dhām. Even, I do not want the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. What shall I do with Kṛṣṇa if Your mercy is not present there? You are the Supreme Servitor of Kṛṣṇa and only under Your guidance do I want that service. Without Your connection I will not get it, I know that, and it is one hundred percent sure.

“Kṛṣṇa has many forms, but: “*Rādhā-saṅge yadā bhāti, tadā ‘madana-mohitaḥ’*” When You are with Kṛṣṇa, we can see that Kṛṣṇa is in His fully ecstatic form. Therefore, I need Your

mercy. My whole time I have spent for Your mercy. My only prayer is, 'Please give Your mercy on my head.' I need to serve Your lotus feet. I do not want the association of Kṛṣṇa without You; such service to Kṛṣṇa has no value. Kṛṣṇa will not be happy without Your service, and I want to do Your service."

Kṛṣṇa says in the *śāstra*:

...mad bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās, te me bhaktatamāḥ matāḥ

("My dear Partha, one who claims to be My devotee is not really so. Only a person who is the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee.")

We can see many *śloka*s in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and other places expressing this point.

So Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī says: "Kṛṣṇa Himself is very pleased with the association of His devotees; therefore I need Your mercy, only this is my hope. One day I must get it. But I have passed my whole life here in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and still I do not have it!" In this way, Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī is praying. His ambition is only to serve Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. And it is by the special mercy of the associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that we may get that kind of hankering.

Śrīla Narottama Ṭkākura wrote in one song: *nitāiyer koruṇā habe, braje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pābe*. Nityānanda Prabhu can give us admission there, He can give us the passport. But only the associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī can give us the visa to enter into that world, that faithful service world. So we pray to our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. He is the non-different representation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

**ācāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān, nāvamanyeta karhicit
na marttya buddhyāsūyeta, sarvva deva-mayo guruḥ**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27)

Kṛṣṇa Himself appears in the form of Guru, but when we will see the real form of Guru, then we will understand that he is the Supreme Servitor of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākur in his *Guruvāṣṭaka* says:

**yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
dhyāyan stuvamś tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

**nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai
yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇiyā
tatrāti-dākṣyād ati-vallabhasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

From these *ślokas* we can see the position of Śrī Gurudeva. Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākur said that if we realise in a higher way, we can see Gurudeva as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; that means, the Supreme Servitor of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To gain that vision we need the mercy of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Without such mercy we cannot enter the garden of Reality the Beautiful—that transcendental world.

By the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj we are gathered together here and asking for the mercy of the lotus feet of Gurudeva. If Śrīla Guru Mahārāj with his full wave of mercy will break into our hearts, then we must gain admission within that transcendental world.

Many times Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained and praised *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, and every time he would give us some clue: we must follow the service mood of Lalitādevī.

Lalitādevī's mood is twenty-four hours a day continuous service, and such mood spreads throughout her group. Not

only that, but all groups are enlightened by the service of Lalitādevī. So, it is necessary to get their mercy and it is possible only by the grace of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—and not by any other way. This is because he commands the position of the Holder of the *Rūpānuga Sampradāya*. He is the super servitor of Lalitādevī, and that servitor is Śrīmatī Rūpa Mañjarī.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave charge of His *Sampradāya* to Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. In this way we are connected, and we must one day fulfil our divine aspiration for their service. This is our only hope.



Chapter Five

The Land of Spiritual Gems

More from within Śrī Vṛndāvan-Dhām

Many devotees are coming to our *Maṭh* from every corner of the world and we are living together. Everyone who comes does not know Bengali, English or Hindi, but they are always very submissive and trying to serve, and they are serving. In which way is this possible? It can only happen by the causeless mercy of Śrī Guru.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj spread his consciousness, the conception which is coming through the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, and you are getting the chance to engage in that line of service. All of you cannot speak even English, but you are doing service. It is sometimes a miracle for me to see. Only the mood of affection and the mood of service can help us, and you have that. It is your property, and to serve you—that is my property. In this way, no problem comes between us.

We are always trying to serve the will and mood of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, that is why we have come here. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj lastly told me, “In the future, do not try to make many *maṭhs*. Managing a *maṭh* is very difficult and all of your time will be taken for that management. So only make a *maṭh* in Pūrī-Dhām, and if possible, you can try to organise a devotees’ *bhajan āśrama* in Vṛndāvan-Dhām.” That was his desire. And now it is established—Pūrī, Vṛndāvan, and Nabadwip-Dhām. With all the devotees I am trying to satisfy Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s will and desire.

I know, believe, and have faith in Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and

that by his causeless mercy we can and must establish here a devotees' *bhajan āśrama*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not say a *maṭh*, but he said, "*Bhajan āśrama*."

Whoever comes to Vṛndāvan must try to do some *sevā*. *Bhajan*, means *sevā*, service. Here we are not doing business. When the mood of service to Vṛndāvan, to Guru and Vaiṣṇava comes, and when the mood of service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa comes to us, then we shall try to stay in Vṛndāvan. Who has this mood, he can stay in Vṛndāvan, and for that type of devotee we must make a *bhajan āśram* here.

Sometimes a few devotees have some intention to stay in Vṛndāvan, but they are staying in Vṛndāvan like a bee on the outside of a bottle of honey. What are they doing? One devotee came to see me recently, he now lives here in Vṛndāvan, but what is he doing? He purchased a cow and he maintains his family—he is doing the same as he was in Bengal. His mood is good because he considers Vṛndāvan to be a very auspicious place, but his conception of Vṛndāvan is very small.

Vṛndāvan is infinitely great and it is inconceivable by our intelligence. We only see the mundane cover and we are not getting admission within the transcendental world of Śrī Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We need admission, and it is our hope that one day we shall get that real vision.

**mātala harijana kīrtana-raṅge
pūjala rāga-patha gaurava-bhaṅge**

Taking this *śloka* as our example we shall worship Vṛndāvan from afar. One who reads *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* can know something about Vṛndāvan-Dhām. Actually, Vṛndāvan-Dhām is:

**goloka-nāmni nija-dhāmni tale ca tasya
devī maheśa-hari-dhāmasu teṣu teṣu**

(“First there is Devī-dhāma, then Maheśa-dhāma,
and above Maheśa-dhāma is Hari-dhāma;
and above all is His own home, Goloka.”)

And:

**śriyaḥ kāntāḥ kāntaḥ parama-puruṣaḥ kalpataravo
drumā bhūmiś cintāmaṇigaṇamayī toyam amṛtam
kathā gānaṁ nāṭyaṁ gamanam api vaṁśī priyasakhi
cid ānandaṁ jyotiḥ param api tad āśvādyam api ca
sa yatra kṣīrābdhiḥ sravati surabhiyaś ca sumahān
nimeṣārdhākhyo vā vrajati na hi yatrāpi samayaḥ
bhaje śvetadvīpaṁ tam aham iha golokam iti yaṁ
vidantas te santaḥ kṣiti-virala-cārāḥ katipaye**

(Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā, 5.56)

(“That place where the Divine Goddesses of Fortune
are the Beloved,
and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Male,
is the only Lover;
all the trees are Divine wish-fulfilling trees,
the soil is made of Transcendental Gems
and the water is nectar;
where every word is a song,
every movement is dancing,
the flute is the dearest companion,
sunlight and moonlight are Divine Ecstasy,
and all that be is Divine, and enjoyable;
where a great ocean of milk eternally flows
from the udders of billions of Surabhī cows
and the Divine time is eternally present,
never suffering the estrangement of past and future

for even a split second...

that Supreme Transcendental Abode of Śvetadwīp
do I adore.

Practically no one in this world knows that place
but for only a few pure devotees—
and they know it as Goloka.”)

That is the explanation of Vṛndāvan, actual Vṛndāvan.
Also in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.29), Lord Brahmā says:

**cintāmaṇi-prakarasadmasu kalpavṛkṣa-
lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam
lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevya mānaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi**

(“Surrounded by millions of wish-fulfilling trees,
in Abodes made of multitudes of wish-yielding gems,
He who tends the ever-yielding cows
and who is perpetually served with great Affection
by hundreds of thousands of Lakṣmīs—
the Primeval Lord, Govinda, do I worship.”)

In *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* is given a very nice explanation
about Vṛndāvan-Dhām, Goloka-Dhām. *Cintāmaṇi-prakarasadma-
su kalpavṛkṣa*. If we look at the houses in Vṛndāvan we cannot
at present see that they are made of *cintāmaṇi*, but actually
they are transcendental and actual Vṛndāvan is all made of
cintāmaṇi. *Prakarasadmasu kalpavṛkṣa*. *Sadmasu* means all the
houses, and *kalpavṛkṣa* means wish-fulfilling trees. If you want
a fruit such as a mango, from a neem tree, the neem tree will
give you a mango, that is *kalpavṛkṣa*. But what we see with our
present vision is not that!

We think it is a very auspicious place, no doubt, and that it
exists above this mundane world, but with our mundane

knowledge we cannot feel it. We glorify that auspicious place, and therefore sometimes some light may come to us. We think it to be better than other places, no doubt; but we do not see the real Vṛndāvan. But we need that real Vṛndāvan, and we need to have admission there.

**cintāmaṇi-prakarasadmasu kalpavṛkṣa-
lakṣāvr̥teṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam
lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-saṁbhrama-sevya-mānaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi**

(Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā, 5.29)

In this connection, I can remember an answer given by Pishima, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's sister. Pishima had much regard and affection for Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and he also liked her like his disciple. She was a very strict lady and a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, so everyone respected her, and her opinion was held in very high regard.

One day some curious *sannyāsīs* asked her, "In which way is Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp, running? Are they eating nicely or are they not getting food?"

Pishima gave her reply, "Oh that Maṭh is very glorious, you cannot guess it. Lakṣmīdevī herself looks after the grounds and verandah of Rādhā-Govindasundar! This is the actual position of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh there."

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj heard this he said; "Oh, in a very protective way Pishima has expressed it! If she would have said, 'Lakṣmīdevī herself looks after the grounds of Śrīdhara Mahārāj's Maṭh,' I must fall into the ocean of offence, but she said, 'She is looking after Rādhā-Govinda's grounds,' and that is good. We can honour that, we can honour her opinion."

Lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-saṁbhrama-sevya-mānaṁ. This is the

mood of our transcendental body: we are always ready, ever ready for service to Kṛṣṇa, and waiting for the order of our Divine Master.

Our transcendental body is very nicely decorated with marks of *tilak* as twelve temples of Kṛṣṇa, and good *Tulasī-mālā* on our neck. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* is on our chest. With that body we are to serve Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of our Divine Master. This is our *dhyāna*, our meditation, and we want that. We are practising in a mundane way, but by the mercy of our Gurudeva, and through our devotion, we must get it. That only, is our hope, and this has been shown by Śrīla Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī.

Already I told you Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī's super-*śloka*, *āśābharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit....* Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī gave another *śloka* that is also very high. He said,

**viracaya mayi daṇḍam dīnabandho dayām vā
gatir iha na bhavattaḥ kācid anyā mamāsti
nīpatatu śata-koṭīr nīrbharam vā navāmbhas
tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena**

"He Dīnabandho, He Kṛṣṇa, I am fully surrendered unto Your lotus feet. I do not want anything without Your mercy—that is my life's position. I shall not praise others and I do not desire anything from any other channel. Only I desire the mercy of Your Divine Grace." In this way, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī also explained the heart of a devotee.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī composed many books. For us, the conditioned souls, he gave many things. Anyhow, our activity must go for the service to Guru, Vaiṣṇava, and Bhagavān, and one day we must attain that transcendental vision. Through such vision we will be able to see everything—Kṛṣṇa-Dhām,

Vraja-Dhām, Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We will get the mercy of the *Vrajabāsīs* there, and of Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Raghunātha, and the other Goswāmīs. Through their mercy we must get service to Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is our only hope, and the only goal of our life.



Chapter Six

Sweet Service, Service, Service

Devotee: I notice that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda were engaged in defeating the *brāhmaṇas* by showing that Vaiṣṇavas are above *brāhmaṇas*. In the meetings the stalwart *brāhmaṇas* accepted defeat, but afterwards they all forgot. Is this because it is a hidden treasure and can only be received from the self-realised soul? If it is not the case then after being defeated they would surely remember that Vaiṣṇavas are above mere 'brāhmaṇism' and they would follow that.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Also it is true that so many saw the *Viśvarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa. Karna, Duryodhana, Duṣṣāsana, they all saw the *Viśvarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa and they were stunned. They were surprised at what they saw, but they thought it to be magic: the magic of Kṛṣṇa. Dhṛtarāṣṭra also very eagerly wanted to see that. In *Mahābhārata* he said, "O Kṛṣṇa, everyone is seeing Your *Viśvarūpa*, but I cannot see because I have no eyes. Please give me eyes for five or ten seconds because I want to see that."

Kṛṣṇa replied, "It is not necessary for Me to give you eyes. If I say, you shall see." Then Dhṛtarāṣṭra saw the wonderful Universal Form of Kṛṣṇa. He then bowed down to Kṛṣṇa. But afterwards he forgot everything.

A devotee recently wrote to me with an important question. He asked, "What is the position of Gurudeva?"

We see in the Scripture: *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair*—Gurudeva is non-different from Kṛṣṇa. But elsewhere the

Scriptures give: *ācāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān, nāvamanyeta karhicit*. Kṛṣṇa says, “I am Guru. I reveal Myself in the form of Guru.”

And in another place we see that the position of Gurudeva is given as *Sākṣād*-Baladeva—non-different from Baladeva. Gurudeva is non-different from Nityānanda Prabhu; and Nityānanda Prabhu is non-different from Baladeva. The devotee worships his Gurudeva as Baladeva—as Nityānanda Prabhu.

In yet another place the Scriptures say that Gurudeva is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. We can note too, that Baladeva has a form as a *Mañjarī*: Anaṅga Mañjarī.

So what is truth, and how to harmonise it? This was the question posed by that devotee.

It is necessary to harmonise everything, then we can understand what is what. First it is necessary to see what is the position of Kṛṣṇa. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the first position.

When we try to realise the position of Gurudeva, at first we shall see the main glow—that everything emanates from him. And He from whom everything emanates is Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa is not alone. He is *svaśakti śaktimāna*—Kṛṣṇa is with His Power. When Kṛṣṇa and His Power come to play, His form is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. It is not that this is happening just for some time, but it is eternal. It is not that yesterday this happened but the previous day Kṛṣṇa was alone. No. Everything is eternal and transcendental, so everything is living within consciousness, and that consciousness is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the first thing we are to consider.

Also in another place we see:

yadyapi aśṛjya nitya cic-chakti-vilāsa

Nobody can create His Pastimes, and Kṛṣṇa also does not create them. His Pastimes are eternal, therefore nobody created them. The Supreme Personality with His Power is eternal, and that Power is sometimes attached with Kṛṣṇa and sometimes detached. When detached, still there is full power with Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: That last sentence is very difficult to understand.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: There is power, and there is the powerful. If you detach power from the powerful is there still power with the powerful?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: With the powerful there is full power even though power may be detached from the powerful, and that is called *acintya*, incomprehensible.

Devotee: Do *aiśa* expansions such as *vaibhava-vilāsa* also follow this principle in that He expands into other forms but without Himself becoming diminished?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. An example is given by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī: if from one candle another candle is lit, that second candle is full with its power but without any loss from the original candle.

rādhā-kṛṣṇa eka ātmā, dui deha dhari'
anyone vilase rasa āsvādana kari'

sei dui eka ebe caitanya gosāñi
rasa āsvādite donhe hailā eka ṭhāñi

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.56 & 57)

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the Power and the Powerful, are inseparable, but when They want to play They can exert themselves

separately. He is full with power and She, His Power, is also full with power! This is the point.

When Kṛṣṇa wants to have Pastimes, the first manifestation of His energy is Baladeva, Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa. He comes out from Kṛṣṇa—*prābhava-vilāsa*. From Rādhārāṇī automatically comes Yogamāyā. Yogamāyā and Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa come out at the same time.

Yogamāyā takes charge of the playing ground, like the referee. She makes the rules and regulations, etc. in a way which will please Kṛṣṇa, and by her will everything immediately manifests accordingly.

When Kṛṣṇa wishes to play, immediately everything is manifest and managed by Yogamāyā. Baladeva takes the charge of all administration and He delegates charge to Yogamāyā. From the Powerful comes Saṅkarṣaṇa, and from Rādhārāṇī comes Yogamāyā.

Devotee: Saṅkarṣaṇa is one of the names of Balarāma?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes: Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa—the original Saṅkarṣaṇa.

Devotee: And afterwards so many other Saṅkarṣaṇas are manifested?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes: the Catur-vyūha. There are many expansions of Kṛṣṇa and many expansions of Rādhārāṇī—*prābhava-vilāsa*, *vaibhava-vilāsa*, etc., but in the higher plane are playing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa and Yogamāyā. These four participate there.

Devotee: The Catur-vyūha are not in Goloka Vṛndāvan?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: No, they are in Vaikuṇṭha. When Goloka Vṛndāvan comes down to this mundane world and shows its flame, those Pastimes can be revealed in Vaikuṇṭha

or anywhere. They have such power; and everything is full, *pūrṇa*. In the *Vedas* it is written,

**om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ, pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya, pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate**

Kṛṣṇa is full, and Rādhārāṇī is full. When the Power comes out from the Powerful, that Power is also full. The play of that plane progresses with the continual cycle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Devotee: Even there? Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said that all problems start from above.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: But nothing there is bad or wrong. All, whether they are possessors of power or power itself, they worship for the satisfaction of the Supreme Power and Powerful, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

We are trying to satisfy the Powerful, and in the extreme position we can see that Rādhārāṇī holds the highest position of power in trying to satisfy Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: Is this why even Nityānanda Prabhu wants to expand Himself as a *Mañjarī*, Anaṅga Mañjarī: He comes from the Power, but He wants to give service to the Powerful?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Nityānanda Prabhu Himself enjoys *Madhura-rasa* as Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa, Balarāma. But He enjoys *for* the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: Is Balarāma's *Rāsa*-dance of a different mood than Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsa*-dance?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Kṛṣṇa is living in Balarāma's heart. When Balarāma engages in *Rāsa-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsa-līlā* is playing within.

Another example is that a person may become aged by body but the mind may remain young in mood. An aged man may not have the physical capacity to act like a young man, but his mentality remains as a young man's—sometimes he may hold even more of a youthful mentality than a young man!

That power of willing has a position in the Play of Kṛṣṇa, and that is in the form of a *Gopī*. When Saṅkarṣaṇa wants to satisfy Kṛṣṇa in *Madhura-rasa*, he cannot do that in the form of a male body. He must therefore transform and go under the guidance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

We will also find there the form of Gurudeva. What is Gurudeva doing? He is giving service to Kṛṣṇa. For the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa he gives us a rope to rescue us, and he takes us as a flower-offering to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Baladeva is the first Guru. If we can see Baladeva we shall see that He is the first Guru and he wants to take us and offer us to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. We shall see that Baladeva is Gurudeva.

When we see the Power of Kṛṣṇa, we will see that She is the highest and She gives the highest satisfaction to the mind of Kṛṣṇa. She satisfies Him to the extreme. Seeing that, the devotees very much hanker to receive such a chance of service. Immediately they search out the possibility, and they follow the *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs*, and in this way their service goes to Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī gives the highest satisfaction to Kṛṣṇa. She is the master of the ocean of *Madhura-rasa*. She is the proprietor of that property, therefore everyone, even Baladeva, if they want to satisfy Kṛṣṇa supremely, they must go under Her guidance. But Rādhārāṇī does not give anything directly to anyone because She does not have the time. She is always busy for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa and She always wants ingre-

dients for the service of Kṛṣṇa. Her suppliers are the *Aṣṭa-Sakhīs*. The *Sakhīs* not only supply various items for service, but they make many things also. They make many very nice preparations. From potatoes they make thousands and thousands of varieties of preparations for offering. In this way they make many things for the satisfaction of Rādhārāṇī, and Rādhārāṇī worships Kṛṣṇa with these.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa is very naughty and Kṛṣṇa wants to meet with the *Sakhīs*, but they do not want direct union with Kṛṣṇa. The *Sakhīs* do not have that type of mentality; their only concern is with the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. They know that Kṛṣṇa is fully satisfied with Rādhārāṇī, and they supply everything. But Rādhārāṇī, Herself, for the happy, varied play, offers the *Sakhīs* to Kṛṣṇa. She pushes them to have His direct association. And the *Sakhīs* participate with Kṛṣṇa for the satisfaction of Rādhārāṇī, not for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. The *Vṛndāvan-līlā* of Kṛṣṇa goes on in this way.

One who wants the full satisfaction of his transcendental service-life must take the position of a female. Actually all *jīva*-souls are female by intrinsic nature because they are *śakti*—*jīva-śakti*. Obtaining a female form they aspire to join the *Līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. They always pray for the mercy of the *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs*. Kṛṣṇa is not their master, but He is a player, a participant. The *Sakhīs* take the position of master. They know in which way Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied, and they make arrangements accordingly. The *Sakhīs* take the guidance of Rādhārāṇī and try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa accordingly. They are exclusive servants of Rādhārāṇī; they are happy, and Kṛṣṇa is also happy with them in that way.

Devotee: Is there competition?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: No competition for themselves, but

service competition is there. Sometimes there may be antithesis within the auspicious emotions, the *Bhāva*. When Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvan, Rādhārāṇī fainted.

Within the mood of fulfilment of the Ecstatic Play as a whole, sometimes antithesis appears, and that gives even more satisfaction to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī. When Rādhārāṇī sees Kṛṣṇa before Her, She sees one Kṛṣṇa, and She tries to satisfy one Kṛṣṇa. But when Kṛṣṇa hides from Her, She sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere and tries to satisfy Him everywhere. That mood is called *Viraha*.

We can see the Guru's position in many ways, but it is all within the play of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa means the Conjugal Power, and the Powerful, and that is full Kṛṣṇa. It is from that plane that Kṛṣṇa comes down and says, *ācāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān*, "I am Guru."

When Kṛṣṇa says, "I am your Guru," that is not the full conception of Kṛṣṇa. He has many incarnations: He comes as *Yuga-avatāras*, He also shows Himself as a teacher, such as when He became the teacher of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. Kṛṣṇa has many moods and varieties, and one variety of Kṛṣṇa is that He is the Guru, therefore He says, "*Ācāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān, nāvamanyeta karhicit*"

Which means, "When you take shelter unto the lotus feet of your Guru, you will think that it is I, Myself, who has appeared in front of you in the form of your Guru in order to rescue you from the illusory environment and to take you to the transcendental world." Such is the form of Kṛṣṇa that we see manifest there: the *Āchāryya* form.

All aspects of Kṛṣṇa are truth. One truth is that Kṛṣṇa appears as the *Āchāryya* in order to rescue the conditioned souls. When He appears in this way He is very merciful to the conditioned souls. Kṛṣṇa cannot tolerate their painful position

so He appears as the *Āchāryya* in order to rescue them from their unfortunate position: *ācāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān*.

But when the liberated souls in the transcendental service world try to serve, they also have a master of their own, and in the line of the Powerful they shall see him as Balarāma, Nityānanda. If they will follow that line, they will go to Kṛṣṇa within that conception. Nityānanda Prabhu and Baladeva will be there as their Guru. The conception comes from that supremely extreme plane where Kṛṣṇa is present with His Power. One step down from this is the form of Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa, and this is manifest for the Play of the Lord. In that realm there are many forms of Guru. His play is enacted with His *Cicchakti* as well as with His *Jīva-śakti*, and, in a negative way, with *Māyā-śakti*.

At one level is Yogamāyā. By the will of Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa, all the transcendental world is acquired by Yogamāyā. She has full consciousness about Kṛṣṇa, therefore for the play of Kṛṣṇa she makes everything needed for His satisfaction. The trees, the peacocks, the deer, flowers, and everything; all are expansions of Yogamāyā's power.

Devotee: Does Yogamāyā have a form there as a *Gopī*?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Vṛndādevī is an expansion and representative of Yogamāyā. This is said in the first verse of the song of *Aṣṭakālīya-līlā* composed by Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī.

When the *jīva*-soul obtains the form of a *Gopī*, under the guidance of the *Mañjarīs* she tries to satisfy her masters, and they see that Rādhārāṇī is the Supreme Satisfier of Kṛṣṇa. Under the guidance of Rādhārāṇī they try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. For the service of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī is the supreme Guru.

We are of the *Rūpānuga Sampradāya*: we are followers of

Rūpa Goswāmī. Actually we do not consider ourselves to be following properly, but we are trying to be followers. The only destination we can see is in the direction of the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī is so merciful and She can manifest Herself in many ways, so She can also come in front of me—in the form of Gurudeva. What She wants to see is our mood of service.

There is a history I heard from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj at Kusum Sarovar in 1947. When I saw that place, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj told me that one day Rādhārāṇī came there to collect flowers along with Her *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs*. They came in a big group and collected flowers. Suddenly Rādhārāṇī noticed a girl of eleven years of age or so and mentioned, “Oh, she is such a beautiful girl. When did she join?”

Lalitādevī replied, “Rūpa Mañjarī brought her from her village and I gave her to the group of Rūpa Mañjarī. She is serving Your Highness through Rūpa Mañjarī.”

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī said, “She is such a beautiful girl and she can do much *sevā*.” And Rādhārāṇī continued with her service activities.

I heard this story from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and I cannot forget this example. Immediately such kind of fortune may come to anyone, and Rūpa Goswāmī can take us in that way. Lalitādevī is also very merciful and she can immediately bestow her mercy upon us.

Rādhārāṇī has many *Sakhīs* but eight are principle. There are thousands of *Sakhīs*, and they have groups. There are thousands of groups of *Mañjarīs*. First we must remember that this matter is to do with the transcendental universe. Within a second it can expand by one thousand yojanas* and more.

I previously had a query within my mind and I asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “Here is Rādhā-kuṇḍa, but Varṣānā is

many kilometres away, so how did Rādhārāṇī come here every day, and how did she go from Varṣānā to Kusum Sarovar to collect flowers?"

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained, "This is the transcendental world where, for the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, for His satisfaction there is always expansion and contraction. This happens by the will of Rādhārāṇī, and Yogamāyā arranges everything. When the necessity comes, distance becomes very short. And when there is necessity, distance becomes very long such as when the banks of the Yamunā expand. For the service of Kṛṣṇa, everything immediately takes the suitable form to satisfy Him."

In one way, the supreme Guru is in the form of Baladeva. In a general way Kṛṣṇa shows His own path of service and He becomes Guru. In the form of Guru He reveals Himself within the mundane world. His position as Guru is also in the heart of the devotees. Supremely, where there is a variety of extreme services to Kṛṣṇa, that is *Madhura-rasa*. In that plane the highest Supreme Satisfier of Kṛṣṇa is Rādhārāṇī. And that is our line and life's goal.

We only expect that some day it may come by the mercy of Gurudeva. Whether or not we will gain admission there is by the will of my group leader, my Gurudeva.



*A Vedic measurement. 1 yojanas = approx 8 miles.

Divine Guidance

Second Section

Excerpts from Letters

by

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Hand-carved Gems

Excerpts from letters

by His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

Question: In summary I have the following questions:

1) What are your thoughts about maintaining the standard of behaviour acceptable to an initiated disciple, and about requesting disciples to chant a minimum of sixteen rounds as had been established by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda in the recent past?

2) What is the proper conception of the Gurudeva's order to serve with devotion in a family of devotees, ISKCON, designed by the Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the perpetuation of the disciples' service to the Lord?

3) If an institution, such as ISKCON, has discrepancies, should it not be maintained and given time to mature?

4) Should the devotees working now on your behalf try to lure settled but neophyte devotees away from ISKCON to your service, rather than be encouraged to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and his servants in spreading the glories of the Holy Name and in making spiritual advancement through the vehicle of ISKCON? And should such activities be encouraged by your workers or not?

5) Should the books presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda be distributed by those in your service, even including those who would become your newly first initiated disciples? How else can we avoid minimising Śrīla Prabhupāda's importance to the strength of the *saṅkīrtana* movement than to read and dis-

tribute these books, even side by side with those published by the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Please accept my humble *danḍavat praṇāms* in remembrance of our Divine Masters Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda....

Your questions are very clear and relevant, and now I am happy to answer them, but first it is necessary to make ourselves in a little neutral position in order to see the facts (even though some of the facts you have not directly asked for in your questions).

Actually, in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura's time there were many qualified disciples full with independent preaching capacity. I heard this from many sources, also that at any one time they were not unified. Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura knew it very well, therefore he did not name one particular person as his successor. However, in a special gathering of his disciples one day before his disappearance he showed the hint of his desire through the hearing of the *kīrttan* "*Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada*" from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and he instructed the devotees: "For the management of the missionary work you are to make a Governing Body with twelve persons, and the secretary of that Governing Body must be the present secretary Kuñja Babu for as long as Kuñja Babu will live."

He also gave some other instructions, but he did not directly appoint anyone as an *Āchāryya* of the Gauḍīya Mission.

At that time Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was no doubt very exalted and an undefeatable preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but his nature was to always keep himself in the background. Also he wanted to serve the Vaiṣṇavas very enthusiastically but he himself did not want to take any position of Guru or member of the Governing Body. Also through that nature and mood he

never tried to come in the foreground of the Governing Body. He felt himself to be indebted to his few special Godbrothers who helped him from the first time in his divine practising life: Śrīpād Vāsudeva Prabhu, Śrīpād Bhakti Sudhākar Prabhu (Professor N.K. Sānnyāl), Śrīpād A.V. Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī, Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj, Śrīpād Mādhava Mahārāj, etc.

Actually Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself did not make Vāsudeva Prabhu an *Āchāryya*, also he was not in a position to have any right to do so, but when it was declared by that special group of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura's disciples that Vāsudeva Prabhu be the *Āchāryya* of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj agreed and immediately felt relief that the responsibility of being *Āchāryya* did not come to him. Furthermore when Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj heavily proposed his name in the Governing Body, that also he cleverly avoided because actually Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not want to be involved in the management, only he wanted to stay as a humble preacher and friend to all the Vaiṣṇavas. Earlier also, seeing the situation of his Mission, Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura fully depended upon Kṛṣṇa to select the future *Āchāryya* of his Mission. Actually this was the fact at that time.

I read a letter of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj where he apparently blamed Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for appointing Śrīpād Vāsudeva Prabhu, but that was his own idea—and some of the devotees of the Gauḍīya Maṭh's idea—and there is some truth also. But if Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had wanted to take a strong managerial decision, then Śrīpād Vāsudeva Prabhu would not have been able to come out in the forefront easily. But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was of disinterested nature and he did not want to get involved with the management. But later it came out in front of all the devotees that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was the fittest person for the *Āchāryyaship*, but by that time that thinking of the devotees

was too late. When Vāsudeva Prabhu and Sundarānanda Prabhu, Bhakti Sudhākar Prabhu and others tried to keep Vāsudeva Prabhu's ownership from the anti-group—and heavily tried to do so with violence—then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj wanted to keep aloof, and he unhappily left that Mission. After that he wanted to stay alone with his *bhajan* life. This is the fact, but when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj came out from the Gauḍīya Mission, at that time more than 50% of the prominent devotees also came out from that Mission. We heard this from his divine Godbrothers as well as Śrīpād B.S. Siddhānti Mahārāj.

It was the idea of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and others, and thinking in this way about Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's position, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj mentioned in his letter that if Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj had not stayed in favour of Vāsudeva Prabhu, Vāsudeva Prabhu would not have got that position. It was indirect support to Vāsudeva Prabhu's Āchāryyaship.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj was a very respectfully intimate Godbrother of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and I consider he has the right to say as he did, but *we* will see it as only his expression of clarification for his disciples in order to make his mission perfect.

I have no doubt that Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj wanted to give the position of Āchāryyaship to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. And when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj came out from that Gauḍīya Mission he received his first preaching invitation from Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj in Calcutta as a measure of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's respect and friendship.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj wanted to start another mission headed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—many times we have seen it. We can mention that his last proposal was that he wanted to take Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj as the President of the "League of Devotees" in Jhansi.

Actually neither of them were very much eager to take missionary Āchāryyaship, but it later automatically came to them and they served that chair whole-heartedly, and they endeavoured to give full protection to that chair for the future preceptorial line.

I know that his letter was not criticism of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj expressed in that letter in the name of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for only cautioning the devotees. We can consider this as a past picture of the Gauḍīya Mission, and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj did not want a repetition of that picture.

My commentary is not as a disciple of them, it is simply impartial history. Actually we have no right to involve in that historical matter. What you say in your letter is one hundred percent true: “We cannot fully know the arrangement of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but we do see practically that insincerity will be rewarded with fall-down. But, it is not the fault of the Gurudeva, but rather the insincerity of the disciples that may lead to such discrepancies and problems.”

In the time of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu it was His desire that everyone will chant a minimum of one lakh (one hundred thousand) *Harināma*. Some devotees chanted in that way, but mostly they could not do so. Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura also instructed that to chant one lakh *Harināma* every day is very good, but that a minimum of sixteen rounds must be chanted. But when the Gauḍīya Mission expanded all over India and disciples also came from all parts of the country, it was his consideration that an absolute minimum of four rounds must be daily chanted by everybody.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj realised everything about the Western World and scrutinisingly seeing their nature of devotion he gave the direction, “Everybody must chant sixteen

rounds every day.” However, everybody cannot follow that, therefore they are breaking their promise to Gurudeva.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj duly considered, and he expressed, “We must chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* with full concentration for a minimum of four rounds if it is not possible to chant sixteen rounds or more,” following his Gurudeva’s minimum guide-line, and he gave much more importance to *sevā*—that means serving the Lord through the satisfaction of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas.

Nāma-saṅkīrtan is direct service to *Harināma* if it is perfectly done without offence. You know the *śloka*:

**ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau, svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ**

Śrī *Harināma* will reveal Himself through service to the Vaiṣṇavas, and Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākur gave more importance to such service to Guru-Vaiṣṇava. By his instruction to chant a minimum of four rounds it is indicated that as much as possible by the servitors they are to chant unlimitedly. And everywhere Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “We need quality, not quantity.” Also in Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur’s *Patrāvalī* (Letters of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur) we can see in his letter to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that he gave more importance to the service of Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava, and that through such service they achieve the qualification of quality in their chanting. But if anyone can increase the quantity while keeping the quality, that is very, very good.

We can also see from another angle. When Gurudeva gives *Harināma* initiation, at that time the disciple promises, “Yes I shall chant such a specified number of rounds (whether four, sixteen, sixty-four, etc.),” but to fail to keep their vow will

go in the category of offence against Guru. In that way it is some relief to the devotees to have a minimum of just four rounds daily. On the whole all Their Divine Graces have the right to adjust their instruction according to the environment, the situation and the capacity of the devotees. Anyhow, the vital point is that we are to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa as much as possible—without offence, with sincerity and with love, and to serve Guru-Vaiṣṇava and their *Mahāprasādam* whole-heartedly.

About the four directives, we are always mentioning them here in India, but on my recent world tour I sometimes did not mention them—I am thinking that everyone in the West is conscious about the four directives. Also, those who are coming to me, they are not coming to me directly, but they are coming through some Vaiṣṇavas. Those Vaiṣṇavas are recommending them, that is I do not know anything about them but I am giving my service initiation to the recommended sincere seekers. (Actually the directives are not four, but five, and those four directives are living automatically within the fifth. However for the innocent newcomers we must advise that they follow the four directives no doubt.)

But here is also some vital point that we must not forget (even though it may not be for public mass-distribution) that is that the position of the real and exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa is above the rules, and such devotees can come from anywhere and everywhere. And from another angle, we can say that the mercy of the great Vaiṣṇavas can make anyone immediately into a good devotee. In this connection we can discuss the *ślokas* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, *jāta-śrad-dho mat-kathāsu...* and: *api cet sudurācāro....* Therefore we must try to consider everything in a harmonising way otherwise we may be offenders.

**yasmin śāstre-purāṇe va haribhaktirna dṛśyate
śrotabyam naivatat śāstram yadi brahmā svayaṁ vadet**

“Do not hear any scripture which does not glorify *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and Kṛṣṇa’s *Bhaktas*. Even if Lord Brahmā will sit in front of you and recite any other type of scripture, don’t listen!” It was for this purpose that Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj formed ISKCON. He wanted ISKCON to be a pure place of devotional association. Especially we are to avoid *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

Always there must be some imperfection in this world but if ISKCON remains at least 60% pure, then carefully the devotees can serve there. ‘Carefully’ means that devotees will be careful to keep good association and to avoid those who have any tendency to be offensive or disrespectful to the *Vaiṣṇavas* and *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

About myself, I can say clearly that I have made a promise to my Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and at least I can say I am trying one hundred percent to practise and preach according to his wish.

When travelling to our destination if we come across someone who is sick or injured and they beg assistance, naturally we will also try to give some assistance by way of relief-work.

When an ISKCON *Āchāryya* does some activities that even the material people will not do, then how can we agree? And in which way can the sincere seeker be faithful to that *Āchāryya*? Such seekers want no mundane things from ISKCON. They need the seeds of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the association of good *Vaiṣṇavas*.

They need to have the seeds planted happily in the heart, and to get more and more inspiration to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they can inspire others also by their example as good ISKCON devotees. But we cannot ignore the fact that inside

ISKCON many of the leaders have proceeded in a very mechanical and mundane way.

You are putting a very hard question for me to answer about the ISKCON Mission. In those earlier days when Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj established the now exalted 'International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness' his Mission was always receiving proper nourishment through his divine association. Perhaps everything was not going fully perfectly, but on the whole we can say that his Mission was the only hope for the Western world to happily practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is true that after his disappearance some disturbance came in his beloved ISKCON Mission, and it is a very usual thing. In every mission everywhere it must be expected that when the exalted sun is going to set, some illusory environment will try to influence over all that mission. I cannot say that in Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's time there was no influence of illusion, but by his divine power everything was immediately harmonised.

Everybody will try to make his Mission perfect, and I think all the auspicious and great *Āchāryyas* in this world tried to make their Missions perfect and spent their whole energy for that. And I have no doubt they were all the well-wishers of all *jīva*-souls.

I think the ISKCON Mission is completely different from other missions: we can consider it as a God-gifted organisation for the super-benefit of the conditioned souls through His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, "Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj is a *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, otherwise no man can make such a mission all over the world within five years." In a very short time he widely gave the chance to receive the supreme goal of life: unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa in the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

In the time of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj whenever news

would come from any corner of the world of the many persons chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* and practising pure devotional life, at that time I saw the face of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to be greatly exalted and he openly praised Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's divine activities and glories in front of everybody. I also saw his similar divine expression whenever Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj would come and report his missionary news to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. They were both very great, and their basic discussion was very high and harmonious about spreading real Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj himself selected a few leaders for maintaining and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world for his Mission—that was called the “G.B.C.”—and he was proud of them. At that time my own feelings were non-different from ISKCON and I was very happy to see the mood of the devotees. I did not get the chance to mix with everybody—it was also not possible—but I was surprised to see the depth of knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in those I saw. Actually, I received much nice impression and enthusiasm from them including Śrīpād Bhāvānanda Mahārāj, Śrīpād Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāj, Śrīpād Achyutānanda Prabhu, etc. I still have many friends in the ISKCON society and they have a very good mood. They are living within the preaching and practising life and I highly respect them.

But you know that after the disappearance of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj many things have happened in that society. Not only that, but many of the great, great devotee personalities showed their very unfortunate form and that was painful for their followers and many of the followers of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, and it was very painful for myself also. Those confused persons eagerly sought secure shelter for their spiritual life, but they could no longer fully trust others in that society.

At the same time they did not want to leave Kṛṣṇa consciousness because living in their hearts was the seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness planted by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj often said, “I am ISKCON.” That means that all the property of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—the Society he formed—was living with him, and he could not tolerate that any disturbance will come to his preaching life, and he would try to remove such disturbances by any means. But after His Divine Grace’s disappearance, some wave of illusion in the form of ego immediately tried to spread bad influence. You know that many have been affected by that influence. By those infected persons’ power many good souls were ousted, and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj tried to give them some hope and shelter in the form of relief work. At present I am trying to serve his divine chair to the best of my limited capacity.

Actually Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj organised the ISKCON society so there can be practising of Kṛṣṇa consciousness under proper guardianship, and that is the only goal of life for all conditioned souls. This is not only the preaching of His Divine Grace, but it is also the preaching of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, His associates and the preceptorial line after Him. No doubt it has manifest in the world at large, especially in the West, through Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, but the many disciples of Śrīla Saraswati Ṭhākura and our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj continued according to their own capacity to preach and practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We see everywhere that each do not have the identical preaching method and mood of Śrīman Mahāprabhu: *ṭṛnād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā, amāninā mānadena...* and they were not all free from *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Therefore many difficulties arise in every society, and even our society is not fully free from that.

We need to do good for ourselves and for others. We want to leave the ideal of mundanity and we must try to achieve the

super-beneficial transcendental service-plane—which is really our life’s goal—through chanting the *Mahāmantra* without offence in the association of devotees, and preaching. The chanting without offence is so very essential, and if that feeling does not come to us we will not get the proper beneficial results. I feel that this is very important for us now.

I heard a phrase in English from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “The rank is but the guinea-stamp, man is the gold for that.” Actually an institution or *sampradāya* is like the guinea-stamp but the real value is to be found in the quality of the gold—wherever it is to be found—otherwise only in its own particular country will the value certified by the guinea-stamp be given.

In another way we can say, “*svadeśe pūjyate rājā bidvān sarvoatra pūjyate.*” Qualified persons have value everywhere, but if a King is not qualified, he will only receive honour in his own kingdom. We can also see many nicely designed uniforms displayed in shop-windows. But we need to proceed to our destination and if we can understand whole-heartedly this importance we cannot sit back and wait for that. If we can have both the man and the designed uniform, that will be very good for us.

I am always trying to harmonise with all environments and I never advise anyone to make any disturbance or offence to others. I want to try to make everyone my friend, and I want blessings from all our sister-concerns. And if unknowingly I may make any offence to them, I am always praying for their forgiveness. If I can proceed with this mood I must remain free from *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

Already everything has been given in the writings of the Goswāmīs, but the successive *Āchāryas* distributed that same treasure but according to the receiving capacity of the aspi-

rants. This process is always going on, whether in the West or the East, and in this way lakhs of people have come. Even Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura did not give many things to us—because we are not qualified. Not only that, but Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself did not give such things, because they are not for mass-distribution. Therefore the conclusion is that they gave everything about Kṛṣṇa consciousness no doubt, but not for everybody. Also all are not qualified to receive that. Therefore it is said,

**antaraṅga laiyā kare rasa-āsvādan
bahiraṅga laiyā kare nāma-saṁkīrtana**

I sometimes hear that disciples of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and myself, they are heavily preaching their conception akin to “throwing out the baby with the bath-water,” but that is not *my* preaching. My preaching is to be humble, tolerant and to give honour to others, and that is the way of Mahāprabhu’s teachings also. It is my prayer to everyone to try to take to heart the teachings of all our predecessor *Āchāryyas* for the real benefit and progress of everyone in a harmonious way. All have come for Kṛṣṇa consciousness and they have faith in that conception. To see them going away is very painful. I want to help them, and if anyone approaches me for help, it is my duty to try to help them according to my capacity.

In summary of the answers to your questions:

1) Concerning the standard that Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj established in the Western World for the behaviour of the devotees and the chanting of the *Mahāmantra*, that standard must be beneficial for all. But the special consideration about chanting a minimum of four rounds is also agreeable to remind us of the mercy of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura as well as Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

2) Śrīla Gurudeva's orders are the super-directives for the disciple, and without hesitation the disciple must follow that. ISKCON is a society for practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it was unquestionable in the time of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, that is he said "I am ISKCON." If after the disappearance of His Divine Grace that society can exist within that same conception of quality then the devotees will unhesitatingly try to serve there if they will get the chance.

3) Maturity and progress in spiritual life have no limit, but in the starting stages there are certain directives.

4) Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī said,

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ, kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalan, janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

If anyone sincerely seeks with a full mood of hankering to search *Rāgānuṣāṅga* loving *bhakti*, we must encourage them, but we are not to disturb in any way the mission of others or the natural devotional environment.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said that we are to have sympathetic dealings with nature and not to cause any disturbance. But along the way of spiritual advancement if we will see that anyone is in trouble and they need help, or that their vehicle needs repair or they want a lift to their destination, or in any way they are in a difficult position and need help for their relief, we will try to help them as affectionate friends. Actually we all need spiritual progress within the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as well as the *Rūpānuṣāṅga Sampradāya*, therefore we shall try to help each other in that line through our mood of service-energy, but we will never try to disturb others' service activities or missions.

5) And in answer to your last question: When I claim that I was perhaps the first mass-distributor of *Back to Godhead* door

to door from 7 Sitakanta Banerjee Lane, Calcutta, then where is any difficulty for us to distribute the books of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj if the B.B.T. will give chance to do that service? I can say that I think everyone headed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj would be very happy to see their books distributed side by side.

I may mention Your Grace as an example. You have approached me with thoughtful, sincere enquiry, and naturally I am trying to give proper reply and guide-lines according to my capacity, but my English is very insufficient. I cannot express fully my thought through the English language, and I think my answer will invite more questions. That is, everything is not sufficiently expressed, but only briefly I have expressed my heart.

In this way I cannot ignore all the sincere seekers and enquirers. But personally I consider Your Grace to be a qualified Vaiṣṇava and merciful to the fallen souls such as myself.

I hope this letter meets you in steady practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Again with my humble *daṇḍavat praṇāms*,

Yours Affectionately,
Swāmī B.S.Govinda

P.S. My time is very short. If you want to ask any more questions, please try to see me. At that time we can sit together and discuss.

Question: Recently I came across the books of Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāj and I find them to be a great source of inspiration in my devotional life. However, some of my friends who are disciples of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī

Prabhupāda are discouraging me from reading these books and associating with your disciples. I am in a dilemma and asking your help.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: You have been a devotee for several years but I do not know if you are aware of the intimate relation between Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda and our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. I was with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj personally for maybe 42 years and saw his relationship with all the different devotees. For about ten years of that time the Calcutta branch of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh was in Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's own premises next to his house. He would regularly come for many hours of discussions with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Also at that time, by the instruction of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, I learned *Bhagavad-gītā* from Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. Also up until Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's last days in this world he wanted Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to be the head of his ISKCON Mission. Actually there are many things that the devotees do not know, therefore some misunderstanding has sometimes come.

Anyhow, by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, the position of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is clear. It was always the wish of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj not to disturb others' missions, but our mission is one of 'relief work' for the spiritual seekers. You are reading his books and associating with his devotees, that is, you can understand something of his exalted mood.

Question: You have much faith in my ability to manage, but I cannot see how it is possible to carry out your order, and I fear that if I continue, then the situation will get much worse. Please, Mahārāj, remove me from this position and appoint someone else and I will try to serve that devotee. If it is your desire that I continue, then I shall have to try again but I am deeply frustrated and feel hopeless.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: In our practitioner's life, for the time being many disturbing things and also frustration, must come, but with our deep service intention and faith, by the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj everything will be vanquished. Every morning in winter we shall not see the clear sun, as some days must be foggy, but we do not stop our duty because of that. Śrī Kṛṣṇa said in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*:

**mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya, śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās, tāms titikṣasva bhārata**

What is necessary is only our capacity to tolerate. And this is also one kind of test. If I think of my own life's history, almost every day I have spent with anxiety in my service-life. But I am happy with that, that is, I am thinking that Kṛṣṇa is taking something from my energy for His divine service by making me worried. When a good boy after trying hard, fails his class exam, what does his father do? Does he oust him from the house, or give him nourishment to give him more enthusiasm? We must remember this.

**alabdhe vā vinaṣṭe vā, bhakṣyācchādana-sādhane
aviklava-matir bhūtvā, harim eva dhiyā smaret**

Therefore we must try with our double energy to fulfil the desire of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for the super-benefit of our spiritual lives.

Whatever is my duty is exclusively mine—I cannot give any share to anyone to make a massacre. If I know that only I can do the duty that has come to me, then I must do that. Those who can accept the challenge of service to Guru-Gaurāṅga, they can do many things even beyond their capacity, by the grace of Their Lordships. Therefore don't you worry.

I can remember one phrase in Bengali poetry that says that even if the whole world will leave their service with a crying mood, I will not run, but I will try. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj many times recited this story of Ravindranath Tagore:

yadi tora dāka śune keu nā āse tabe esalā calore

If nobody will come with you, you must proceed alone, without even a stick. It is necessary to be steady in your point of position of service. It is a very high thing, but for your attention I can say humbly, but beyond my jurisdiction, in remembrance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: “Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī cannot tolerate to give any other party Her divine, exclusive service share for Kṛṣṇa.” I think it is enough for your remembrance....

...We have got this very rare human body, intelligence, energy, and many qualifications for the service to Kṛṣṇa, therefore we cannot allow ourselves to make a massacre of our service-mind in exchange for some part of the mundane.

Dear Prabhu, don't you be worried for any illusory environment. You must think that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is always with us, watching us, and taking care of us. It must be we will finally get a victorious service position by His divine mercy.

We are very fortunate, that is we are enlightened by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's divine service life. After Śrīman Mahāprabhu, this kind of wave of devotion has not come out until the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda. That wave has been blown all over the world by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in order to successfully smash the illusory environment; and now the whole world is chanting “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” By hook or by crook they established Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but if we think how much obstruction came in their lifetime, we must forget our own sorrow and difficulties. Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī said that when you

will be in a very much troubled position from your inner enemies—*kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *mātsarya*—you chant loudly the name of your protector: the Vaiṣṇavas. Pray to them for the protection of your spiritual divine life, and, if you are sincere, you must get help from them. Then I can only say, “Proceed, proceed, and proceed, and the foggy sky must timely leave your vision.”

Question: We have read in a book from another temple that union is higher than separation and we are having some problems understanding the explanations given there. In the past we have always read in books by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that *vipralambha*, separation, is the highest mood in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How are these statements compatible?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: My feeling is that even after one thousand births more, such persons as wrote that statement will never be able to understand what is *vipralambha* and what is contained there. Mahāprabhu stayed twelve years in Gambhīrā tasting the separation mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to Kṛṣṇa extremely, and that is the super-expression of *Kṛṣṇa-prema*. Such super-expression came out through *vipralambha*, otherwise it is not possible to taste *Kṛṣṇa-prema*. We can get some idea of how deep it is, that Mahāprabhu took the Form of Rādhārāṇī’s *bhāva* and *kanti*, and that is not the mood of union, but of separation.

Everyone, including even a child goat, in this mundane world knows what union is, therefore it is not necessary to teach anyone to enjoy: they already know, so it is not necessary to clarify that for anyone. But all the attentive energy is to be used for what? What is not known is the transcendental mood of separation. Why was such mood tasted by

Mahāprabhu again and again? Mahāprabhu's feeling always returned to the tasting of that *vipralambha*—the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The subject matter of Mahāprabhu was to taste what deepest degree of feelings were felt by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

It is not possible to express by language the mood of separation that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu tasted in Gambhīrā, but Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavīrāja tried to show something in *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, second chapter. Throughout the whole of *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* the mood of separation is present. And why do we say that this is the supreme mood of the play of the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Just what degree of *bhāva* is in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that Kṛṣṇa appeared as Mahāprabhu in order to take Her mood and taste that? Who is the enjoyer? What is enjoyment? And, who is being enjoyed through the mood of suffering?

Everyone knows enjoyment, especially conditioned souls involved with sexual enjoyment, and thinking it gives the highest happiness within this mundane world, but he who can say that the highest super-painful mood of separation can give the supreme feelings—the only one who can say that is Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

One *śloka* expressed by Kavīrāja Goswāmī about Mādhavendra Purī's feeling of the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa is:

**ayi dina-dayārdra-nātha he mathurānātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayaṁ tvadaloka-kātaraṁ dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham
ei śloka kahiyaḥen rādhāra ṭhākuraṇī...**

This *śloka* was extremely expressed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and through Her super-mercy Śrīpād Mādhavendra Purī also tasted it at the last moment of his life. After that, only Śrīman

Mahāprabhu, and no one else, is qualified to taste it fully—this is the opinion of Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī.

You try to consider the following: What is it that Kṛṣṇa cannot taste Himself? What was it that Kṛṣṇa wanted to taste, that He appeared in the Form of Mahāprabhu? Why did Kṛṣṇa take the mood and colour of Rādhārāṇī and what was His tasting matter? What did Kṛṣṇa taste in the Form of Mahāprabhu during His Pastimes here? What mood did Mahāprabhu show in Purī-Dhām, especially in His Gambhīrā-līlā, and why did He faint to see Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra in the Form of Jagannātha? Why did Chaṇḍidās write in one poem:

**lakha lakha yuga hiye hiye rākhanu
tabu hiyā juḍana nā gela**

(Meaning: Why did Rādhārāṇī say She couldn't be satisfied by embracing Kṛṣṇa for millions of millions of years?) What mood is expressed here?

What mood of tasting is given by Śrī Kavirāja Goswāmī in expressing Mahāprabhu's *Antya-līlā* in *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* second part, second chapter?

That which Rādhārāṇī tasted in separation of Kṛṣṇa when He did not return but sent Uddhava to see Vṛndāvan, Mahāprabhu tasted that *Vramara-gītā* in an intoxicated way continuously for twelve years like an extremely mad man. If such souls are foolish then all the residents of Vṛndāvan, including the *Gopīs*, are foolish. Why didn't they get straight into a chariot, like a taxi, and go just half an hour to Maṭhurā instead of foolishly living in Vṛndāvan?

But if that author (of the book you mention) with his conception wants to taste the mood of union he will immediately become pregnant, then what will be for him?

What was it that Rūpa Goswāmī expressed in a praising

way about the mood of *Kṛṣṇa-prema* in separation when he said—*pīḍābhir nava-kāla-kūṭa*, etc. (*C.c. Madhya* 2.52)—the power of even a young cobra's poison is defeated by the *Kṛṣṇa-prema* of separation?

Actually I am not eager to give answer to this, but I am only remembering the mood of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. I am extremely hating to give any answer to this question of childish mood of praising union. That is, everybody knows the position of union.

I know what is hell, and I have some experience about heaven, but I do not know what is the destination of one who wants to criticise the dearest associates of Rādhārāṇī as well as Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadeva. He has not even the smallest idea about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially about the twelve years of Mahāprabhu's living in Gambhīrā, and the mood of Rādhārāṇī tasted by Mahāprabhu, the non-different Form of Kṛṣṇa. Can you say what kind of destination awaits such a person? If the residents of hell see such a person they must be fearful of him and need to make a new hell for him.

We have taken refuge at the lotus feet of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and therefore Kṛṣṇa has been gracious to give us all protection from the concocted ideas of the foolish. If you read only Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's books and try to serve only in his line, you will be joyful and worry-free, and very quickly you will make progress on your transcendental homeward journey.

Question: I am running a purely vegetarian restaurant, but a devotee quoted you as saying that devotional service and business should not be mixed. He also implied that it isn't proper to offer foodstuffs to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga before

serving it out. I have a little trouble to understand this. Please say something on this matter for us.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Regarding your question I can say that everything depends on the mood of the devotee. The *Mahābhāgavata* can see everything to be *Prasādam*. But the Scripture also says that to give *Mahāprasādam* to those who have no faith is an *aparādha*. By way of example, *Harināma* can rescue everyone, but if you give it to someone who has no faith then it is an offence; in a similar way we can make *aparādha* to *Mahāprasādam*. But it all depends on the mood of those involved: if in a fully conscious way it is made and offered, then distributed to those with faith—that is very good.

Mahāprasādam means mercy, and we are not to give that in exchange for money, but we can give it in exchange for faith. However, I am not criticising Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, that is I can harmonise it in another way: he wants to engage the whole world in the service of Kṛṣṇa, and he has the right to break and make the injunctions, that is, he is a *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. We can adjust the mood of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and the traditional rules in this way: where there is no other way to do service to Guru-Gaurāṅga, the devotees are doing business, being employed, distributing books, selling cookies, etc. Also running restaurants is one kind of business. So I can harmonise in this way, that after cooking you first offer a little of each preparation to Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga, but not mix it back in with the remainder. Also, after taking for the maintenance of your family, you offer the profit money for the service of Śrī Guru Vaiṣṇava, and in this way no reaction will come to you. That is, I say it all depends on the mood in which it is done. The main thing is that your existence must stand in the plane of service. If anyone with *śrad-*

dhā wants that *Prasāda*, you can happily give it to him.

Question: In the purport of verses 5.24 and 25 of *Śrī Brahma saṁhitā* it is stated that the *Gopāl Mantram* has two aspects: 1) To fulfil the pure spiritual desires of pure devotees, culminating in *Kṛṣṇa-prema*, and 2) To also fulfil the mundane desires of the mixed devotees.

Considering myself a mixed devotee I am asking you if I may chant this *Gopāl Mantra*. I am already initiated into the *Gāyatrī Mantra* which contains the *Gopāl Mantra*. May I chant this *Gopāl Mantram* like *japa-mala*, or in my mind incessantly?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Regarding the *Gopāl Mantram*, you can refer to this verse:

**bhoga-mokṣa vāñchā chāḍī' harināma gāi re
nā ceyeo nāmera guṇe osaba phala pāi re**

When we will chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* or meditate upon the Kṛṣṇa or *Gopāl Mantram* without asking for anything except the transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa under guidance of Śrī Gurudeva, that will be of real benefit for everybody, and what good things are needed for us will come automatically. But if any mundane desire will come and mix with that devotional mood, that must hamper the pure devotion.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī said:

**anyābhilāṣitā śūnyam, jñāna-karmmadya anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā**

You can consult with that *śloka* and can understand what is what. It is in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Also Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura said,

**bhoga-mokṣa vāñchā chāḍi' harināma gāi re
nā ceyeo nāmera guṇe osaba phala pāi re**

You can chant the Gopāl *Mantram* constantly—that is no problem, but in this age of Kali-yuga, *Harināma* is the *Mahāmantra* and of all *mantras* is the best. *Harināma* is for everything, but the Gopāl *Mantram* is for meditation.

Question: I have been told that *jīva*-souls who take birth in the mortal world but who later go back to Kṛṣṇa's abode can also fall down again into the material world. Is this true? Also I hear from some that the *jīva* originally came from the spiritual world, but others say our origin is the marginal position. Dear Gurudeva, please help me understand this.

Also, please clarify as to whether I may visit other missions if I find their members to be respectful to my Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: If anyone from Vaikuṇṭha comes to the material worlds it is generally only by the will of the Lord. It is, however, given in the Scriptures that even a resident of Vaikuṇṭha can fall down if he commits *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, but that also can be seen to be by the will of the Lord as in the case of the gatekeepers, Jaya and Vijaya.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was many times approached with this question and he illustrated clearly that our origin is the marginal potency of the Lord, the *taṭastha-śakti*. If we become liberated from worldly bondage, as a matter of right we can enter the marginal plane, but only by grace can we enter the higher planes of Vaikuṇṭha, Vṛndāvan, etc.

In other societies there are no doubt many good and respectful souls whose association is good, but it is also true that some have the tendency to criticise our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—and

that is very harmful. To hear criticism of Śrī Gurudeva is very bad and must be avoided because it strikes at the foundation of spiritual wealth: faith in Śrī Guru. From another angle, anyone running a mission certainly faces many problems to keep the unity, so we must always be careful to respect that. And if others may not want us to visit their Temple we will humbly agree to their wish and still keep our respect for those devotees.

Ideally we shall try to keep the association of those who are following our own track of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In this way various devotees are trying hard to make successful *āśramas* as places for our *Maṭh's* devotees to associate happily.

Question: As you know, one devotee who was considered to be more senior has fallen away from your Mission here. Our question is how we can avoid similar misfortune befalling ourselves also?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: I am surprised to see the mood of that devotee: he has completely fallen down in the ocean of illusion, but you are all saved by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. We can understand that the cause for such fall-down is ego and offence to the Vaiṣṇavas. You all please try to avoid *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, and be careful from mundane ego.

I have seen in my short life many things: many up and down situations of the practitioner's life. Big, big personalities up to *Brahmaloka* have received difficulty in their practising life due only to the cause of *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* and egoism. Anyhow, our protector and saviour, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, is always bestowing his mercy to us and we must cross over that dangerous situation.

Question: As per your wish we plan to translate and publish books of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. We need funds for this, therefore

we first wish to translate and publish a popular book introducing Indian philosophy. We are asking your permission for this.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: For your own continuing practising life and proper, happy, safe progress you must try to be devoted exclusively to your Guru for the satisfaction of the beloved Lord. In order to do that you need some certain line and track to happily proceed. Many things are good in this world, no doubt, but one with exclusive mood will always focus on his own track—that means the books of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, his instructions, practising method, etc.—and we will follow that. But as a business for the purpose of maintenance we can consider presenting the books of others, as long as it is not harmful and that it does not differ from the conception of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but we cannot sell ourselves in exchange for anything in the mundane world. In this regard we can remember Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura's advice that we must tolerantly try to serve Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga despite whatever may come. Love or rupture or anything may come, but we are to proceed in our track—that is very important.

Question: I have an enquiry about the worship of the Devas. Also, Gurujī, is it wise for us to conduct *śrāddha* ceremonies for the non-devotees who have passed away?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: One who is a follower of the exclusive devotional line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as given by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj as followers of the *Rūpānuga Sampradāya*, he will not feel any necessity to engage himself for the purpose of any other god or demigod. This is our clear line. As primary support for this *Kṛṣṇa-sevā* conception *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, *devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇāṁ pitrṇāṁ*. This *śloka* supports that one has no other necessity than to engage in Kṛṣṇa's service.

For one who is living as a *grhastha*, if he will feel some obligation about Vedic society rules for his departed ancestors, he has some allowance in this way: he can offer *Mahāprasādam*, read from four or five holy Scriptures in front of Vaiṣṇavas, offer sixteen kinds of gifts to the Vaiṣṇava Gurus, hold a fire sacrifice as *Vaiṣṇava-homa*, congregationally chant the *Mahāmantra*, and make special offerings to the Deities then offer that *Mahāprasādam* for the satisfaction of the Vaiṣṇavas and afterwards offer that *Mahāprasādam* to the departed soul for the spiritual benefit of that soul.

For the general people if they faithfully follow the Vedic culture they may be encouraged to become Vaiṣṇavas.

Question: Should the *Gāyatrī Mantra* be received by hearing through the right or left ear? I understand there is evidence in the Scripture that says spiritual topics should be received through the left ear, but recently I heard you mention that the *Mantram* should be received through the right ear.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Regarding your question, I can say that generally the right ear is stronger than the left ear. It is true that King Purañjana heard through the right ear, the south *pañcāla*, that means the *karmma-kāṇḍa* fruitive activities under guidance of the *Vedas*, and it is that plane that Purañjana entered. This is given in the *śloka* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.25.50), but in that *śloka* another qualification is also given: that one can memorise very quickly, *yāti śrutadharānvitah*, just by once hearing, one can immediately memorise. In addition, Mādhavāchāryya, our *Sampradāya* Guru, said that through *karmma-kāṇḍa* the *jīva*-soul may get a super chance by the *karmma* if by good fortune he gets the opportunity of the super-servitor's as devotees' service. The left ear is a little weaker and it is mentioned to be a symbol of *jñāna-kāṇḍa*. In *jñāna-kāṇḍa* there

is virtually no chance to get any service to the Vaiṣṇava devotees due to base ego. The final result they receive is *nirvviṣeṣa-loka*, but this position must be avoided. In *jñāna-kāṇḍa* the main base is ego.

Also in some places we find the left ear is mentioned, but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj instructed us to hear through the right ear, therefore we are following that process.

Question: I am living so far away from the central *Maṭh*. How can I understand there is any value in whatever little service I can do from here?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Here in Nabadwīp so many activities are going on, but all is for the satisfaction of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Also you can think it, that in the capital city of a country there are many duties that cannot be done there in the capital. The provinces, the smaller towns, and the villages all have their part to play in serving the centre. They grow paddy, vegetables, etc., spin cotton, make fabrics and clothing, keep cows and produce milk, butter, yoghurt, etc, as well as many other duties. In this way all over the world's fortunate souls can engage in service to the central Mission of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in unlimited ways. This varied service-life to the Centre is the basis of the whole spiritual world of joyful activity.



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Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math Road, Kolerganj, P.O. Nabadwip,
Dt. Nadia, Pin 741302, West Bengal, India ☎: (03472) 240086 & 240752
E-mail: math@scsmath.com

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math's principal Web site:
<http://www.scsmath.com/>

Affiliated Main Centres & Branches Worldwide

India

Calcutta

Sree Chaitanya Saraswata Krishnanushilana Sangha

Opp. Tank 3, 487 Dum Dum Park
Calcutta, Pin 700055,
West Bengal, India
Phone: (033) 2590 9175 & 2590 6508
Email: calcutta@scsmath.com

Sree Chaitanya Saraswata Krishnanushilana Sangha

Kaikhali, Chiriamore (by Calcutta Airport)
P.O. Airport, Calcutta, Pin 700052
West Bengal, India
Phone: (033) 2573-5428

Burdwan

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram

P.O. and Village Hapaniya
District of Burdwan
West Bengal, India
Phone: (03453) 249505

Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda Seva Ashram

Village of Bamunpara, P.O. Khanpur
District of Burdwan
West Bengal, India

Orissa

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Bidhava Ashram Road, Gaur Batsahi
Puri, Pin 752001,
Orissa, India
Phone: (06752) 231413

Mathura

Srila Sridhar Swami Seva Ashram

Dasbisa, P.O. Govardhan
District of Mathura, Pin 281502
Uttar Pradesh, India
Phone: (0565) 281-5495

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math & Mission

96 Seva Kunja, Vrindavan
District of Mathura, Pin 281121
Uttar Pradesh, India
Phone: (0565) 446778

U.S.A.

California

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram

2900 North Rodeo Gulch Road
Soquel, CA 95073, U.S.A.
Ph: (831) 462-4712 Fax: (831) 462-9472
Email: soquel@scsmath.org
Web: <http://www.lcd.com/sevashram/>

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram

269 E. Saint James Street
San Jose, Ca 95112, U.S.A.
Phone: (408) 288 6360 & (408) 287-6360
Email: devi@scsmath.com
<http://www.lcd.com/sevashram/sanjose>

New York

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

P.O. Box 311, Oaklyn NJ, U.S.A.
Phone: (856) 962-8888
Fax: (856) 962-0894
Email: bkgiri@scsmath.com
Web: <http://www.scsmathny.org>
and: <http://www.scxmathnj.org>

Oregon

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram

755 N. Bertelsen Ave.
Eugene, OR 97402
Phone: (541) 687-1093
email: oregon@scsmath.org

Hawaii

Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda Mission

RR1 Box 450-D, Crater Road
Kula, Maui, HI 96790, U.S.A.
Phone & Fax: (808) 878-6821
Email: mdasa@krsna.cc
Web: <http://www.krsna.cc/>

Sri Chaitanya Sanctuary

P.O. Box 1292,
Honokaa, HI 96727, U.S.A.
Email: bororaj@yahoo.com

CANADA

Montreal

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sridhar Ashram
4271 De Rouen #8, Montreal
Quebec, H1V 1G8, Canada
Phone: (514) 899-5226 Fax: (831) 462-9472
Email: vidyasundar@sympatico.ca

Mexico

Mérida

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva Ashram de México, A.R.
Calle 69-B, No. 537, Fracc. Santa Isabel
Kanasín, Yucatán c.p. 97370, Mexico
Phone: (52-999) 982-8444
Email: merida@scsmath.org

Guadalajara

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva Ashram de México, A.R.
Reforma No. 864, Sector Hidalgo
Guadalajara, Jalisco, c.p. 44280 Mexico
Phone: (52-33) 3826-9613
Email: guadalajara@scsmath.org

Monterrey

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Krishnanushilana Sangha
Alheli 1628, Col Santa María
Cd. Guadalupe, Nuevo León,
c.p. 67160, Mexico
Phone: (52-8) 360-41-42

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Seva Ashram de México, A.R.

Apartado Postal 510
Col. del Valle, Nuevo León, c.p. 66250, Mexico
Phone: (52-8) 319-53-58 & 356-49-45
Email: madhumayi@mail.cmact.com

Tijuana

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva Ashram de México, A.R.
Ave. de las Rosas 9, Fracc. del Prado
c.p. 22440, Tijuana, Mexico
Ph: (52-664) 608-9154
Email: tijuana@scsmath.org

Veracruz

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva Ashram de México, A.R.
1ro. de Mayo No.1057, (entre Iturbide y Azueta)
Veracruz, Veracruz, c.p. 91700, Mexico
Phone: (52-229) 931-3024
Email: madhuchanda@ver.megared.net.mx

Orizaba

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva Ashram de México, A.R.
Andador 13 No. 108, U. Hab. El Trebol
Orizaba, Veracruz, c.p. 94348, Mexico

México D.F.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva Ashram de México, A.R.

Fernando Villalpando No.100, interior 103
Col. Guadalupe Inn, Deleg. Alvaro Obregón
México, D.F., c.p.01020, Mexico
Fax: (52-55) 5097-0533
Email: aradia53@hotmail.com

Morelia

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Seva Ashram de México, A.R.

Calle Loma Florida No 258
Sector Independencia, Col. Lomas Del Valle
Morelia, Michoacán, c.p. 58170 Mexico
Phone: (52-443) 327-5349
Email: bhagavan@unimedia.net.mx

Europe

England

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

466 Green Street
London E13 9DB, U.K.
Phone: (0208) 552-3551
Email: londonmath@scsmath.org

Republic of Ireland

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sangha

C/O Devaswarupa Das
14 marks Alley off Francis St., Dublin 8, Eire
Tel: [+353] 1 454 5208
Email: ireland@scsmath.org

Italy

Villa Govinda Ashram

Via Regondino, 5
23887 Olgiate Molgora (LC)
Fraz. Regondino Rosso, Italy
Tel: [+39] 039 9274445
Email: villagovinda_ashram@virgilio.it

Netherlands

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Sridhar Ashram

Middachtenlaan 128
1333 XV Almere, Buiten, Netherlands
Phone: 036 53 28150
Email: gandiva@chello.nl

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Van Beuningenstraat 81
1051XD Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: (020) 686-2099
Email: sacidevi@dds.nl

Portugal

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math,

Rua do Sobreiro 5,
Cidreira, 3020-143 Coimbra, Portugal

Hungary

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Andras Novak
Pajzs utca 18. H-1025 Budapest, Hungary
Ph: (361) 212 1917/8 Fax: (361) 212 2602
Email: sweetwater@scsmath.org

Mandala-Veda Ashram

Attila Bakos
Erdo utca 126. H-2092 Budakeszi, Hungary
Phone: (36) 23-452-969
Email: budakeszi@scsmath.org

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Community Centre

Kozep fasor 7/A IV/12
6726 Szeged, Hungary
Email: szeged@scsmath.org

Slovak Republic (information)

Pavol Nemcek (Pavan Krishna Das)
Vargova 22
984 01 Lucenec, Slovak Republic

Czech Republic

Sri Sridhar-Govinda Sangha

Libecina 14, 566 01 Libecina
Posta Vysoke Myto, Czech Republic
Email: czech@scsmath.org

Turkey

Sri Govinda Math Yoga Centre

Abdullah Cevdet sokak, No 33/8, Cankaya 06690
Ankara, Turkey
Phone: 090 312 4415857 and 090 312 440 88 82
Email: turkey@scsmath.org

Australasia

Australia

Sri Govinda Dham

P.O. Box 72, Uki, via Murwillumbah
N.S.W. 2484, Australia
Phone: (0266) 795541
www.mandala.com.au/dham/
Email: uki@scsmath.org

New Zealand

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sangha

1030 Coatesville Riverhead Highway,
Riverhead, Auckland, New Zealand.
Tel: (09) 4125466
Email: auckland@scsmath.org

South America

Brazil

Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda Seva Ashram

Krishna Sakti Ashram, P.O. Box 386
Campus do Jordao, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Phone: (012) 263 3168
Email: ksa@scsmath.org

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sridhar Asan

Rua Mario de Andrade 108,
Caucacia Do Alto - Cotia
Sao Paulo, Cep 06720-000, Brazil
Phone: (011) 4611-1253 & 4611-6777
Email: bhuvana@uol.com.br

Srila Govinda Maharaj Seva Ashram

P.O. Box 92.660,
Prata dos Aredes Teresópolis
Rio de Janeiro, Cep 25951-970, Brazil
Phone: (021) 644-6695
Email: akrishna@terenet.com.br

Srila Sridhar Govinda Sangha

Rua Pedro Wayne, 78,
Cep 91030-480 Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil
Telephone: (051) 362-6448
Email: sridhar-govinda@vedas.cjb.net
http://www.geocities.com/nityadasa/

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Rua: 13 de Maio 1184 ap.02
Curitiba - Parana - Brazil
Tel: (41) 324-7816

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Rua Quinto Bocaiuva, 537
Pajussara-Maceio-Alagoas
Brasil-CEP 57030-320
Tel: 82-337-3374
Email: maceio@scsmath.org

Natal, RN, Eastern tip of Brazil:

Information: Email: divya@bol.com.br

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram

Caixa Postal 39 - CEP: 72980-000
Pirenópolis-Goiás, Brasil
Email: kirtan@loggo.com.br

Ecuador

Srila Sridhar Swami Seva Ashram

P.O. Box 17-01-576, Quito, Ecuador
Phone: 342-471 Fax: 408-439

Venezuela

Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda Seva Ashram

Avenida Tuy con Avenida Chama
Quinta Parama Karuna
Caracas, Venezuela
Phone: [+58] 212-754 1257
Email: paramakaruna@cantv.net

Urbanización Prados del Este

calle Los Ríos c/calle El Carmen,
Quinta Nieves, Madlen. Municipio Baruta.
Caracas 1080. Venezuela
Tel: 58 212 976 21 04 & 58 414 246 35 57
Email: kaliyakrishna@yahoo.com

Calle Libertad, Los Robles
Municipio Maneiro
(a una cuadra bajando despues de la Iglesia)
Margarita, Venezuela
Tel: (58) 414 798 8227 & 792 8853
Email: koladwipa@yahoo.com

Africa

South Africa

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

P.O. Box 60183, Phoenix 4068
KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
Phone: (031) 500-1576

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

57 Silver Road, Newholmes, Northdale
Pietermaritzburg 3201
KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
Phone: (0331) 912026
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Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram

4464 Mount Reiner Crescent,
Lenasia South, Extension 4
Johannesburg 1820, Republic of South Africa
Tel: (011) 852-2781 & 211-0973
Fax: (011) 852-5725

Russia

Moscow

Str. Avtozavodskaya 6, Apt. 24a.
George Aistov
Phone: (095) 275-0944
Email: russia@scsmath.org

St. Petersburg

Pin 197229 St. Petersburg, p.Lahta
St. Morskaya b.13, Russia
Phone: (812) 238-2949

Other Centers

Mauritius

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math International

Nabadwip Dham Street, Long Mountain
Republic of Mauritius
Phone & Fax: (230) 245-3118 / 5815/2899
Email: mauritius@scsmath.org

Vaisnava Seva Society

Ruisseau-Rose, Long Mountain
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Phone & Fax: (230) 245-0424
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Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math International

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Phone: (230) 617-8164 & 5726

Malaysia

Persatuan Penganut Sri Chaitanya

Saraswat Sadhu Sangam

Lot No. 224A Jalan Slim Lama
35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia
Phone: (05) 459 6942
<http://scsmath.org/centres/malaysia/>
Email: klabanya@hotmail.com

Sri Chaitanya Sridhar Govinda

Seva Ashram

7 Taman Thye Kim, Jalan Haji Mohammed Ali
32000 Sitiawan, Perak, Malaysia
Phone: (05) 6924 980
Email: sitiawan@scsmath.org

Philippines

Srila Sridhar Swami Seva Ashram

C/O Gokulananda Prabhu
23 Ruby St., Casimiro Townhouse
Talon Uno, Las Pinas City Zip Code 1747
Philippines
Phone: 800-13-40
Email: sridharswami@hotmail.com

Singapore

Block 313 D Ancorvale Road
#16-134, Singapore 544313
Phone: 65-63159114
Email: singapore@scsmath.org

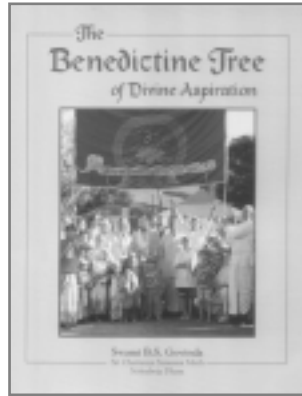
Fiji

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Sridhar Asan

P.O. Box 4507, Saru Lautoka, Fiji
Email: fiji@scsmath.org

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga

The Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration



Compiled for the satisfaction of

His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

And all the Devotees of Śrī Chaitanya Sārawat Maṭh
with its branches world-wide

On the completion of the second and final part
of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's First World Tour—21st February 1993.

Places visited:

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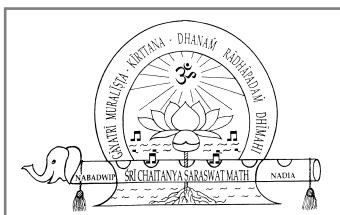
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District: Nadia,
West Bengal, Pin 741302, India
Website: <http://www.scsmath.com>

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Part I
from the
World Tour, First Leg

— 1 —

Divine Benevolence Abroad

An interview with Śrī Mohanānanda Dāsa Adhikārī,
coordinator of the first World Tour of
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Interviewer (Q): Please tell us something about Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's tour and his plans.

Śrī Mohanānanda Prabhu (A): Plans have been formulated and they change accordingly everywhere we go. But one thing is certain: the desires of the devotees have been fulfilled very much. I can see it in their faces. And it is reciprocal—you can see it in Śrīla Mahārāj's face too, how happy he is. We are now in the San Jose, America, part of the tour, and just about halfway done. The energy count will be a bit low, but he is really stimulated each time he sees the devotees. We are all pros at travelling but he hasn't travelled around the world before, so he's adjusting accordingly,

and he is an expert adjuster. He only needs to be told once, or observe once, and he'll take it perfectly.

(Q): Have you seen His Divine Grace change during the tour?

(A): Physically he's put on a bit of weight because the food has been not only tasteful, but nourishing. We Westerners know that living on a Western diet you don't have to eat much because the food is nourishing and potent. Even small quantities will be nourishing. But the devotees' desire is to give Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj a try of everything at one time; and Mahārāj's desire is to fulfil the wishes of the devotees, so he's trying everything at one time. As a result he's putting on a bit of weight, but that's also necessary

because he's doing a lot of work. He's constantly working, but the work of travelling is a different kind of work than sitting at a desk writing a book or walking around the grounds of Nabadwīp. He's 63 years old and he leaves me for dead—and I'm 20 years his junior. When we walk he takes giant strides and I have to run just to keep up with him, and everyone thinks *I'm* quick! When he is on the go he is super fast.

(Q): What were Śrīla Mahārāj's expectations on this tour?

(A): Actually this tour was organised for one reason only—for His Divine Grace to see his friends and 'family': all of his disciples and those who are spiritually related to him in one way or another. That includes all of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj's disciples also. We are basically all of the same family tree; just different branches, if you like. So he is just coming to see all of his well-wishers and his friends. The reason he felt the need to come to the Western part of the world is because he considered that, whereas in Nabadwīp we can come one-by-one to him from all other parts, for many reasons not all Westerners can go there. Now the economy is in a slump and people can't afford to go, and those who can afford to go may not like the conditions. Some are too sick to travel, and others can't travel because of illegal status: Mexicans in America, and others in Australia. They're all over, trying to make a living. They don't understand bureaucracy and boundaries, and they cannot go to Nabadwīp and see Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. Still others can't travel because the husband can go but the wife can't, or vice-versa. So Śrīla Govinda

Mahārāj felt a need to go to see all of these people and give them some of that mercy that he and only he has. Because, as you can see from the faces of the devotees, all he has to do is just look at them, and they melt like hot butter. So he came for that purpose, just to see the devotees.

The preaching side of the mission developed as we progressed. You can't stop that. People want to ask questions. People want to hear *Kṛṣṇa-kathā* or they want to know about this or that pastime or what Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj were really like. And Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj is merciful—he is talking to everybody. He tries to answer everyone's questions in detail, with such person-to-person intimacy that you'd have to be a very insensitive person not to pick that up. He is really very intimate and very direct. He may talk to your eyes, but actually it is directly to your heart. Wherever people may be from, and from whatever *sampradāya* or whatever ideas they may have, I've not seen one person who's met him and not felt absolutely satisfied. Whether they are writers or Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, or whoever they may be or think they may be, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj satisfies them fully. They keep coming back for more. They can't get enough!

(Q): Is it because they are building a temple in Australia that he was inspired to go there?

(A): Not exactly a temple. The intentions originally were to build a temple, then when Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj came he explained that to run a temple means you have to have full-time commitments. You have to think about it in terms of

generations. You don't think about only now. If you're going to have Deities, then you have to seriously consider how many generations can worship those Deities. They are not just dressed-up dolls. And when the devotees heard this directly from Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, then their conception changed a little.

We will have a nice ashram for the *brahmacārīs* and visiting *sannyāsīs*, where those who want to take full-on practices and full doses of the good medicine can go. For those who just want to take medicine in small doses or want to come and get together, then we'll have a *kīrttan* hall. We'll build a nice *mandir*, where everyone can come. There will be a photo of the Deities of the Nabadwīp Maṭh, and there will be our *Paramparā* photographs. We'll chant, break bread together—take some *Prasādam*—and everyone will be happy. We can come together in the name of our Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, and be happy. What we are doing is taking association, which is what Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj wants. The devotees are together taking association and trying to preach to other people the glories of Mahāprabhu's message, and trying to get them to see that there is a right path in this difficult world. And if you follow the right path, good.

(Q): We have the experience in San Jose that devotees have become surcharged since Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj arrived. Has this been the experience in every city he's been to?

(A): Absolutely. Even more so. The enthusiasm I see is a sweetness that comes from the heart. It cannot be disguised.

It cannot be manufactured. It just comes from the heart. You can't stop it. It is like an overflowing river—you try to dam it but it is useless, the stones are going to be ripped apart. If Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj stayed here for one month, all of Los Angeles would be coming here. San Jose would become the second largest city in America. And it is the same in Australia. People started coming out from everywhere like ants out of woodwork, coming from everywhere.

(Q): Devotees that you hadn't seen for many years?

(A): For donkey's years! You can't imagine. Never mind they came; they didn't want to go home. We suddenly had to find accommodation for all of them. Of course a lot of pre-planning didn't take off because while a lot of devotees desired to see Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj come, another side of them told them, "It's not possible, it won't happen." They heard this many times. Even up to two or three weeks before the tour was actually going to take off, there was a lot of pessimism that, "As a matter of fact, it might not happen." But when they heard that Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj was actually on the plane and off to Australia, then it was action-stations: "All men on board; let's get to work. We've got to get this thing together." And everybody's ears pricked up, all woke up, dusted off the cobwebs of their spiritual bodies, and just kept coming.

(Q): The question on everyone's mind is: "Is this the only trip Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj is going to take, or does he feel inspired to make more trips?"

(A): If anybody thinks this is his only tour, then they really haven't realised

how much the devotees have pleased Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. Śrīla Mahārāj will travel. He'll travel probably more now and for longer periods than before. Because now he's seen and knows how to travel basically by himself, except for the immigration forms which will take him just a short while to do, he won't be travelling with such a large party next time. Naturally they don't need an expensive porter like myself to tag along, for a start. And Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj has seen what the devotees can prepare in the way of his personal *Prasādam* and needs. So where we can economise, we will. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj is very conscious of how the money the devotees give is spent. Every dollar in Nabadwīp he has accounted for. And you're a tax man, Hāsyapriya Prabhu—you know how difficult it is to keep a constant check. But Śrīla Mahārāj can account for everything right to the last cent.

(Q): What are Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's aspirations for the mission?

(A): What Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj would really like more than anything else is constant association among the devotees. That is, forget about your personalities for a moment; forget about your petty differences. Forget about what other *sampradāyas* and other people are doing. Get on with your devotional life. Get on with meeting with each other. If you can get together for *Vaiṣṇava-saṅga* as often as possible, that is nourishment for each one of you. That is most important. Chant the glories of the Holy Name, preach to newcomers, and spread the word if you can. But if you can't, then just come together. A few families can meet; you don't all have to meet at one

time. You can have weekly meetings, and if you can be consistent and meet regularly, that would be nice.

I'll give you a perfect example of that. When the Australian ladies' committee was collecting money and sending Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj some money on a monthly or quarterly basis, it wasn't much money, but what really pleased Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj was not the sum that was collected but the fact that these ladies were actually working together. Each time, they took association with each other, and through that they built a bond between each other. And now in Australia—I can truthfully say, and even Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj will support me in this statement—it is very harmonious and very wonderful that the devotees have put all their differences out of the door. Of course, we may occasionally fight with each other, but generally the family in which there are never any fights is a family that is childless. In our family we have happy fights. But we also have happier times when we have a meeting and *Prasādam* together once a week. We have a simple chanting-hall where we're getting together.

You Americans are the masters for marketing anything. Look what you did with the message of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. No doubt he was a great personality. He came here, and as Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj always says, although he wasn't the most successful businessman, in the business of Kṛṣṇa consciousness he was the master, and he had the best of everything. Americans came out from everywhere and didn't know anything about Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, but they were the best marketers. You can

promote the message and that's what we need now. We need people to go out and say, "Yes, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is still alive." The real sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's message is still available, and not just at the airports, but it is available at any time that you desire it. Here in America it is available at the San Jose temple; at the Miami branch of the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh; in New York, and elsewhere. It is available. It may not be absolutely known to everybody, though, so that's the job for us now: to let other people know. This is what our various newsletters around the world are doing.

(Q): What can we do to attract Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj to return?

(A): That's what we're doing now. I can really only answer for Australia in a definite way, and for others I can only give you a glancing preview. In Australia we are definitely trying to attract Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj by getting some land immediately. Right now I'm constantly getting calls from the devotees, asking me to find out what kind of land Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj wants. Land is much more available there, and certainly at a cheaper price than here, but still the endeavour to do so is available everywhere. On his next trip Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj will go to Malaysia, Mauritius, and South Africa—particularly Mauritius, which he has promised to go to for many years. And after that tour, when he returns to Australia he will see a *mandir*, hall and quarters that we're going to build for him, and then he can visit Australia on a regular basis.

(Q): You're talking about a second tour. What will be the tentative itinerary for the second tour of America?

(A): San Jose, definitely next year. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj has promised. In Maui, one gentleman has offered Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj 55 acres of land, and the man is not even a disciple—yet another example of our saying about people coming out of the woodwork. *There* is one man who is hungry for some sort of service to Kṛṣṇa. And somebody else whose desire was not true would have grabbed it immediately, but Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj always looks at the devotees' needs, and he says, "I shall come back and then we can talk." And if the gentleman still feels the same, which I'm certain he will, then something will develop on the island of Maui, and Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj has promised them also that he will come back for two or three weeks.

He has mentioned to me privately that he would like to come to San Jose again, because our time here is not sufficient. We're here for only seven days, and we're visiting two places within 50 kilometres of each other. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj wants to see other parts of America, particularly New York—he's promised Śrīpād Giri Mahārāj that sometime he would like to go there to see the 'Big Apple,' as he calls it.

Also, many devotees want to take initiation from Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj and time is not sufficient to initiate them all. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj shall do what he can now, but the desire to give connection and mercy is there constantly. He must come back. But you can make it more inviting for him by saying, "Well Mahārāj, we're getting a temple together. We're meeting every week and doing some service."

Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration

Everybody wants to get connection—and Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj is giving that easily; but not everybody is coming and saying, “Please engage me in service.” I do hear it from some, quietly, but not many are coming up and saying, “Please engage me in service.” But if everyone comes up and receives connection and then engages in service, automatically you will have a temple here, and it will probably be the crowning jewel of the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh’s overseas branches.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj has special affection for many devotees, but great and special affection for devotees connected to the San Jose *Maṭh* because despite all of their trials, tribulations, and difficult circumstances they still go ahead and do their service, and do their service also to the central *Maṭh* in Nabadwīp. That is another thing people musn’t forget. We do our service for our local *Maṭh*, but we must also do our service for the centre. Devotees should go there whenever possible. Everybody should try to go and stay there for six months and spend some time. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj likes to engage the Westerners in service there. They are happy to be there and they are doing good service. They are doing things which are full of austerities for them in their Westerners’ bodies, but they’re doing it very happily. And Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj feels comfortable when the Westerners are at the *Maṭh*. He feels that his family is all there. If it is only the Indians and Bengalis, then he feels that only half of his children are there. But when all the Westerners are there, he feels happy; then he’s jolly.

(Q): Is there an open invitation for *all* the devotees to visit Nabadwīp and spend time there?

(A): I can say that absolutely wherever he goes Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj continuously makes an open invitation to everyone. You can go there and be his guest if you like, or if you are his disciple, you can go to your father’s house happily. He will very happily nourish you in any way he can, because he likes to serve.

(Q): On Mahārāj’s next tour, what can we do to improve things for his convenience?

(A): In an organisational sense, I can’t see how you could improve things. You are doing the best within the shortest period of time. What is necessary is that we want to try and give him maximum exposure to the devotees and the general public in the minimum amount of time.

(Q): Is there anything else you’d like to express to the devotees world-wide when we publish this interview?

(A): I would like them to know how grateful I am to everyone who wrote to me with all their suggestions, and to all for their assistance and their planning. It is not a one-man show—I didn’t do this by myself. Through the grace of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, and through the kindness of Śrīpād Sāgar Mahārāj who asked me to take charge of this particular part of the tour in planning, I’m just another cog in the wheel. The only reason the wheel has turned around very nicely without any disruption is because of everybody everywhere. And that means from the person who delivers our *Maṭh*’s publications, to the chief

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cook making a buffet meal for all of us—everybody has assisted in every way possible. Everyone has found some engagement, some way to serve, and they are serving the centre as the servant of the servant of the servant. That has been the pleasing thing, to know that we have such a big family and they are participating all over the world.

I tell you, any devotee who wants to go any place in the world now, once we have our mission's branches properly established—wherever they go they will find their brothers, sisters, etc. They are never going to feel alone ever again. Once Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj has finished this tour and established everything nicely, no devotee will be able to say that he's alone. And if he says he's alone, then he is not seeing very clearly, because all around him is his family—everywhere. All he needs to do is get in contact with them in the same kind of service mood as you've all shown in the

presence of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj loves every one of us, and if the devotees can come together as a loving, serving family, then a beautiful thing will happen. Whenever strangers will see Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's disciples they will say, "There go those people. They are Govinda Mahārāj's disciples. They are so harmonious and so loving to each other. They are a nice bunch. We should get to know these people," instead of, "There goes such-and-such person's disciples. All they're doing is just gossiping and speculating, and back-stabbing each other the first chance they get." We don't want to hear such things, for it burns our ears. All we want to hear are sweet things. "There goes Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's disciple; there goes Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's disciple. They are so nice, and so loving to each other. Let's try to arrange something with them so that we can gain their association."



— 2 —

Universal Grace

The following address was given at the Lauden Nelson Center,
in Santa Cruz, California, on June 30, 1992

by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

**om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitam yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas'ca
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ

namo mahā-vadānyāya
kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa caitanya-
nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ**

Respected devotees, my dear God-brothers and sisters, honourable gentlemen and ladies, by your mercy I have come here for meeting with you all, and I want to spend some time with you to speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am not so learned and especially I am very poor in English, but you have much affection for me and you are always my well-wishers, so I shall try to express something about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Why have I come here to the West? Previously, a great general in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla A.C. Bhakti-vedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, felt a great necessity to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially in the Western world. He could not wait to do that, and as soon as

possible he tried to come. And he came alone. But what is that feeling he had? Actually what did he want to do, and why? My connection also is with that consciousness, and I can say it is the topmost necessity for the conditioned souls. One who can understand this cannot tolerate living without giving something of that consciousness. That was Śrīla Prabhupāda's position. He was always feeling compassion for the conditioned souls who are suffering so much in this mundane world. Conditioned souls cannot understand what is good for their real life, their eternal life. That feeling brought him to the West. No doubt, his Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, ordered him to preach in the West, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave that order to all the devotees also.

The feeling to do good for others was deeply in the heart of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. He had no money and not so much experience, but he had eagerness, affection, and a full, good heart. With a full, good heart, he could not tolerate the deficiency of knowledge and Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the *jīva*-souls, and he tried as soon as possible to come to the West. He tried so hard to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and during the first year

he suffered in many ways, but his eagerness and his deep feelings gave success to his preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

He started alone, but—*eko 'bhaṁ bahu syām*—“I, the One, became many.” This is an aphorism of the *Upaniṣads*. Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord, was alone first and then He became many, and with His heart of Love He manifested Himself in millions of Forms. Similarly, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, whose heart was filled with Divine Love, wanted to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness. His feeling was that it was an extreme necessity for the conditioned souls, and if they didn't get it, what would they take? And in which way would they live?

Actually he was very disturbed and could not understand why the conditioned souls were running around in the illusory environment. His feeling was very strong. He wanted to give something, and he gave it first in the Western world.

I have come to meet with you all—my friends and your families. I have received mercy from you, therefore I can come. ‘Mercy’ means your affection. Affection has attracted me to meet with you, and this affection has grown through Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Otherwise, I live in India and you live in America—we live so far apart. But attachment, attraction and affection have all grown through Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and thus I have a chance to come here and meet with you. What can I give to you? You have all material things. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness has no end. We can only start and we can only proceed, but we will find that there is no end. It is infinite. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is infinite.

There are several kinds of Relationships in Service to Kṛṣṇa, and feelings are also infinite there. Our connection with the Infinite is always giving us that infinite position. And our service mood will also always work infinitely in that Infinite World. That is Goloka Vṛndāvana. Some may consider the ultimate plane to be Paravyoma or Vaikuṇṭha, but the underlying necessity is to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that is our life's goal. Our real form is transcendental, not destructible, and there is much possibility to get a position in the Service World. We have that type of possibility and form. If, in any way, any auspicious soul can connect us with that Transcendental World, we will get everything there. This feeling was in the heart of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. He tried in many ways to begin his mission in India, but lastly he thought, “My place is in the West, and I can try to do something there.”

All religions are always showing us something. Some are showing heaven, some are showing Vaikuṇṭha, and some are showing Goloka. But all religions are trying to take us upwards, not downwards. That is the nature of religion.

Everybody has some eagerness to know what Indian religion is. But actually religion is not for India and not for America; religion is for the *jīva*-soul. *Jīva*-souls have permanent existence which is thinking, feeling, and willing, and *jīva*-souls are eternal. They have the Religion of Service to Kṛṣṇa, their Lord, and service to the Transcendental Plane. There we find all happiness, all ecstasy, all beauty, charm, and Divine Love. Whatever we want in this mundane world within our conditioned position—

beyond that, in the Transcendental World, that Divine Love is always waiting for us, waiting to embrace us. That is the actual position, and one who can understand this cannot live without giving that gift to others. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Once we wake up and get connected with that consciousness, we can never leave it. We must proceed stage after stage up to Vrajadhām, Goloka Vṛndāvana. That is the Religion of all the *jīva*-souls.

Many auspicious *mahātmās*, or great religious teachers, come from time to time, and their goal is to try to take us up over this illusory environment. Some religions want to take us to heaven, some religions want to take us to Brahmaloka, some want to take us to Vaikuṇṭhaloka—all of them want to take us to a higher level. But ultimately all the Scriptures and the very intimate servitors of Kṛṣṇa come down into this mundane world to show us our highest life's goal, which is Service to our Divine Lover, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One who has that feeling will surely give us connection with Kṛṣṇaloka. That is the nature of the *sādhū*. *Sādhū*s do not want to enjoy anything, but they are always trying to give enjoyment to others—not mundane enjoyment, but transcendental joyfulness, happiness, ecstasy. The description of Kṛṣṇaloka or Goloka Vṛndāvana is very nicely given in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and other Scriptures that are trying to give Divine Knowledge to us and trying to make us qualified servitors in that Divine Plane.

So I have come to meet with you all not for any mundane enjoyment or for

giving or taking anything mundane. You are my Godbrothers, Godsisters, and spiritual relatives.

Actually the *ātmā*, the soul, is coming from a vast power, and we are part of that. In that way, we are all relatives. When a particular *sādhū* came from India and addressed the people, “Brothers and sisters of America...,” everybody was charmed to hear it. We really are all brothers and sisters related with each other in a higher way, and everybody has some existence with a relationship to each other in their eternal form—that is *caitanya-jīvātmā*—and everybody has a service relationship with our Divine Lover, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In that way we are all related. We must try to help each other to progress in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and then we will easily proceed to our destination. That is the advice of the Scriptures.

In this way, I need your association. You are giving me much affection, but not for mundane enjoyment, and not for taking or giving something mundane. By your association perhaps I can give some hope to you all to try to proceed to your destination. I can say what is your own property, what is the wealth of your soul. I must try to help you, and you also can give me hope and encouragement for that Transcendental Service. That is my hope. You have many things in this mundane world, but the real necessity is the mood of practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That has no end, and it is increasing in an ever more beautiful way. With heartfelt energy you please try to proceed, and you can preach this Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others for their benefit. I shall try to help in that way,

and if you have any questions about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I will try to give an answer.

My English is very poor, so I cannot give a formal lecture. It is very difficult for me to give that. But it is very easy for me to give answers about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I have received some mercy from my Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, and for a long time I am connected with their movement. Also, it is my duty to everybody. If I can help you to feel satisfied in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then I must feel satisfaction in my service. So if you have any questions you can ask them, and I shall be very happy.

Question: We became attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness by a great soul, but sometimes we may not go fully, all the way. What can help us to continue to the goal without leaving it halfway?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: This is a very good question. Thank you for your attentive question. It is not only your question, it is the question of all of us. We surrendered unto the Lotus Feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and tried to proceed to our destination, but many obstructions are coming in our life, and we are feeling many disturbances, thus it seems that we cannot proceed to our full destination. There are two factors: one, if we surrender fully to the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa will see us. That is one hundred percent certain. In the Scriptures it is said,

**sakṛd eva prapanno yas
tavāsmīti ca yācate
abhayam sarvadvā tasmai
dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama**
(Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam 9.4)

Lord Rāmachandra said this about Bibhīṣaṇa. Everyone wanted to oust Bibhīṣaṇa. Bibhīṣaṇa was the brother of Rāvaṇa, and Rāvaṇa was the enemy of Rāmachandra, so everybody thought that Bibhīṣaṇa must have come as a spy. But Rāmachandra said, “Maybe he is a spy; maybe not. But since he took shelter of Me, I must protect him, and I must give him assurance that he will not be ousted.”

So when we took shelter, whether there was any deficiency in us or not will be the first question. Otherwise, in the middle of the way, why are we leaving Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Many may leave and stop practising, or somehow some disturbance may come to them. But what is the process to leave or oust that disturbance? The process is here: Kṛṣṇa Himself says,

**satām prasangān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāh
taj joṣanād āśv-apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā-ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati**
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25)

What we need are good friends and association, then we can proceed happily. And the other factor is that if our surrender is perfect, then from the upper level faith will come to us and protect us. If someone is fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa in His form as Guru or *sādhū*, then Kṛṣṇa will certainly protect him. He must protect him. But it is also sometimes a factor of time as to when Kṛṣṇa will accept that devotee or how much time He will spend for him. But we should not feel hopeless because of that. When the time actually comes we shall surely understand. It may be a very

short time—just in front of us—or maybe a long, long time. But what is time? Maybe a few births can also come and go in that time, but that is also a very meagre thing. In relation to infinite time it is most insignificant. From Kṛṣṇa we get our hope, and this is a one hundred percent assurance. But while we are waiting for that position of liberation from this mundane environment, and when we want to proceed to our destination, this is when the association of Kṛṣṇa's devotees will be most helpful. Such association can give relief and nourishment to our mind and soul.

Lord Kapiladeva told His mother, Devahūti, “Mother, please don't worry. You are a woman and have no ability to read the *Vedas*, and you cannot practise *yoga* and so forth, but don't worry. I am always satisfied with My servitors who are engaged twenty-four hours a day in My Service. You just try to get their association. Through their association your practising life will happily progress.” That means with *śravaṇam*, *kīrttanam*, *vandanam*, etc. The Lord says, “If you hear from My servitors about Me, and in their association you happily chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra** and My Glories, you will get much nourishment for your practising spiritual life. Then, ultimately you will get strong, firm devotion, and strong attachment to My Transcendental Form.” It is necessary for the practitioners to get real *sādhū-saṅga*, association of the real saints.

It is possible to get *sādhū-saṅga* in two ways: from *śāstra-bhāgavata* (the holy books), and *bhakta-bhāgavata*

(the saintly persons). When there is no saint—when we do not find a real *sādhū* and his association—at that time we can take help from the holy books. In this age, that will be very helpful for the practitioner. Our Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj have both given many holy books for our practising life's instruction. If we read those books, we will get much strength and nourishment, and we can proceed very happily to our destination.

So if a living *sādhū* is not in front of me, I must try to read his books. And another thing we can do is take the direct association of Kṛṣṇa—that is, by way of His Holy Name. That is the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*. This method is only for this age of Kali-*yuga*. It is not for other ages. In Kali-*yuga* it gives a very good chance to the conditioned souls. Kṛṣṇa Himself appears in His Name, in the form of the *Mahāmantra*. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* and Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent. All the Scriptures teach this to us.

The Name and the Person are the same. They are both transcendental and eternal. Then if we try to chant that Holy Name with faith and respect and without offence*, then we must get the direct association of Kṛṣṇa, also our mood of service to Kṛṣṇa will increase.

So these three methods are immediately in front of us. If we can get all three, that is very good; but in any case we must serve the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and try to get His holy association. And for our practising life, if we cannot get the association of a holy

*See Appendix II

*See Appendix III

person, a *sādhū*, then we can still read the holy books. This is the hopeful process to reach our destination.

Question: When Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the West, he distributed Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a very broad and free way. Over the years, many of us have developed what might be considered not very good habits, such as putting pictures of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa on the wall without offering any worship to Them; saying “*Haribol*” without any reverence, etc. Should we in the West now try to make a change in our attitude?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: If Śrīla Prabhupāda would have immediately given what he wanted to establish in the West, everyone would not have been able to digest it. In a very broad way, Śrīla Prabhupāda tried to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West. He selected a process when he gave Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he gave some conditions. “You want to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa? Will you follow four directives*?” “Yes.” So he gave you the *Mantra* and instructed, “You must chant sixteen rounds, and you must follow the four directives. If you want to live the life of a *brahmacārī* you can stay in the *Maṭh*, or if you like you can stay in the *Maṭh* in *grhastha* form.” That chance he also gave. He knew the Western world’s activities, in which way it was going, and the West and India are not the same. Indian culture and Western culture are very different. In India, in meetings, ladies are always seated on one side, and gents on the other side. But it is not like that in the West. Here in America, and in

Australia, I see everywhere so many ladies driving cars—not only cars, but big, big trucks as well. Easily they are driving, and with a very free mind. They have a culture in which everybody is giving respect to everybody. I have seen it in Australia especially. We were standing in the road, and a lady was going by in a car very fast. Although she did not know us, and we did not know her, still she gave us some attention and some honour.

Anyway, the cultures of India and the United States are not the same, also the lifestyles are not the same. Prabhupāda considered: “If I try to give them the Indian way, they will not be able to take it.” So he gave some method whereby you must follow the four directives. The four prohibited acts here are very common. Everybody is drinking liquor. Maybe those who have some disease don’t, but everybody else does. Father, mother, wife, sons, and daughters—all are drinking something at the same dinner table. And for mixing of the sexes, everybody has freedom; they can mix almost without restriction. There is so much freedom in the West, and when Prabhupāda saw that, he decided to establish the four directives. He thought, “If they can follow these, they will become advanced in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

Regarding the sixteen rounds, he considered: “They do not know about *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*, *Hari-nāma*.” So he said, “You first practise chanting *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma*

*No gambling; no intoxication; no illicit sex; and no meat eating.

Hare Hare. Practise! Practise! Then, you will understand what is behind that.”

When I first heard that *Mantra* in my youth, I was very small, only twelve years old at that time. I did not know Sanskrit, but the *Mantra* is manifest in the Sanskrit language. *Brāhmaṇas* may give *mantras* for meditation, but if asked the meaning of the *mantra*, they generally reply, “It is not necessary to know. Just meditate on what I have told you, and the *mantra* will reveal the meaning in your heart.” That was their advice. And it is true for the *Mahāmantra* that it is transcendental, and He will be revealed in our hearts.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj advised every one, “Chanting sixteen rounds daily is the minimum amount of chanting. But in this way the habit will come to you to chant. First you will get that habit, then your practising life will become very easy. And when the searching tendency grows in your heart, you must try to search out what it is, and you will receive help from the upper level. That is the main process.” Prabhupāda did not always tell everything to everybody, but he did ask everyone, “Will you follow the four directives?” “Yes, sir.” “You will chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?” “Yes.” “Very nice. Now here—take these beads and go on chanting sixteen rounds daily.” In this way he engaged everyone.

Kṛṣṇa is very merciful. He does not just look at the devotee’s external activities. Kṛṣṇa wants the heart of the devotee. He wants to see if there is love and affection along with the service for Him. Kṛṣṇa wants *that*. He is not looking to see if you are American or you are Indian. Kṛṣṇa does not want to know where

you were born in this world. Kṛṣṇa only wants your love, your affection, and your attachment for Him with full faith and sincerity. And wherever He finds it, Kṛṣṇa will give His mercy. But it is not always coming through the practising process. The practising process will only help us. If I say, “*Haribol, Haribol*,” an outsider will also see me, and he will imitate, saying “*Haribol*.” In that way, some *saṁskāra* (acquired tendency or notion) will come to them.

There is practically no comparison between Western and Eastern *saṁskāra*, but you have the right to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they have the right to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is completely separate from all cultures and customs. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only necessity for the *jīva*-souls. Prabhupāda tried to give that to the Western world.

There are many differences we see between Indian and Western cultures. I remember one devotee who was connected with Kṛṣṇa consciousness for fifteen years. He is a disciple of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. When he met with me in Nabadwīp, he had a bag with him and he requested, “Mahārāj, I shall go to Calcutta for three or four days; can I keep my bag in your room?” I told him, “Yes, Prabhu, you can.” So he kept his bag in my room. I left, and I did not see where he put it. Then when I came back, I saw that he had placed it near the door. I noticed one pair of big shoes just inside his bag. Suddenly it came in my mind, “Is there anything holy inside the bag?” So I took out the shoes and I saw the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* also. Then I became

puzzled, and I took it this way: I apologised to Kṛṣṇa, “He does not know what is what. You please forgive his offences, and forgive my offence for not preventing this from happening.”

After four or five days that boy came back, and I said to him, “Oh Prabhu, what have you done? You kept your shoes upon the *Bhāgavatam* and *Gītā*. That is very bad.” But he replied, “No, Mahārāj, I have not kept my shoes in my bag. Somebody else put them there.” I said, “No, Prabhu, nobody else is coming in my room, only you came. Nobody touches anything in my room. Everything is kept here in a very methodical way. Only I know what is where, and nobody ever touches anything. You have done this.” But he very strongly denied it, “No, Mahārāj, I could not have done that. I have been practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness for fifteen years. I know what is what. I could never do that!” Lastly, because he has so much affection for me, and he thought I was angry with him, he began to cry. While he was crying, I embraced him.

I told him, “Prabhu, I believe you have not done it. You are saying that you have not done it, and I believe you. Now be happy! Don’t cry.” Hearing this, he was very happy and stopped crying. He then wanted to show his respect and affection for me, so he fell down to offer *daṇḍavat praṇāms*, full *daṇḍavats*. But at that time he was chanting on his beads. So where would he keep his beads? He is expert—fifteen years in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But immediately he put his chanting beads on top of his shoes! Therefore by this example you can understand what is *saṁskāra*.

He put his beads right on top of the big, big shoes. He was thinking, “This is the highest place. If I put them on the ground, that is offensive, so some higher place is necessary.” Seeing that his shoes were higher, he put his beads there.

I told him, “Oh Prabhu, what have you done? Don’t do this.” Then he was *very* upset. And he said, “Oh Mahārāj, I am a *mleccha*. Forgive my offences. I do not know what is what. Please forgive my offences.”

Then again I embraced him and told him, “Who am I? Kṛṣṇa will surely forgive you. Kṛṣṇa knows what is what. You have much affection for Kṛṣṇa consciousness; that is your qualification, and that is the highest qualification. Kṛṣṇa is not seeing where you are putting the *Tulasī* beads, but I *must* see, because I am cultured by Indian philosophy. But Indian philosophy or Western philosophy will not give liberation, and they will not give Devotion. Actual Devotion and liberation will come from the heart. And that heart you have. So don’t worry, Prabhu.” Then I embraced him again and I told him one *śloka* from the Scriptures:

**murkho vadati viṣṇāya
dhīro vadati viṣṇave
ubhayos tu samam puṇyaṁ
bhāvagrāhi janārdanaḥ**

(*Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavata, Ādi 11.108*)

Kṛṣṇa is enjoying the mood of devotion, and not anything of this mundane plane. And there are two processes of practising life. One type completely tries to follow the directives of the *Vedas*, but does not know their actual meaning. All the rules, regulations and directives

of the *Vedas* are taking us to the mood of Devotion. And Kṛṣṇa is very merciful to one who has the mood of Devotion. But one who has no mood of Devotion can do anything, however holy it may appear, but Kṛṣṇa will not recognise it.

I explained the meaning of that *śloka* to him, and he was very happy. I also told him, “Never do this again. It is offensive, but not for you. It is offensive for me; that is, I know it is not good. You do not know. Therefore Kṛṣṇa will forgive you, but He will not forgive me if I allow it. Kṛṣṇa knows that I am familiar with, and accustomed to, the proper habits from my childhood, but you are not habituated in this way. You are thinking that shoes are higher than the ground, so you kept your beads upon the shoes. In that way you are very innocent.”

Sometimes a small baby passes stool on his mother’s lap while she is eating, but the mother does not cast the baby off her lap. The mother cleanses the baby and gives it much attention and nourishment. So Kṛṣṇa is like our mother and our father. Kṛṣṇa is always very affectionate and merciful. He has much love, and we have tiny love. He is always searching for the *jīva*-soul and thinking, “When will he come home?”

Kṛṣṇa gives the *jīva*-souls their freedom, and He will not take back that freedom. With freedom the *jīvas* can finish their material existence through Divine Service to Kṛṣṇa. And for that He gives them freedom. But He is expecting service, expecting love. He has much love, and He wants to reciprocate with the *jīva*-souls. Therefore Kṛṣṇa will not see any bad in us. We just need the heart-

felt desire to serve Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa will see only that.

We must try to follow some rules and regulations, and that is good, but it is not the all-essential thing. It is essential for the peace of society. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said that the system of *varṇāśrama* is ‘proper adjustment with the environment’ and ‘sympathetic dealings with nature.’ That is *varṇāśrama*. We need sympathetic dealings with nature, ourselves, and others. But even if we cannot do that, Kṛṣṇa will never be angry or throw us out if He sees that we have the proper mood of devotion and service. That is the answer, Prabhu, to your question.

Question: How should we picture Kṛṣṇa in our mind while chanting? And how should we see ourselves in relation to Him so that we can remain Kṛṣṇa conscious?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Once, when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was giving *Hari-nāma-dīkṣā* to someone, they asked, “What should we think about when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?” Guru Mahārāj said, “It is not necessary to think of anything. You should just know that the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* is a transcendental *Mantra*. If you can give proper nourishment to yourself and to that *Mantra*, He can be revealed to you in your heart. Proper nourishment means that you must avoid the ten kinds of offences. And during your chanting time, you must pray to the Holy Name, ‘O Hare! O Kṛṣṇa! Please be revealed in my heart.’”

The *Mantra* is couched as a calling unto the Lord. *Hare Kṛṣṇa* means Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, but it is not necessary for you to know a literal meaning. You only

need to know that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He appears in this mundane world in the form of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*. He can appear in the heart of each of us with His full Form; He has that capacity. Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name is nondifferent from Him, so I shall only pray to the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*, "Please appear in my heart, and dance on my tongue." It is not necessary to think about anything else. This lesson we learned from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. You are living within the mundane world so your tongue is also mundane, and a mundane thing cannot chant the Transcendental Name.

**ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ**

Kṛṣṇa's Name, Kṛṣṇa's Form, Kṛṣṇa's Qualities, and Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes—all are transcendental, but we are living with mundane consciousness in the mundane world. Here we cannot properly chant *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*. It is not possible. Mundane and transcendental cannot mix, but the mundane may be transformed in contact with the transcendental. And we must pray to Kṛṣṇa: "Please make me transcendental and show Your Form in my heart and dance on my tongue. That is my prayer." When Kṛṣṇa will reveal Himself in our heart, then we can feel, we can see—we can become transcendental. This was Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's answer.

Question: I was in a park, and a devotee gave me a book from which I learned the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*. I began to chant and feel detachment from the

world, but I never received any instructions or authorisation to chant by any higher Vaiṣṇava. Now I think I may be making offences. What shall I do? What is the proper way to go?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: The proper way is that you have somehow gained some divine connection, and that is by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. You are attracted to chant *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*, so inspiration is coming to you from the upper level and giving you some light.

An incident happened in the life of Dhruva Mahārāj, who also had no Guru. His mother told him, "If you want the wealth for which you are seeking, go to Lakṣmīpati—Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu. Try to satisfy Him." So he went to the jungle. He did not know how to perform *tapasyā* (penance) and he did not know what is what, but because his mother told him, "Just try to meditate on Nārāyaṇa," he tried to do that with faith and determination. He became absorbed in thinking, "I must try to satisfy Nārāyaṇa." In that way he tried to meditate, and Nārāyaṇa, who has His existence within everybody's heart, immediately understood what Dhruva wanted. At that time He told Nārada Muni, "Nārada, this boy wants My connection, but it is only possible through the proper channel, and you are the proper channel for him." That is Disciplic Succession; we consider this the proper channel. The *Mantra* comes down through heart-to-heart transmission, and in that way it is manifest in the heart of a devotee. Some special mercy may always be available, and somebody can get that. Still, it is also necessary to accept a direct connection with the

Transcendental World, and that is coming in the line of Disciplic Succession. This is the advice of the Scriptures. So Nārāyaṇa said to Nārada, “Go and initiate him with the *Mantra*.” Therefore Nārada initiated Dhruva Mahārāj, and through that *Mantra* Dhruva received the *darśana* (he beheld the Divine Form) of Nārāyaṇa.

Nārāyaṇa does not want to break His own rule. When one feels attachment and attraction to the Holy Name within one’s mind, that is certainly not offensive, but it will be offensive if you do not know the proper process to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*. There are ten kinds of offences, and it is necessary to receive the *Mantra* from a proper channel. You can read the *Mantra* in a book or you can hear it from anybody, but that will not be very effective. Still, some effect must be there. Anybody can hear it and he will be affected. That is called *nāmābhāsa*, the hazy Name. That *ābhāsa* can come to you. The Holy Name is never inauspicious; it is a very auspicious thing, no doubt. But it is necessary to connect with a qualified person who will give you the transcendental seeds of that *Mantra*, and also give you advice on how to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

I can advise you to avoid the ten kinds of offences, and that will be very fruitful for you. But it is necessary to take advice. A teacher is always necessary, whether we reach a very junior class, a senior class, or a higher class. Even if we want to eat something, there also a teacher is necessary. Guidance is *always* necessary! Guidance is always good for everyone; this is the answer.

Question: I would like to see a centre for Kṛṣṇa consciousness develop in Santa Cruz, but there seem to be two camps: the camp of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, and the camp of ISKCON. Do you have any suggestions how to bring these two camps together?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: I have come here without any sectarian campaign. I am living within that consciousness where my instructors, my Gurus, are playing freely. And both of them—Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj—are my Gurus. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj is my Instructor Guru and my *Dikṣā*-Guru (Initiating Guru). And Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, by the mercy of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, is also my Instructing Guru. So I only want to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I have no party feelings. I do not know who is living in this party, and who is living in that party, who is living in India, and who is living in America. I have no differentiating mind. We want to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness—this is what we have received from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. This is our Preceptorial Line. In that Line, I am so fortunate to have two Gurus, and many others also. But two are super-instructors and Gurus, and I am trying to follow their directives and their process. I am preaching this to my friends and to whoever has some faith in me. My process is to preach, and not to say that this Prabhu or that person is better.

The process is humility, tolerance, and giving honour to others. This process was given by Mahāprabhu. You know that *śloka*, the third *śloka* of the *Śikṣā-ṣṭakam*. The proper chanting qualification

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is that you must be humble—humility must be your property; you must be tolerant, and you must give all honour to others. Through these three things, one can easily avoid *Vaiṣṇava-aparādhā*. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādhā* is the greatest obstruction to chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*. The *Mahāmantra* is coming from the upper level, and through the Vaiṣṇavas it is coming down. Through the *Pañcatattva*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Adwaita, Śrī Gadādhara, and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura—the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* is distributed in this mundane world. But if you make any offence to Them, the *Mahāmantra* will not be happy with you, and He will not manifest Himself in your heart. Mahāprabhu said we must avoid *Vaiṣṇava-aparādhā*, and also the other nine kinds of offences to *Harināma*. Very easily we can avoid them.

What is necessary, nose or breath? If we have no nose, it may be tolerable, but if we cannot breathe we shall die. What is our life? Our life is for practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is what we need. For every *jīva*-soul, the most important thing is that we need to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What our identification is—that is not so important. Whether someone is Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's disciple or Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja's disciple is not so important.

The important thing is we need to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the guidance of a good Vaiṣṇava who has the aforementioned three qualifications; who has developed real feelings about Kṛṣṇa consciousness; and who is expert at giving us Transcendental Knowledge about Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We must invite his

association into our life. We will always try to get good association. A devotee may be in ISKCON, or he may be in Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's *Maṭhs*, but what is important for me is *sādhū-saṅga*, and wherever there is a *sādhū*, I shall try to get his association. A *sādhū* will not differentiate between this camp or that camp. He will differentiate between the levels of devotion. Wherever there is pure devotion, he will be attracted there.

My business is like that. I want to make everybody my friend and well-wisher, not my enemy. This has always been my tendency since childhood. I always bow down to everybody. I shall not make any offence to any Vaiṣṇava. Even if a devotee is not in our *Sampradāya*—he may be in the Rāmānuja *Sampradāya* or any other Vaiṣṇava *Sampradāya*—but I am afraid to make any offence to him.

There is no question about ISKCON. If anybody has that type of feeling, that party spirit, then I must ask him to leave that feeling. Avoid that type of mentality, and come and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* which was given by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāja, or given by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja. They did not want to make a sectarian party, so why are we eager to make a party? We want to harmonise with everything. So we can easily harmonise both of their societies.

But 'society' means many people. People have many faults, many difficulties. The ego is the worst enemy for everybody. We must avoid false ego. What will I lose if I give honour to others? If I am humble and tolerant, all good qualities will come to me. Mahāprabhu

said that with this qualification we shall try to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and then we will gain real feeling for that transcendental *Harināma Mahāmantra*. The Holy Name is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, so it is a good practice not to think in the line of party spirit. It is our life's goal to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness without offence to *Harināma*; and wherever that is possible, we are slaves of that place.

What is our life's goal? And what am I here for? If I can do something good for others, then I shall feel that my mission is successful. Otherwise, so much money is being spent, and that money came through the energy of the devotees. I shall not be happy if my mission is not successful. And what is my mission? To meet with my friends and their families. And if I get the chance to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then I shall try to preach in an independent way. That is my mood. I shall be very happy if by my association anybody will feel inspired to proceed in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Even if it is only one man, then still I shall be very happy. Then I will feel that my mission is successful.

We all need to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and whichever way it is possible, we shall try to follow in that line. Many missions are going in the line of party spirit. Sometimes they are doing good, and sometimes they are doing many wrong things. Actually, we have no line in that sense. But what is our life's goal—we must first keep that, and then without disturbance to the environment and others, we can proceed. It is necessary to see the goal. And if it is possible to make everything harmonious,

then that is very good. That will give us more inspiration, and that will give us more attachment and attraction for each other. That would be very good, but actually it is very difficult to do. I can control my own ego, and maybe I can control a few of my friends' egos, but I cannot control everybody's ego. And because our ego is our worst enemy, it is questionable how much total harmony is possible.

Another consideration is that Kṛṣṇa does not want to give *Prema-bhakti* to just anybody. Kṛṣṇa wants to give *mukti*, liberation, but He does not want to give *Bhakti*, Devotion, indiscriminately. Even though His devotee is freely distributing the seeds of *Bhakti*, Kṛṣṇa sometimes tries to avoid that because He becomes controlled by one who becomes His devotee.

So a reaction may come to the mind of the general seeker in such a way that he may leave Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But we must go on practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness even though Kṛṣṇa may not want to give it, because if a devotee wants to give it, then Kṛṣṇa cannot do anything. However, when the devotee is no longer present, Kṛṣṇa may try to hide it. Kṛṣṇa is not foolish! Kṛṣṇa may sometimes try to avoid freely giving out consciousness of Him. That is the nature of spiritual transactions.

In the Scriptures it is said, *muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogaṁ*. This is the reason why there is some disturbance coming in every society. When a devotee wants to leave, Kṛṣṇa feels that He has no right to check that. Devotees randomly distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but after that, one must

practise. The devotee who gave you the seed will not come and practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness for you. Then in the practitioner's life there may be some fault, and Kṛṣṇa may be avoiding him. Faults are coming, and the practitioners are going away from the track. Then the examination is failed, and one is disqualified. When boys run in a race, everyone has a lane to stay in. And if anyone goes out of his own lane, he is disqualified. But with the proper help from the genuine Vaiṣṇavas, we will always remain on the right path.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj always tried to harmonise everything. The whole Gauḍīya Mission, and the heads of other missions, came to him from time to time and took advice from him—even his enemy group. 'Enemy' means those who were abusing him. On one occasion one person who was the head of an opposition camp, came to see Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and Guru Mahārāj asked him, "Why are you coming to see me? You are living in an opposite camp." And that person replied, "Mahārāj, you are

not a party man. Your strong common sense, super intelligence, and disinterested (detached) nature always attract me and this is why I am coming to see you. Talking with you, I always feel very happy. That is why I am coming to you."

I am a disciple of that Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, and I have also grown with that consciousness. I am feeling everybody is my friend. And if they are not my friend, then I want to make them my friend. I do not want to have any enemies.

I have many friends in the ISKCON society, and some of them are very good friends. In Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's God-brothers' societies and my own God-brothers' societies, many devotees are very affectionate to me, and actually I am living by their mercy. They are affectionate and merciful, and when I am getting their affection and mercy, I am thinking that my practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness must go on in a happy way. So, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, I am trying to harmonise with everything. That is my mood.



— 3 —

Demolishing Pillars of Ego

A Lecture given on the Island of Maui, Hawaii,

by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Why have I come here to the West? Many times I have thought about it. The devotees have spent much money for my World Tour. I do not know how much they have spent, but I am thinking that for me it is far too much. However, I must give something to my friends, to my Godbrothers, to the devotees and sincere seekers. I must give something, but what shall I give? I can only give a connection, and sometimes I can rectify.

If anyone has any questions, or if anyone has any deficiency or any doubts about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I shall try to remove these. I will try to give some nourishment to them, and I also will get some mercy from them—that is my wealth, and that is why I have come out from Nabadwīp.

I know what is the position of Guru. Guru is not *laghu*, light. The Guru never has a light position. But I am very tiny, and a conditioned soul, so in which way will I give advice to others? However it is my good fortune that I have that type of *sevā*. It is very hard *sevā*, and it is very hard to continue it, actually.

It is hard in this way. First, we must prevent ego from coming to attack. Ego is a very bad thing for the practitioner. In the Scriptures we see:

**ahaṅkāra-nivṛttānām
keśavo nahi dūragah
ahaṅkāra-yutānām hi
madhye parvata-rāsayah**

(*Brahma-vaivartta Purāṇa*)

The position of Kṛṣṇa is that He is very near and dear to everyone of us, but why are we not feeling His presence within our heart? What is the cause? We must try to search the cause. We have received the *Harināma Mahāmantra* from a great Guru, but how much actual progress are we making? This is necessary to consider.

A schoolboy receives every week or every month a progress report which he shows to his guardians, “This is my progress report.” Similarly twenty-four hours pass every day, but what is our progress report in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? This we must realise. We have a grand Guru, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and a grand Guru, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj; they are world-wide Gurus, and we have gained a connection with them. We are so fortunate no doubt, but what seed have they given to us? And have we planted it properly or not? Is it showing its form and glory or not? It is present in our heart, but it is necessary to realise how

much it is showing itself. We can say that this is one kind of self realisation.

In this way it is as a reminder of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj that we are meeting here, also we can discuss together how much progress we have made in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we have not progressed so much, where is the deficiency? It is necessary to know. The Scriptures say that Kṛṣṇa is living within the heart of everyone and in all the environment. The Scriptures also say that it is possible to see Kṛṣṇa; He is present everywhere. But why can we not see His presence within our heart always?

One very big obstruction to seeing Kṛṣṇa is ego. We have freedom; everybody has freedom, and through freedom ego is growing. But in one way freedom is very good. I shall give an example. I have freedom of my tongue. I have a tongue, and that tongue can taste many opulent things. It can taste many opulent types of *Prasāda* such as sweets and honey. But it is also within the freedom of my tongue to always taste bitter things.

Kṛṣṇa has given the tongue, and all the senses, for service to Him, but at present we are not using them for that. We are eager to make ourselves like pillars of ego, thus preventing ourselves from making much progress. It is necessary to remove the ego from between ourselves and Kṛṣṇa. Ego is in between us, and it works in a very bad way. We must remove it. But ‘ego’ means what?

What does everyone need? Everyone needs some position—everywhere we see it. But it is necessary to know what is our *actual* position, otherwise we cannot understand Kṛṣṇa conscious-

ness. If such enquiring feelings do not arise within us, then Kṛṣṇa consciousness actually is not possible.

Mahāprabhu is Himself Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and what did He say? He appears in this mundane world for our supreme benefit no doubt, but He has some interest to taste the Supreme Devotional Mood. He wants to taste in which way it is playing between Kṛṣṇa and the devotees.

**sei rādhāra bhāva lañā caitanyāvatāra
yuga-dharmma nāma-prema kaila
paracāra**

*(Chaitanya-caritāmṛta
Ādi-līlā 4.220)*

Kṛṣṇa is very beautiful, ‘Reality the Beautiful.’ That is the Form of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa’s beauty is such that no other incarnation can compete with Him.

**sarvādbhuta-camatkāra-
līlā-kallola-vāridhiḥ
atulya-madhura-prema-
maṇḍita-priya-maṇḍalaḥ**

*(Chaitanya-caritāmṛta
Madhya-līlā 23.82)*

Kṛṣṇa is playing with the *Gopīs*, and there everything is automatically serving the whole environment. The Play of Kṛṣṇa is going on there like waves in the ocean. Full happiness and full joyfulness are present. It is full of Divine Love, ecstasy and nectar. In the *Līlā* of Kṛṣṇa those waves are always playing.

Kṛṣṇa lives with such loving souls who always try to serve Him in every way with their full energy. The Kṛṣṇa conception is full-fledged theism, and they are using their full energy in serving Him. They are always playing with Kṛṣṇa within the four types of *Rasas*.

Demolishing Pillars of Ego

Somebody feels, “I am the servant of the servants of the servant of Kṛṣṇa.”

Someone else feels, “Kṛṣṇa is my friend. Kṛṣṇa and myself, we are equals. We shall play together in the playing ground.” Such a person will join with others to take Kṛṣṇa out from His house and go to a grass field or within a cave. They have the form of cowherd boys and they play with Kṛṣṇa in many ways.

Others think, “Kṛṣṇa is my son,” and they show much affection in the mood of *Vātsalya-rasa*. And others are in the supreme *Rasa*, *Madhura-rasa*: the Ecstatic Divine Relationship of Consortship and Paramour Love.

Kṛṣṇa is not born from the womb of other ladies, but each of them are thinking, “Kṛṣṇa is my son.” Even the cows are thinking, “Kṛṣṇa is my son!”

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we can see that all the *Rasas* are playing in a very ecstatic and joyful way in *Vṛndāvana*. Divine Love is always playing there.

**trijagan-mānasākarṣi-
murali-kala-kūjitaḥ
asamānordhva-rūpa-śrī-
vismāpita-carācaraḥ**

(*Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*
Madhya-līlā 23.83)

Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, and everybody keeps contacted through that sound. When Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, Mother Yaśodā and other ladies with maternal feelings towards Him think, “Kṛṣṇa is hungry. He wants to take some food and nourishment.” And the cowherd boy-friends of Kṛṣṇa think, “Oh, Kṛṣṇa wants to play with us, now we shall go! Kṛṣṇa is playing His flute and calling us.” In this way the flute always keeps connection

with the whole of that environment.

If suddenly the sound of His flute overflows from that plane and goes everywhere, everyone becomes puzzled, like Brahmā. He thinks, “This is not my sound! I am the creator of the whole universe but this is not my sound. Where has this sound come from?”

Anantadeva has the form of a snake, and on his head the planets are present. It is described that this entire universe is upon his head, but when that huge Anantadeva heard the overflowing of that Divine Sound, He also was puzzled.

The whole universe becomes puzzled to try to understand from where this sound is coming. And not just our universe, but all the universes. That sound sometimes comes to other universes also, just like lightning which sometimes flashes through the sky, illuminating it for a moment.

But Kṛṣṇa is just playing. Kṛṣṇa doesn't know, and He has no time to know, who He is. He is always intoxicated with the devotees' love, and in a loving way He always plays in *Vraja-dhāma*, *Vṛndāvana*. That is His position. *Atulya-madbura-prema-maṇḍita-priya-maṇḍalaḥ*.

His transcendental land is such that service is always going on there, and we are connected in that line. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gives a very nice example of how we are connected with that world: our connection is through the telescopic system. We cannot see how many stars are present in the sky; we cannot see them either in the day-time or the night-time. But through a telescope we can see many stars and planets; and a powerful telescope can show us even more.

Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration

Transcendental knowledge comes down through the telescopic system of the *Guru-paramparā*. Actually that plane is our home, and we have shelter there, but only through service and hankering can we enter. Through the mood of hankering and the mood of service we can go to that plane. And that plane is transcendental and infinite.

Kṛṣṇa can appear anywhere and everywhere at any time. It is possible by His will. We cannot control that. If an ant runs on the floor in front of me, he does not know I am sitting here, but if I touch the ant, he can understand, “Something is touching me.” But that touch depends on my will, not his. I can withdraw my finger and the ant will no longer feel anything. In a similar way transcendental knowledge comes down in this mundane world; but all is dependent upon the will of that infinite world.

You have read in one of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s books that someone questioned him: “If the finite can understand the Infinite, then how can He be Infinite?” But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj answered, “If the Infinite cannot make Himself known to the finite, then He is not Infinite!”

The Infinite has the absolute right to do everything, therefore He can show Himself also. We may be very tiny souls but He can show Himself to us, but that depends upon His will, and we need to attract His will. His ‘will’ means His mercy. We can only try to attract His mercy, otherwise it is not possible.

We cannot go directly to the King. If we want to go to the King we must first make some petition and identify ourselves and our wish. Our petition will be taken by an officer, then it will be

passed on to someone else, then another. In this way our identity will become known and when our petition will win approval, only then can we meet with the King. This is the procedure, and it is found everywhere, not only for meeting the King. It also applies if we want to see the Prime Minister, or any minister or official. Similarly, if we want to join in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness line it is necessary to follow a proper line of approach. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj called it the ‘proper channel.’ If we come through the proper channel we can easily go to that transcendental world, and then we will be able to see what is going on there. From here we cannot understand, but it is possible for the transcendental world to appear within our heart.

In which way will we actually get Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

**ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ**

We cannot chant pure *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*, so in which way shall we chant? The Scriptures and saints all say that *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* and Kṛṣṇa are non-different, His body is a transcendental body, His playing ground is a transcendental playground, and when He appears in the Form of *Harināma* that also must be transcendental. So how with this mundane tongue can we chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*?

Na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ. *Indriya* means the senses: the tongue, eyes, ears, nose and skin. We have these five senses, and through them we can feel. But our senses are all mundane

Demolishing Pillars of Ego

senses, so in which way will we chant and feel the transcendental *Harināma*? It is not possible by anything mundane, but if we gain a transcendental seed of *Harināma*, and if we can plant and nurture it in a proper way, then it will appear in our heart. When He appears I shall only be able to see Him through transcendental senses, so my senses will be transformed in this way, and through those senses I shall be able to see the play of *Harināma*.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said that *Harināma* Himself will appear within your heart, and when He will appear, you will then be able to feel His presence. You will be able to feel joyfulness, happiness and a living ecstasy. You will feel everything.

First we need a connection with the proper channel, then it is necessary to plant that within our heart. We have received that seed from a grand Guru, then it is up to us to plant it nicely. The ball is now in our own court; and whether someone can score a goal or not depends on their own capacity.

Capacity comes to us through the process of humility, tolerance and giving honour to others. Mahāprabhu expressed that mainly ‘capacity’ means that without offence we are to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*. If we are able to chant in this way, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* must appear within our heart. The ten kinds of offences are dangerous things*.

The main obstruction is ego. If we cannot first remove the ego then in which way can we chant? Therefore we must follow the four advices given to us

by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, then the ego will go out, and other obstructions will go out also. His advice is:

**tṛnād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā,
amāninā mānadena
kīrttanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ**

“One who knows himself as more insignificant than a blade of grass, who is as forbearing as a tree, and who gives due honour to others without desiring it for himself, is qualified to sing the glories of Lord Hari constantly.”

First of all it is necessary to feel who we actually are and what our position is, then the ego cannot come, and we must be humble. *Taror api sahiṣṇunā* means to be tolerant, like a tree. If you cut the branch of a tree he will not protest, and cannot protest also. Everything depends upon your will, but the tree treats you as his friend. If you cut his branches, next year he will still give fruit to you. He will not stop his benevolence.

In which way does the tendency to be an enemy come in this world? Everyone feels the need to have some position, and each have the tendency to make all others lower than themselves: that is ego. But if we give honour to everyone, even to those who have no honour, they must be pleased with us. Therefore if we can make ourselves very humble, tolerant and in the mood of giving honour to others—not only by mouth, but actually by our nature—then the enemy tendency will not come from any other side. Everyone will become our friend, and if we give honour to

*See Appendix III

everyone, then no possibility will arise to make offence to the Vaiṣṇavas. It is very difficult to know who is a Vaiṣṇava and who is not. We do not have that type of capacity, so in which way shall we decide? Therefore it is necessary to always give honour to everyone.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj generally instructed, “Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and follow the four directives. Your duty is to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa without offence. In this way you will get everything. And read the books. Why? It is necessary to read the Scriptures in order to make yourself good, but it is not permitted to read all the Scriptures.”

It is not permitted because we may not be able to understand the content properly:

**yāha, bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne
ekānta āśraya kara caitanya-carāṇe**

*(Chaitanya-caritāmṛta
Antya-līlā 5.131)*

“If you want to read the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, go to the Vaiṣṇava who knows its real meaning. In front of him you are to read the *Bhāgavatam*, and in that way you will gain some proper understanding, otherwise you will not be able to understand.”

I can read Bengali, and there is a translation of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* in Bengali, then why did Śrīla Guru Mahārāj instruct me, “You go to Swāmī Mahārāj and read *Bhagavad-gītā* from him”? There is a reason for that. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained, “By this process you will not go in the wrong way. Rather, your understanding must develop in the proper way.” The *Bhagavad-gītā* was the first of our books that I read.

[A child comes and makes an offering to Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj and draws his attention.]

Seeing how the young children are coming and making offerings, and seeing how enlightened and attracted they are by Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I am thinking this is all the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I am moved to see it. These small boys are very enthusiastic to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*, and it is not only as a formality, but it is coming from their heart. It is genuine. They do not know about this mundane world and many things, but with the association of their fathers, mothers and other devotees, they feel much inspiration to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*.

They are so innocent. Sometimes we mention something to them to make them conform to customs, “Oh, this is not good, this is not the behaviour of a good Vaiṣṇava...,” but who are we to tell them like that? We must also show them humility, tolerance and honour.

But ‘humility and tolerance’ does not mean that if anybody kicks my Guru Mahārāj’s photo, or in front of me kicks a Vaiṣṇava, that I shall tolerate such actions. This is not the actual meaning.

We must have tolerance of mind for anything against ourselves. If, however, we see too much disturbance, our first duty is to take ourselves as well as our dependents away from that place. We must leave such association. In this way it is necessary to protect ourselves and the children. At the same time the children must always receive some good inspiration, and I am seeing in the Western world that they are getting that.

Demolishing Pillars of Ego

I was in Australia, and seeing the mood of all the devotees and children, I was stunned. They are so enlightened with Kṛṣṇa consciousness and so devoted. They gave me some photographs of us all together, and if you will see them you will be happy to notice how nicely they are chanting the *Mahāmantra* and how enlightened they are with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Actually it is all the property of our Gurudeva.

Now that chair of Guru has come to me. What is my practice? It is that my Guru has ordered me, “Do this...,” therefore I am doing it. But if any ego will come to me, then I will fall down, no doubt: “Oh, I am a grand Guru! Why are you not giving respect to me?” I have seen many examples of this. It is no joking matter.

For forty-two years I was with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. I did not go anywhere without his service, but all the Gurus came to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. So it is my fortune that I have seen many things in their dealings and how they gave constant honour to others. Some of that mood I have also gained from them.

Whenever they came to the *Maṭh* they would always give honour to one another very nicely. Also my Śrīla Guru Mahārāj right up to his last days expressed, “I am a student, I am not a master. You are also students. You are all my friends, and students; and I am feeling I am also a student.” I have received that teaching from my Guru Mahārāj, and I cannot forget it. I am a student. I am his servants’ servant, and I am trying to serve his devotees.

I have come out from India to serve the devotees. I have come by the will

of the devotees for the service to the devotees, and to give help to whoever has the devotional mood. I have come to help the sincere seekers who have eagerness for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I shall try to help them.

If a blind man cannot cross the road, what shall I do? I shall take his hand and help him: “Oh, come, you can cross the road now.” In this way it is help to others.

**om̐ ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitam yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ**

All the conditioned souls are blind actually. They can neither see the Form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa nor the world of His transcendental affairs. They cannot see, so in this sense they are blind. They are searching, “Where is my property? Where is my property?” It is their property, but they cannot see it. The following example is given in *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*.

“You are the full proprietor of a large wealth but, even though it is within your own home, you do not know where it is hidden. You do not know that it is hidden within you. In searching for it, if you go to the western side, if you go to the southern side, or if you go to the northern side, you will be cheated. You can also dig a deep well, but you won’t find any wealth there either. But if you go to the east corner of your house and dig there, you will find it.” This example is given, and the expert who knows that, will show you: “Your wealth is within you. Try to get it in this particular way.” Following him, you must be successful.

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ. “We are all sons of nectar, sons of the nectarean ocean.” Therefore it is necessary for everyone to discover that wealth, and to find out that it is within, it is in our own heart. And it will be very helpful for us if anyone can show in which way we can easily discover it. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

When you give knowledge of one’s wealth to someone, he will adjust his own activities in order to try to discover it—he will develop the proper devotional mood.

**śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arccanam vandanaṁ dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau
bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addha
tan manye ’dhītam uttamam**

First is *śravaṇam*, hearing, and if you can listen very attentively, then you can chant—*kīrtanam*. Then comes *smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, *arccanam*, *vandanaṁ*, *dāsyam*, *sakhyam* and *ātma-nivedanam*. These are the nine principal kinds of practising processes, and you will try to do them. They give nourishment to the *bhakti-latā*, the creeper of *bhakti*, the creeper of devotion. You must try to grow that creeper within your heart.

Question: Śrīla Mahārāj, you mentioned how Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked you to read *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* under the guidance of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and that this process would keep you on the right track. Please could you explain this further.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes, I can help to explain it through the following example. When a railway carriage runs along the main track it must not deviate to another track or become derailed. So Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “When I am not here, you read *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* from Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. Stay on the track!” That was his advice, rather his order. At that time he did not give advice to us; his order was sufficient!

Since the day of my joining the *Maṭh* I have seen many things by the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. I have also gained many friends, and they are all very good Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj was a very great Vaiṣṇava, and when he expressed, “Govinda Mahārāj is my son,” it is not a light thing. At that time he was a grand world Guru. In the meeting for the opening of the Māyāpur Chandradoy Mandir in 1973, he also told the gathering that he considered myself as his son, and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj as his *Śikṣā-Guru*. In the opening meeting of his Temple he expressed it. I consider this as one kind of honour for me, and it is a high fortune, otherwise I would not get this type of honour. But I know that I am a very tiny and fallen soul, and I always feel it.

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj wanted to give his chair to me I was very afraid to take it. I did not want to be a Guru. Actually I have some previous brahminical experience: I was born in a family of *brāhmaṇas*, and that family was a guru family. My father, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc. were all gurus. Being born in such a family I know what is the position of a Guru. Therefore I was not

eager to take the position of Guru, and I did not want to play or pretend with others in such matters—that is not my nature. I therefore avoided: “Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, I am a very fallen soul. I cannot be Guru now. You are Guru, please you continue.”

“When will you be Guru?”

“I shall see, later.”

More than thirty years passed in this way. But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was very knowledgeable in law and he said, “After giving this chair to you if I live for at least two years, then your position will be firm; otherwise some legal disturbances may come.” He explained that if someone gives any property to others as a gift, then according to Indian law it will be secure if he remains alive for at least two more years.

Then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “I shall not stay in this world much longer so you must take it at this time. What I am telling you is my last desire. If you do not take this now, I shall die today. Do you hear that?”

I wanted to wait three months more, so I said, “Mahārāj, I have not managed everything, so please give me three months more time.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj replied, “No. You must take *sannyāsa* the day after tomorrow, and at that time you must take the chair of this *Maṭh*. I shall give it to you, and if you say ‘No,’ then I must die today.”

I told Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “Mahārāj, I am your goat, your sacrificial goat. If you want to cut my tail, or if you want to cut my throat; that is your will. I am ready. When you are telling me this, what shall I do? I am ready for the sacrifice.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj immediately called Śrīpād Kṛṣṇa Śaraṇa Prabhu* and instructed him, “Go and bring the priest. The day after tomorrow Govinda Mahārāj will take *sannyāsa* and I shall give all charge to him.”

I was afraid to see the chair of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. I did not want to be a Guru. It was inconceivable to me, but I could not ignore it. I know what is the Guru’s position, therefore I was afraid.

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave that position to me, from that day on I thought that I must be humble, I must be tolerant, and I must give honour to others. These are the first qualifications I need. I must feel that I am a servant of the servant of the servants of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

What is the *sannyāsa* promise, and what is the meaning of the *sannyāsi’s tridaṇḍa*? The meaning is, “With my body, with my speech and with my mind, I shall serve my Guru. I am promising this, and I am accepting the *tridaṇḍa* so that by holding it I shall always be reminded of my service.”

In this way I promised to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “I shall serve you with my body, I shall serve you with my mind and I shall serve you with my speech. I shall give this ‘punishment’ to myself. I make this promise in front of you and in front of the sacrificial fire.” That is *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa*. *Sannyāsa* does not mean to be a Guru, actually. But it means, “I must serve you with my full energy. I shall not spend one moment for any other purpose.” That is real *sannyāsa*.

*Who since received *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj—and the name ‘Śrīpād Bhakti Prasūn Araṇya Mahārāj.’

Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is given a description:

**etām sa āsthāya parātma-niṣṭhām
adhyāsitām pūrvvatamair maharṣibhiḥ
aham tariṣyāmi duranta-pāram
tamo mukundāṅghri-niṣevayaiva**

“By the service to Kṛṣṇa and the devotees, I must cross over the illusory environment and join the transcendental service world, the plane of dedication. I must join there.” This is the *sannyāsa* promise, and it is the real meaning of *sannyāsa*.

In the present day we see that many *sannyāsīs* are feeling, “I took *sannyāsa*, now everyone will serve me.” But this is not the meaning of *sannyāsa*. Rather, the *sannyāsī* should serve everyone.

Such service may be: “If anyone will try to connect with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and if I have some seeds of that property, I must give that to him.” If so, then first we must see that whoever wants connection is a sincere seeker. It is necessary to look and see whether he has sincerity and faith, otherwise giving him the seed may destroy me also.

There are ten kinds of *Nāmāparādha*. One of them is that you don’t give advice to chant *Harināma* to one who has no faith. I composed verses about these ten offences. The first one is:

**harināma mahāmantra
sarvva-mantra-sāra
yāñdera karunābale jagate pracāra
sei nāma-parāyaṇa sādhu, mahājana
tāñhādera nindā nā kariha kadācana**

“The Holy Name is chanted all over the world by the power and grace of the saints. They are always absorbed in

chanting the Holy Name. Never abuse them at any time, because that will be an offence to the Name. The Name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are the same, and if you abuse those who are preaching Their glories, the Name will not be happy with you. The Name will not then appear in your heart.”

The ninth *aparādha* is:

**nāme śraddhā-hīna-jana—
vidhātā-vañcita
tāre nāma dāne aparādha suniścita**

“Don’t advise those who have no faith to chant *Harināma*.”

You can notice that faith is necessary everywhere. If you are a follower of Mohammedanism, Christianity, Buddhism or Confucious, the first property of the follower is faith. You must be faithful, then you can enquire further.

The first necessity is to have faith. If someone is faithful and a sincere seeker, I shall try to give help to him, and that will also come to give help to me.

A real Guru always feels, “My disciple is not actually a disciple of myself. He is my Guru appearing in the form of my disciple in order to teach me.” If these feelings will come to a Guru, he is a real Guru. Further, he will feel, “If I shall do anything wrong in front of my disciple he will also do wrong and will not be benefitted by my words; therefore I must try to be perfect.”

Before taking *sannyāsa*, and before taking this chair, I was a very angry person. My nature was that I could not tolerate anything wrong. If anyone told a lie, directly I would chastise him; that was my previous nature. But when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave me the service

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of Guru, I left that bad nature. Now I am trying to follow the directives of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and I am also telling those directives to my friends and to my disciples.

If I am humble, I can say to a boy, “You must be humble!” But if I am not humble, then in which way will he learn humility? If I will not give honour to others, then how will he learn it? Therefore when I have a position as a master, I must serve the disciple, at the same time that will help myself. This is the main and vital thing in the Kṛṣṇa conscious line.

Now we are all to look to see how much progress we have made in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is necessary in any way to make some progress. We have very exalted Gurus in Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. They are both in the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura who was very broad-hearted. We cannot conceive of how broad-hearted he was.

One day the following incident happened. Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura wanted to establish a centre in London. He proposed that a student hostel be constructed where Indians and foreigners can stay. There would then be some chance to give them some nourishment, and some chance to preach to them about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a very sober way. By this we could gain some friends from the student section in London. Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed that if necessary we can supply them their own type of food—meat—from a restaurant. The main thing is that they will come and that they will try to understand our conception. His point of view

was that if we make a big student home where perhaps one thousand can stay, if ten men will come in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness we shall feel ourselves successful. Why? Because it is a very rare thing to come in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It was his proposal that we could gain some affection from the general younger section in this way, and for that, he was prepared to forego our prestige.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj came from a very exalted brahminical family famous all over India, and earlier he was very attached to brahminical standards. When Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura mentioned the possibility of supplying meat, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was seated there and said to him, “Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our prestige will be lost if we arrange their non-vegetarian food to be brought from a restaurant.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura replied, “We shall supply everyone with vegetarian food, but if anyone cannot tolerate only vegetarian food, we shall try to supply according to their needs.” He showed such a degree of tolerance.

But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “We are Vaiṣṇavas. If we do that, everyone will abuse our mission, and that will not be good.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura responded, “A thousand births ago I considered this point and decided in this way.”

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura said something. Upon hearing this, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s conception became very clear: “Always you must be within *Vaikuṇṭha-vṛtti*. Your mood must be always the full serving mood, then

you can use anything for the service of Kṛṣṇa.”

Everything can be used in service to Kṛṣṇa, so why did Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj advise his disciples to follow the four directives, and from where did he get those directives? I shall explain.

These are found in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Actually there are not four, but five, directives given there: *dyūtam*, *pānam*, *striyā*, *śunā* and *jāta-rūpam*. But why did Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj avoid mentioning much about the last, gold?

Money is the main problem for the conditioned souls. They get everything through money: gambling, drinking and intoxication, illicit sex, and killing animals—meat eating. And these are the other four places Kali was given to live in by Mahārāj Parīkṣit.

Gambling, intoxication, illicit sex life and animal slaughter did not exist within the kingdom of Mahārāj Parīkṣit therefore Kali feared for his life. He therefore asked Mahārāj Parīkṣit, “Please allow me to also live where there is money.”

The King agreed, “Yes, I am giving that place to you also. You can reside where there is gold—money.” In this way Kali stays in five places, therefore actually there are five directives, but Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj did not stress much about the fifth, money. It is necessary to understand why. I can say the reason, and for that I have come here.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj always said, “You try to serve Kṛṣṇa in any way. And in any way you can, try to collect money for use in service to Him.”

He knew how money was coming for his mission, but he digested all the

sin behind it. He did not express to the unqualified how much sin was in that money, but he digested it all himself. He had such power of digestion.

He did not instruct, “Don’t bring money.” Instead he advised, “Go for preaching and book distribution. Everywhere money is needed otherwise it is not possible to preach, so also collect money.” He stood by that principle and he had the capacity to digest it. That is, he is a *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. He is an incarnation of the power of Nityānanda Prabhu, so he can digest everything.

He said, “Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, therefore you are to serve Him in every respect and in every way. You can use everything in the service of Kṛṣṇa.” In this way he did not make others feel hopeless.

He knew that it is a very difficult thing to use money, so he took all that charge himself. He ordered, “Do this with the money, and do that. Whatever sinful things will come through that money, I shall take that.”

Kṛṣṇa said in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*,

**yajñārthāt karmmaṇo ’nyatra
loko ’yaṁ karmma-bandhanaḥ
tad-arthaṁ karmma kaunteya
mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara**

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.9)

If you will try to serve the Lord of *Yajña*, Kṛṣṇa, with your full energy through a real Guru or real Vaiṣṇava, you will not receive any mundane reaction. But if you don’t engage in such service, you will receive reaction.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj came out from India to the West in order to spread Kṛṣṇa

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consciousness throughout the mundane world, and he knew money to be necessary for that. It is the basis.

He thought: “If I tell my students, ‘Don’t touch money, Kali is there!’ then my preaching programme will be hampered.” In the West nobody else was able to preach, so Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj took that preaching responsibility himself. That was his actual desire.

Unlike Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj continued his preaching in a very small way. He did not want to make his mission very big. He wanted to stay in Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh without going anywhere else. He did not want to construct many buildings. His wish was to have just one building for the Deities, and in a part of that building he wanted one room for his quarters and one room for guests. That was his desire, but when he trained me he expected that I would do some service for the devotees.

Many devotees started to come from

the Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern worlds and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “This mission is now growing very big. You should put some limit to it.”

But I was very enthusiastic to see everyone being drawn to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s teachings and I told Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “I shall take all the charge, don’t you worry. If you give your permission I shall serve them.”

He replied, “You do not know English so in which way will you serve them?”

I said, “Mahārāj, by your mercy English will come to me. I shall not go to learn English. By your mercy everything that is necessary will come to me, therefore I am not worried about that.”

In this way Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh has grown and by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s grace and the affection of you all we now have this chance to discuss such topics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj even here in Hawaii.



Part II

from the

World Tour, Second Leg

— 4 —

The Eye-Opener

Introducing Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
to a gathering in Mauritius during the second leg of the World Tour.

By

Śrī Adhokṣaja Dāsa Adhikārī

It's a very great opportunity to have in our midst Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. He represents the *Śrī Rūpānuga Sampradāya* in the whole world today. His Gurudeva, Paramahansa Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, is unanimously hailed for his high teachings of the ultimate conclusions of the Scriptures. And we are all truly aware of the great, world-renowned Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda who formed the world-wide ISKCON movement. These two great teachers and Swāmijis both blessed our Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, to spread the Holy Name around the world.

We also have in our midst Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj. He is highly learned. Apart from English he also knows Hindi, Sanskrit and Bengali, and he can speak each fluently.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj himself is a master of Sanskrit and Bengali, composing many *śloka*s and songs in these languages.

Now I'll talk about the need for a Spiritual Master.

As our Scriptures we have the *Vedas*. *Veda* means 'to know,' and there our knowledge begins. Spiritual knowledge begins only when we surrender to the Lotus Feet of a Spiritual Master.

Material education such as we have in colleges and universities is, we are

sorry to say, nothing more than progress in ignorance. I also used to be in that tunnel, but the fact is that such education is considered in this way. We can have true knowledge only when we surrender to the Lotus Feet of a Spiritual Master. Real knowledge will make us understand our own self, and God. We will realise our happy position as a servitor, and we will serve accordingly. We will have proper service and we will engage ourselves in proper activities.

We pray in the temples for some spiritual benefit, and in the temples we also read the Scriptures. There it is said that real knowledge of our self is available only at the Lotus Feet of a Spiritual Master.

**tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ**

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.34)

Without surrender we shall not get proper light of who we are, and our service will be nearly null and void; this is mentioned in our *Sāstras*. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “If you want to have knowledge, this is available only at the Lotus Feet of a Gurudeva.”

For example, there are many educational books, such as books for doctors, but without a qualified teacher, our studies will be in vain. Similarly, matters about spiritual things can be had only at the Lotus Feet of a bona-fide spiritual teacher, a Spiritual Master, and nowhere else. Indeed, this is the advice of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, our Lord, Bhagavān. We should have complete faith in His words.

**ācāryyaṁ māṁ vijānīyān
nāvamanyeta karhicit
na marttya buddhyāsūyeta
sarvva deva-mayo guruḥ**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.17.27)

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself glorifies the position of an *Āchāryya*, and says that He Himself comes as the *Āchāryya*. We cannot see Lord Kṛṣṇa, He is spiritual and we are material. But He comes in the form of a Spiritual Master. So, you see, we have the Lord Himself explaining about His own Self, His own wealth.

I won't say more, because our Gurudeva is here and we wish to hear his words. But we can learn everything only from the Lotus Mouth of our Spiritual Master. He is our eye-opener. And by his grace we will have spiritual insight.

Now our Śrīla Gurudeva will speak.



— 5 —

Life's Destination

by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Honourable teachers, respectable Vaiṣṇavas, and my beloved students, I am feeling very fortunate that you have given me this chance to speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am especially indebted to the authorities of this college; because of their kindness it was possible for me to meet with you all today.

When I first came here to Mauritius I noticed some very auspicious symptoms. I noticed that the trees are bearing so many fruits, all the earth is very fertile, and all the people are very conscious of religion. I was surprised to see that this country is like a heaven on earth. I saw that many mangoes had fallen from the trees, and many other trees bore ripe papayas and other fruits, yet nobody collected those fruits. Seeing these symptoms immediately inspired me to remember Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma. There we find ripe fruits on the trees everywhere, and the souls residing there are full of the mood of service. They are all eternally engaged in the Divine Service of the Supreme Lord. We find such descriptions of Goloka-Vṛndāvana, the Holy Abode of Kṛṣṇa, in *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*. This holy book was brought by Śrīman Mahāprabhu from South India, and it is widely accepted by religious

authorities as the authentic treatise depicting the Teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu..

**īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarvva-karaṇa-kāraṇam**

(*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1)

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Joy, is Govinda, Kṛṣṇa. He is beginningless, the Origin of all that be, and the Cause of all causes.” That is, the actual form of each one of us originates from the *Sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* of Kṛṣṇa.

All the Vedic Scriptures teach us that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ‘Other gods’ also have their own abodes and full powers, but as expansions of the Power of the Infinite Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. If you subtract infinite power from infinite power, you will still remain with infinite power, in a similar way as zero minus zero equals zero.

**om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate**

Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration

A proper examination of the Vedic Scriptures will leave us with no doubt that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Throughout the whole world people are chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*, and through that we can also have some understanding. In all the Scriptures—the *Vedānta*, *Upaniṣads*, eighteen *Purāṇas*, etc.—everywhere we find chanted the Glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Still the question arises, ‘What is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and why should we worship Kṛṣṇa?’

We are in want. We are not fulfilled within ourselves, and for that fulfilment we must worship Kṛṣṇa. What is our want? We need love, we need beauty, we need charm, we need ecstasy, and so on. These are essential for our living soul.

The soul is always in a state of living—the properties of the soul are willing, feeling and thinking. The soul can move, and the *jada*, the material, cannot move. But even within matter, souls are living. Within a tree is living a soul, and this has also been proved by scientists such as Jagadish Bose. But this knowledge is not new; in the ancient *Vedas* we will find all knowledge given in a living way. The knowledge given by the *Vedas* is that behind everything is the living soul, and if we study the *Vedas* we will find this out.

The property of the living soul is willing, feeling and thinking. One who has these properties must necessarily need to do something. He can do good or he can do bad. If he will do good, then good reaction will come to him. And if he will do bad then bad will come to him as his reaction. You have probably heard Newton’s third law which states,

‘To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.’ Every action has reaction. Therefore we shall try to do good things otherwise we shall not receive any good reaction.

And to get relief from all reaction we are to follow in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There we can see that if we surrender fully to Kṛṣṇa then everything will go directly into His account. If we can put all our actions in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, reaction will not come to us. This process has been given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

In this gathering you are all students and you all wish to know something about religion, specifically something about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you will try to read *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, you must be benefited. Everyone has the chance to improve his future by reading this book whether he is a fruitive worker who needs to do some work, or a knowledge seeker who always must think and gain knowledge, or a yogi wanting to conquer power from the environment, or a *bhakta* who is always surrendered and fully dependant upon the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Everyone can gain some good future prospect from reading *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

**anāsaktasya viṣayān
yathārham upayuñjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe
yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate**
(*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.255)

The real benefit to be gained is that without mundane attachment we are to engage in service to Kṛṣṇa.

**aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṁ
prajñā-vādāṁś ca bhāṣase
gatāsūn agatāsūṁś ca
nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.11)

Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, “You are speaking like a wise man, but you are suffering from this material happiness and sadness. You are showing yourself to be knowledgeable in the *Vedas* (*paṇḍit*), but you are not actually following that line.” Then Kṛṣṇa started to give some knowledge of the *Vedas* to Arjuna. He explained that there is a certain plane, and if we can live there, no reaction will come to us.

Kṛṣṇa said,

**niyataṁ kuru karmma tvaṁ
karmma jyāyo hy akarmmaṇaḥ
śarīra-yātrāpi ca te
na prasiddhyed akarmmaṇaḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.8)

“If you do not do anything then you will not get anything. You will not even be able to survive. You must do something, so try to do something good.”

**yajñārthāt karmmaṇo 'nyatra
loko 'yaṁ karmma-bandhanaḥ
tad-arthaṁ karmma kaunteya
mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.9)

“O Arjuna, this whole world of living beings comes into bondage by all action except action performed as selfless duty offered unto Lord Viṣṇu. Therefore, being free from attachment, fully engage in the performance of action for the purpose of such sacrifice.”

Actually, we need to do something

good even from childhood. This is the knowledge of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whenever we shall gain any knowledge, we shall try to use that for a good purpose; not only a good purpose, but we shall use it in a way that will be good for everybody. If we will proceed in this way we shall get super benefit in our life as the final result.

When students endeavour for promotion to a higher class, they try heart and soul. But everyone is not able to get the desired result because there may be many types of deficiency. Some may fail in their class, but if we can think that ‘failure is the pillar of success’ then we can get much strength to try and try again. Even in the mundane world we must apply this process.

At first nobody can run. When a very young child tries to run, he must fall down on the ground, but again he tries to run. He falls down, runs, falls down... but gradually he will gain strength and capacity, and finally he will be able to run properly. In this way a *karmmi*, a fruitive worker, has some prospect, *jñānīs* also, yogis also, but the super prospect is with those who are fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. By their own freewill they march in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they will gain the benefit accordingly.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find the advice of Prahāda Mahārāj to his student classmates.

**kaumāra ācāret prājño
dharmmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.1)

Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration

Prahlāda was a devotee of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva. His classmate friends were from 5 to 12 years of age. When he met with them in their teacher's house they would discuss together and he would urge them to enquire about, and practise, spiritual life even from childhood.

We have fortunately gained this human body. We are *jīvas*-souls and we may be given any type of body according to our activities. But now some good previous activities have brought us this human body. In the human body there is very much possibility to learn many things. We have much capacity to learn and realise. Other species such as dogs, cows, etc. only have a very limited power of understanding; just sufficient to try to achieve some basic happiness. Real happiness, however, is not possible in this mundane world, but some realisation is possible.

We use knowledge in many ways to try to gain happiness and a good result. The best thing for the *jīva* is to try to know what is the transcendental world's environment, and his place there. Who am I? Why am I here? What is my destination of life? After death where shall I go? In this human body we can realise the answers to many such questions; and that is called *Bhāgavat-jñāna*, *Bhāgavat-dharmma*. If we shall try to read and know about such topics, we must be benefitted.

It is necessary that in this life we try to know what is the super benefit of our human life, and the super benefit of the soul. The soul is actually transcendental, but our body is mortal. The transcendental body is living in the mortal body, whether it be a human body or any

other variety of species.

Actually we are not this body. We are living inside this body. We can understand it when we see a person who is dying. At that time we cannot give him any more days. We can understand that inside the body is the spirit of the person. With the spirit is willing, feeling and thinking, and that is called the *jīva*, the soul. When a man dies, that soul leaves the temporary material body. This is not only Indian philosophy, but in the Western countries also we find famous philosophers such as Hegel who have similar realisations.

We must try to do something good for our self, for our soul. Good is possible through the processes of humility, tolerance, and giving honour to others. We should try to avoid the opposing environment, and in that way we can happily study what is the soul, what is God, and what is the super benefit of this life. Also we shall study about where we have come from, where we shall go, etc. Birth and death is natural in this world, and we are always getting happiness and sadness and many other temporary feelings. We must try to understand all these things.

Prahlāda Mahārāj said,

**kaumāra ācaret prājño
dharmmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.6.1)

We must try to know what is *Bhāgavat-dharmma*, and when that steady knowledge comes within us, we shall try to gain the chance through that knowledge to know what is what. If not,

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we shall be losers. Actually it is only in this human body that we can understand properly what is good and what is bad, and if we shall try sincerely we must get that type of knowledge.

What is necessary is sincerity, tolerance, humility and giving honour to others. These four qualities are necessary for everyone. I am very happy to observe that the people here in Mauritius are very enthusiastic and enlightened

with these qualities. Furthermore, their tendency is to be real searchers, and they are practising to do good according to their capacity, while avoiding bad things. I am very happy to see this within this small country.

I am pleased to meet with you all. I do not know how much good I can do for you, but I am with you, and it is my expectation that our attempt must be fruitful for the future.



— 6 —

Reaping the Eternal Fruit

A lecture delivered in Mauritius by
His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

(Translated from the original Hindi by Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj)

**om̐ ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitam̐ yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ**

**vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas' ca
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ**

**he kṛṣṇa karuṇā-sindho
dīna-bandho jagat-pate
gopeśa gopikā-kānta
rādhā-kānta namo 'stu te**

**jayatām suratau paṅgor
mama manda-mater gatī
mat-sarvasva-padāmbhojau
rādhā-madana-mohanau**

*Jaya Om̐ Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak
Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj kī jaya!*

Jaya samavetā bhakta-vṛnda kī jaya!

*All the Eastern and Western devotees
kī jaya!*

All the Mauritius devotees kī jaya!

Gaura-premānande Hari bol!

My dear honourable faithful souls, worshippable Vaiṣṇavas, ladies, gentlemen and beloved children, by your heart's auspicious desire the Supreme Lord has bestowed His mercy upon me so that I could come into your presence today, and am able to have the opportunity to see your auspicious selves and offer my worshipful prayers unto you. After we offer our worshipful prayers to our Divine Master we also realise that the good souls who come and assemble wanting to hear about Kṛṣṇa—they too become worshippable to us.

The Supreme Lord resides within everything that be. We find His Presence everywhere. It is not that the Lord lives only in Vaikuṇṭha or Goloka, although that is His Divine Abode where His Eternal Play goes on. But there are also many Forms of the Supreme Lord.

**vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj-jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti
bhagavān iti śabdyate**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.11)

We can know about three principal Forms of the Lord from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—*Brahma*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān*. From a very distant

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viewpoint, we may have a very hazy conception of the Lord, and that is called *Brahma*, just as we observe the sun by its blazing light—yet, within the sun itself there is another plane of movement. In the sun there is air, oxygen, fire, and so many elements. But we cannot enter the sun-abode; we can only see an effulgent form from a distance. Similarly, to view the Lord from a great distance means to see only a form of effulgence.

Further, another Form of the Lord is *Paramātmā*. *Paramātmā* resides within all *jīva*-souls. All the souls act in various ways in this world, and the *Paramātmā* is always with them as the Witness. The individual souls by nature are implicated by their actions, but the Lord, with His Transcendental Nature, remains unaffected. Remaining ever-present within the souls, the Lord as *Paramātmā* observes the activities of the souls, or *jīvātmās*. Furthermore, He is also present in every atom of existence; so it is said in the Scriptures that there is no place in creation where the Lord does not preside. When the souls try to enjoy the illusory energy of the Lord—*Māyā*—they abandon their natural inner tendency for service and adopt the nature of an enjoyer. Still, the Lord desires to take even those fallen souls back home to His Divine Abode, known as Paravyomadhāma, Vaikuṇṭha, or Goloka.

The souls belong to the *taṭasthā-śakti*, or Marginal Potency of the Lord. They are not born, but they are manifest by the Will of the Lord. This is accepted in all the Scriptures. When they are thus manifest, they appear in many forms.

Whatever religious forms appear in

the world, whether Christian, Buddhist, Muslim or Hindu, all are one with each other in that the aim of all is to reveal the same objective. The cause of the manifestation of this material world seen from various angles and distances of perception is the reason for different religious conceptions being preached in the world. But the Vedic Religion, or the Teachings given by the *Vedas*, show us that all souls are manifest from the Marginal Potency of the Lord; and from their manifestation, the potencies of thinking, feeling and willing remain with them. Since they possess these potencies, they are therefore units of life, units of consciousness.

It is also shown in this scientific age of exploration of atoms, neutrons and protons, etc., that everything in existence is in a state of movement. Every atom has a certain measurement of other bodies revolving around it. Similarly, in the Vedic Teachings we see that life is present everywhere. With their modern research and studies, the scientists are teaching us these things, but from thousands and thousands of years ago the Vedic Teachings tell us that whatever exists in the world—everything is *cetana*. It is all conscious, living.

Even a cement and brick building is *cetana*. Although at present we do not perceive any movement of the building, in a few hundred years we shall notice that a pillar or other part of the building has dissolved or undergone a reformation. Actually nothing has dissolved, but the internal action of the object has finally made itself visible to us.

The state of *cetana*—consciousness or life—is present everywhere in two

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basic forms: *sthāvara* and *jaṅgama*, or stationary and moving. A tree is considered *sthāvara*, or stationary, yet there is life present in the tree. This has been discovered by a Bengali scientist, and it has been demonstrated with scientific instruments that a tree experiences pleasure and pain. So life is present everywhere, and life is called *ātmā*, or soul. In our body millions of life-forms, or souls, are present, but one principle soul guides the entire body as the master of the body, and he is called *debī* or *ātmā*. In this way, life is present everywhere, and when it shows movement it is called *jaṅgama*, otherwise it is called *sthāvara*. When a soul leaves the body what happens? Within two or three days the body noticeably decays. The body can no longer move—although there is still movement in it by way of its decaying. After only a month or so only bones remain, and they too will later become fossilised. The Observer or Witness of all the actions of the moving souls is the *Paramātmā*. *Paramātmā* is present within everything in existence. This is the Nature of the Form of *Paramātmā*.

Bhagavān is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and by His Nature, His *Līlā*, or Divine Pastimes, continue eternally. In this relative world the *taṭasthā-śakti jīva*-souls are bound as though in a prison-house, and this is a relative aspect of the Lord's *Līlā*. In a jail only a very small percentage of the population are found, maybe one percent or less. The normal population are not sent to jail—they reside at their homes and fulfil their works. The evil-doers are sent to jail by the law. The law is for everyone, but the jail is reserved for the violators of the

law. So in the world there may be billions of humans, of which maybe only a few hundred thousand are imprisoned. The rest are free to live and do their business in the world. Similarly, in the Transcendental World, which is known as *Paravyomadhāma*, all the residents live their lives happily without any obstacles; this plane is also known as *Sevā-bhūmi*, or the Land of Service. There, everyone gives joy to one another. As everyone serves the Supreme Lord, He also serves them—as a son serves his father and a father serves his son. This is similar to what we find in this world where fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters all live happily together.

But what is our work here? Some become husbands, some masters, some servants, etc., but what is their real work? Service. That is everyone's work here. A father accepts service from his sons but he also serves them by rearing and nourishing them. So service is the work of everyone. But in this world that service only remains temporarily and thus cannot afford us real value. If we construct a grand house we think that our son will live there, our daughter will live there, our relatives will live there; we shall have a TV set and live happily there. But soon our lifetime will be over. Somehow or other in the end we shall leave this world, and this must happen to us. Our juniors are also leaving this world. It is not a matter of seniors going and juniors staying, and at every moment we see that in this or that village or town people are going, they are dying one by one....

We have sufficient experience that as soon as one leaves this body he must

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leave this world, and no one can live forever within this body. After ten or twenty years, or twenty-five or a hundred years, or two or four months—whatever the time may be, everyone must die. Death is inevitable. As long as there is birth, death is inevitable. So no matter how hard we try, we cannot know happiness here. Today we need money, but is a rich man happy? What is his fate? He may end up with severe stomach trouble and be unable to eat more than a few grains of rice. And one who has beauty cannot be happy either. When his pulse goes wrong he worries why he has become ill, why he has become thin. Today we see that someone has become a great celebrity, but tomorrow he may not have even the power to walk. In this way, the whole world is temporary, and although we are attached to this temporary world we cannot remain here forever.

We cannot claim the house we have built as our own, and our son even won't be able to enjoy it for very long. The money we deposited for our son's welfare may be squandered by him for drugs and other useless or injurious things. One man saves while the other squanders. This is the way of the world.

So all souls have appeared from the Marginal Potency, or *tatasthā-śakti*, of the Lord, and their own home is the vast and infinite Transcendental World, Paravyomadhāma, and they mostly all go there and happily serve the Lord. It is only a small handful of souls like us that cast their glance upon the prison-house of this illusory world of Māyā despite the opportunity to serve in the Transcendental World; from that fateful glance

their misfortune is born. Beyond this we cannot consider any other cause of the *jīva*-souls coming to this world, so we must admit the cause of their coming here is simply their misfortune. When they see Māyā they think, "Here is the object of my enjoyment. I am superior, and that is inferior." Therefore they are attracted to this Māyik, or illusory, plane, which is just like a prison-house.

Still, the Supreme Lord has made all arrangements for taking them back to the Transcendental World. Sometimes when too many disturbances arise He comes here Himself, just as when disturbances arise in a prison, a senior officer or administrator comes personally and fires a few shots here and there to manage the situation. The Supreme Lord descends Personally. He is the Supremely Powerful, so He has no anxiety. When Nārāyaṇa comes from Vaikuṇṭha there is no question of Him 'leaving Vaikuṇṭha empty.' Simply by His Will another Nārāyaṇa can descend here. Also with Him are the Potencies of thinking, feeling and willing, but that Plane is *cetana*, or conscious and living, while this plane is *jaḍa*, mundane or material.

The illusory nature of this plane is also the Potency of the Supreme Lord, but this Potency is like a shadow. Fire has both its form as well as its shadow. The form of fire has its own existence, without which a shadow would not appear. By dint of light, shadow makes its appearance. And we have fallen into this shadow-potency. This is a Potency of the Supreme Lord, and it is also eternal. It will continue on and on. The Divine Pastimes of the Lord—*Līlā*—also go on eternally.

Reaping the Eternal Fruit

The holy book *Bhagavad-gītā* is now known all over the world. Many will know the famous verse:

**yadā yadā hi dharmmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyuttānām adharmmasya
tad ātmānām sṛjāmy aham**

When severe discrepancies in the rules and regulations of religion appear in the world, the Supreme Lord comes personally to set matters right. How? *Paritrāṇāya sādhūnam*. There may be some good souls in this world—of the prisoners in a jail, there may be many who aspire for their own good. To protect them, rescue them from their trials and to take them up, the Lord Himself comes.

**paritrāṇāya sādhūnām
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharmma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge**

So when the Lord comes, all evil disappears just as with the appearance of light, darkness is dispelled. As soon as the Lord appears in the world, all the darkness of the world vanishes. All the *jīva*-souls constantly emanate from the Marginal Potency of the Lord, therefore the illusory world is again filled up, as a jail never stays vacant. When each prisoner's term is up they one by one leave to enjoy their fortune.

We have seen that sometimes when a country attains independence, all its prisoners are released. Sometimes when a president of a nation is changed, for the honour of the new president many prisoners are released. All these things are seen in the world from time to time,

but all these matters are only the shadow of the Original Cause. So when the Supreme Lord appears, so many souls are rescued and leave this world forever. Sometimes He comes Himself and sometimes He sends His representative. The representative is known as the *sādhū* or Guru. He comes here to teach the souls, “*Jīva jāgo jīva jāgo gora cānd bole, koṭā nidrā jāo māyā piṣācira kole*—you are all sleeping here! Wake up! Wake up to your real selves! You are transcendental, conscious life, and your home is the Transcendental World of Divine Consciousness and Life. There you will find everything, your house, your home. Please get ready to go there.”

**uttiṣṭhata, jāgrata,
prāpya varān nibodhata
kṣurasya dhārā niśitā duratyayā
durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti**

Here, in the *Upaniṣads*, we find the Teachings of the Vedic Philosophy. The Scriptures tell us, “Arise from your slumber in this painful world and have your good fortune! Follow the saints!” They also tell us who we are and what our fortune is: *śṛnvantu viśve amṛtasya puttrāḥ. Om tat sat*—these words echo all over the universe.

The Transcendental World is Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is Truth, and we are all residents with Him in that Supreme Plane. Our nature is the same as that Transcendental Plane.

The burning power of the sun is also present in the sun's rays. There are also seven primary colours in the sunlight. Similarly, as spiritual rays of the Lord, we are endowed with powers of thinking, feeling and willing. As the

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Lord is *Pūrṇa-cetana* or the Supreme Original Conscious Entity, we, the individual souls, are *anucetana*, or atomic particles of consciousness. In the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* the soul is described as being so subtle that it is invisible to the eye:

**bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya
śata-dhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyah
sa cānantyāya kalpate**

The tip of a hair divided ten thousand times is a general estimation of the subtle form of the *jīva*. So he is invisible. But despite his minuteness, his power is great. He resides in the deepest recesses of the heart in such a subtle form, and to date he has never been seen. Nowadays some scientists say they can photograph some hazy shadow aspect of the soul, but still they could not ascertain the infinitesimal form of the soul. As this body is a covering, the soul also has a covering as mentioned in the *Gītā*:

**indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur
indriyebhyaḥ param manah
manasas tu parā buddhir
buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ**

These are all more and more subtle coverings of the soul. More subtle than this bodily type of covering is the covering of the senses; more subtle than the senses is the covering made of the mind; more subtle than that is the intelligence; and more subtle still is the soul—*ātmā*. So the soul resides within so many layers of coverings, and its form is still unknown to us.

Still, even though the soul is infinitesimal in size, it is a particle of conscious

life; and it eternally possesses the potent qualities of conscious life: thinking, feeling and willing. Anything having potency can act—whether with good or bad actions—and such potency of the soul is actually very great. A candle flame may be very tiny, but from such a tiny flame a gigantic fire can be ignited. From the tiny candle a larger candle can be ignited, and a larger one still; and the power of the large candle is of an equal nature to the small one. Their burning power is non-different. Similarly, the *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*—the Potent Qualities of Eternal Existence, Consciousness and Ecstasy—found in the Original Form of the Supreme Lord are also found within the soul, who is a part (*aṁśa*) of the Lord. However, at present the soul is covered. Light burns within a lightbulb, but the fire that causes that light cannot be found outside the bulb, although some heat is apparent. There is also cold fire, like neon for example, where even heat seems to be absent. In the microphone there is the invisible fire of electricity doing its work. We cannot perceive that fire, but we see from the results that its work is being accomplished. In this way, the action of power moves in many, many forms. So the potency of the *jīva*-soul can be used for either good or evil. When fortunate souls are ready to use their energy for good, if anyone disturbs them the Lord comes personally and destroys the disturbing elements. Those who want good are good. Thus He has said in the *Gītā*, “I come to protect the saints and to vanquish the evil-doers.” The less good that one wants, the more he is punished, and one who aspires for good is given

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a chance by the Lord: “Yes, you want good, so may you be virtuous. Virtue is your own wealth. What shall I take from you? I am full in Myself.” In the *Upaniṣads* we find:

**om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate**

“The Infinite Whole Source of all *Avatāras* and the Infinite Whole *Avatāra*—both are Whole, that is, full with all Potencies. The Infinite Whole *Avatāra* appears from the Infinite Whole Source of all *Avatāras* for the purpose of manifesting His Pastimes. In order to fulfil His Pastimes, the Infinite Whole *Avatāra* accepts His Infinite Whole Form, and finally the Infinite Whole Source of all *Avatāras* remains present; so in no way can the Infinite Completeness of the Supreme Lord ever suffer any diminution.”

So if the Infinite Whole is subtracted from the Infinite Whole, the Infinite Whole yet remains. In the Scriptures the Supreme Lord is described as *nija-lābha-pūrṇa*—He is perfect and complete in Himself. Therefore He feels no necessity for Himself; still, by virtue of His Willing Potency (*icchā-śakti*) His Pastimes go on, and by His Pastimes the fortunate devotee souls offer themselves to Him through Divine Service, and He too serves them and ecstatically gives Himself to them. In that service exchange, the ecstasy that the Lord feels is felt twice as much by His devotees. This is the nature of that Transcendental World, Paravyomadhāma, the Divine Abode of Goloka.

The Lord also has many different Forms, and in each Form He enjoys certain corresponding Pastimes; and the *jīva*-souls can gain the fitness to enter into particular Pastimes according to the classification of their Pure Devotion. The gradations of Ecstatic Divine Relationship are known as *Śānta*-, *Dāsyā*-, *Sakhyā*-, *Vātsalya*- and *Madhura*-rasas, or Passive Service, Active Service, Friendship, Parenthood and Consorthood. The pure devotees render Service to the Lord according to the *Rasa* of their inner heart's attraction. We normally speak of ‘Service to the Lord,’ but we should know that the Lord Himself also serves His devotee. When Kṛṣṇa stole butter Mother Yaśodā chased him with a stick. “Why have you stolen butter? We have no shortage of butter, and you have plenty to eat, so why do you have to steal it?” Then she bound Him with a rope to a tree. In this case the Lord serves His devotee in this mood of dealings as the son of His devotee.

The Relationship of Consorthood takes place between the Lord and the *Gopīs*.

In the Divine Abode, full-fledged Service in the five types of Divine Relationships continues eternally. In the Abode of the Lord's four-armed Nārāyaṇa Form the appropriate Services go on; in the Abode of the Lord's Rāmachanda Form, the appropriate Services go on, as the Lord manifests Himself in those particular Expansions and Forms of different Divine Moods. But we worship Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra with His Eternal Divine Pastimes, because it is in such Form, His most Original Form, that full-fledged Service is manifest in all the

five *Rasas*, and this is the Supreme Ecstasy for the *jīva*-souls. Such ecstasy cannot be experienced anywhere else.

The friends of the Lord say, “Let us play! Whoever is defeated must carry the winner on his shoulders!” When they take a bite from some nice fruit they immediately offer it to the mouth of Kṛṣṇa, saying, “Oh, Brother, this is so tasty—come on, please take some!” All such friendly, familiar dealings are found only in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* and nowhere else. The *Gopīs* accept Kṛṣṇa as their husband in their thought and actions also. Such Service they render to the Lord. So we have heard about the Lord’s Pastimes and we have heard about His Holy Name, and if we get a connection there, we can have the chance to be allowed into those Pastimes. This is the way of *Bhakti*, and this is called Devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead; and He is Kṛṣṇa.

Just see how sweet the Name ‘Kṛṣṇa’ is. ‘Kṛṣṇa’ means ‘He who attracts all the souls to His Abode, and gives them Ecstasy.’ That is Kṛṣṇa.

**kṛṣṇir bhū-vācakaḥ śabdo
ṇaś ca nirvṛti-vācakaḥ
taylor aikyaṁ paraṁ brahma
kṛṣṇa ity abhidhīyate**

(Mahābhārata)

“The root ‘Kṛṣ’ expresses the All-attractive Existence, and the word ‘ṇa’ expresses the Supreme Ecstasy. The two combined give the Name ‘Kṛṣṇa,’ ascertaining the *Parama Brahma*—the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Godhead.”

He is attracting everyone, yet He never takes away the independence that He has given us. This can be seen as

both the fortune and the misfortune of the *jīva*-souls. The Lord has given independence to all souls—from their very inception they have the potency of thinking, feeling and willing. This independence has been given to us by the Lord. Why? So that by our own desire and free wish we can engage ourselves in His Service. With as much power at our command, as much as we desire, we can combine everything we have and render Divine Service to the Lord.

The Lord’s feeling is, “I have given you independence, and I will not take it back. If you want to serve Me, you may do so; otherwise you can go to Māyā. You may do as you wish. But you will be happy if you render service to Me. Why will you be happy? If you serve the eternal, you will reap the eternal fruit; if you serve the temporal, you must reap the temporary fruit.”

“To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction,” as the scientist Newton said in his third law. So Kṛṣṇa is saying, “Do My Service and your service will be done twice as well.” When Kṛṣṇa’s friend is eating a very sweet fruit, he will give that fruit to Kṛṣṇa, “See, Brother, you will like this very much.” Then Kṛṣṇa eats some and says, “Yes, this is excellent, but how shall I eat it alone? You also eat!” Then they both eat very happily. We also hear about the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa with the *Gopīs* on the banks of the Yamunā. Kṛṣṇa gives happiness to all, even to the point of giving *Himself*. If anyone is unhappy, He gives them double happiness. And the conception that has been given to us by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is most elevated: *Virahamīlana*, the conception of Union in

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Separation, is the bestower of the greatest joy. In the world we may have some feelings resembling that. If a man has gone to a very far and distant land and could not return home to his wife for as long as three or four years, when he finally returns home, how much joy do they both feel? We can just imagine how much joy the husband and wife feel in their hearts.

After a great separation, the joy of reunion is the highest and supermost

joy. Such joy is found in the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and not other pastimes. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's Gift is to give everyone a chance to aspire to become a member of those Pastimes and live in Vṛndāvana. There you will find forest flowers, cows, milk, cream, cheese; you can play with Kṛṣṇa, run with Kṛṣṇa, meet with Kṛṣṇa—everything, you can do with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes are the most ecstatic of all.



Our Super Benefit

The second part of the previous lecture

When as a young lad of 17 I joined with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in 1947, he said to me, “I will not be here in Calcutta at all times, so you learn *Bhagavad-gītā* from Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda.”

When Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj read the *Gītā* he would translate it and also teach it to me. At that time we were staying in Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj’s house. That was before he took *sannyāsa*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj were very intimate friends. I was 17, and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj’s son was also 17, so we were friends. Sometimes we fought as well.

Every day I would go to Bara Bazaar for preaching, and during the preaching many questions would come up, and many would ask me, “Why have you become a *sādhū*? What value do you find in this life? Why have you given up school studies to become a *sādhū* begging in the street?” In this way many people would question me. One of the questions that came up was, “Oh, why don’t you worship Mother Kālī? If you worship her she will give you everything. Just pray, “*Dhanam dehī, rūpam dehī, janam dehī, yaśam dehī,...*” You’ll get everything—wealth, beauty, family, prestige. You’ll get everything, so why don’t you worship Mother Kālī? Why do you worship Kṛṣṇa?”

They seemed to be speaking the truth

and I also felt some trouble to reply properly. So when I returned home I told Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj about it; actually, every day I used to recount to him the day’s happenings. So when I told him about the challenge by the worshippers of Mother Kālī, he said, “Oh! you are foolish. Couldn’t you answer them somehow? You are a devotee of Kṛṣṇa and you worship Kṛṣṇa, that’s no problem; and they are devotees of Mother Kālī, that’s also no problem. But when you want to bring them from that conception to this, couldn’t you have said *something*?”

I replied, “What could I say to them? They said that from the worship of Mother Kālī we would get wealth, beauty, family, and so on.”

Then Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj said, “Will you die eventually or not?”

“Sure, everyone has to die some time. We are no exception.”

“Alright. If you worship Kṛṣṇa properly, in the end you get the shelter of Kṛṣṇaloka, is it not?”

I replied, “Yes, it is true. If we worship Kṛṣṇa properly we must get His mercy, and if we get His mercy we must go to Kṛṣṇaloka.”

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj then pointed out, “And what will be your destination after death if you worship Mother Kālī? You will reach the place of Mother Kālī.

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By doing her service, when she is satisfied with you, you will become one of her associates. What is your gain in becoming one of her associates, and where will you go? She lives in the cremation ground, otherwise she lives peacefully with Lord Śiva in the Himālayas. There it is absolutely freezing. If you go to join her in the cremation ground there is another disturbance—when you become her associate, what kind of form will you take? All her associates have the forms of witches, wizards, ghosts and spirits; she has two sons with such forms, and you also will have to take such a form! No doubt you can get the wealth, family and other things that you are praying for, but when she is satisfied by your worship what will you get? Think about *that*. And Mother Kālī also has a special nature—she goes naked. The artists paint pictures of her clothed, but the Scriptures tell us that she goes naked. She covers herself with hands. Whose hands? The hands of her own sons. You call her ‘mother’—so whose mother is she? She’s your mother. And she cuts off the hands of the demons and uses their hands as her clothing. She attracts them, chops off their heads and uses their skulls as a garland. What good will you get from that? And after becoming her devotee you will have to become a witch or ghost to live with her!”

That was Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj’s reply. Then he said to me, “Couldn’t you have replied to them like that?”

I said, “If I speak like that to them they will beat me! They will say, ‘What kind of preaching is this?’”

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj responded,

“Then you can tell them, ‘Alright, that is very nice, you can become Mother Kālī’s son; but *we* are not interested in the outcome of that. We prefer to have fruits, cream, cheese and butter in the company of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, and enter into His Pastimes in Kṛṣṇaloka: *Yamunā-līlā*, *Rāsa-līlā*, etc. Do you prefer this, or do you prefer that? Whatever you please, you can accept; it is your decision!’”

In this way with his jolly mood Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj used to joke with me in my youth.

The argument of the general people was, “We are gaining all these things—wealth, family, youth, etc.” But Prabhupāda’s argument was, “Oh, you are getting all those things, but they will not stay with you. You will lose all. Then, if you become a great devotee of Kālī, you will live with her. Think what you will get then. But when *we* become great devotees we shall live with Kṛṣṇa. We will reach the home of Kṛṣṇa!”

So Kṛṣṇaloka is the Plane of the most special Transcendental Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. There, the highest Divine Play takes place, covering the Principal Divine Relationships of *Dāsyā*-, *Sakhya*-, *Vātsalya*- and *Madhura-rasa*.

In Nārāyaṇa-loka or Vaikuṇṭha-loka the Pastimes take place within two and a half *Rasas* beginning with *Śānta-rasa*, then *Dāsyā-rasa* and half *Sakhya-rasa*. It is never mentioned in the Scriptures that Nārāyaṇa has any friends. All are His reverential servants, or half-friends, like Lakṣmīdevī, Nārāyaṇa’s Consort. Her mood with Nārāyaṇa is always, “Please, what is Your order my Lord?”

She can never behave with familiarity like a *Sakhī* (lady-friend) and chide

Him, “Kṛṣṇa, go away!” But in Vaikuṇṭha all dealings with the Lord in His Nārāyaṇa Form are mainly on the level of reverential servitude. This is not the case in Kṛṣṇaloka; there, Mother Yaśodā may pull Kṛṣṇa’s ear and chastise Him, “Oh what is this wrong you have done?” And Kṛṣṇa accordingly will also play with her as her son.

Once some cowherd girls, *Gopīs*, came to Mother Yaśodā’s house and accused Kṛṣṇa of some misbehaviour. They went to Mother Yaśodā and gave her a report, accusing that, “Your son comes to our house and does such and such. He creates disturbances, and our milk and other dairy foods are spoiled by his meddling.”

Then Kṛṣṇa denies, “No, no! See my hands—I never touched any of their milk or butter, you would smell the scent otherwise. I took whatever food you gave me, that’s all. They are telling lies.”

Mother Yaśodā asks, “Then why on earth are they lying?”

“Well, of course, they are only coming here just to see Me! That’s the real reason. But they can’t tell you that; they are hiding behind their accusations.”

Then the cowherd girls laugh, Kṛṣṇa also laughs; Mother Yaśodā also laughs and she leaves the matter. But when the cowherd girls walk back to their homes Kṛṣṇa suddenly appears before them, saying, “What is this? You went to My mother and caused so much trouble for Me. Now I shall retaliate by coming to you all as your husband; what will you do about that?”

Such are the Pastimes in Kṛṣṇaloka. But this play of Kṛṣṇa cannot be found in any other Form of the Lord. For

example, Lord Rāmachandra is the Godhead Himself, *Pūrṇa-brahma*—the All-perfect Supreme Godhead, completely transcendental to the mundane plane. But what does He show us in His *Līlā*? He resides completely within the jurisdiction of law. He always gives full honour to all the Vedic laws and injunctions. He never breaks any of the rulings, infallibly. This is His behaviour at all times. For this reason He is famous as *Maryyādā-puruṣottama*, or the Supreme Lord as the Protector of Vedic Rulings. He is none other than the Supreme Lord Himself, but He manifests this special aspect. Although He is free and independent of all rules and regulations, He shows this full subordination to the Vedic codes of conduct. When it came to His ear that, “Your wife was in another’s house,” He immediately banished Śrīmatī Sītādevī to the forest. So in this Incarnation, the Lord manifests the nature of complete subordination to law.

But as Kṛṣṇa there is no such question of law. The question of law never enters His thoughts. His freedom is absolute, but there we find love, beauty, charm—as much affection of the heart as is ever possible, as much beauty as can ever be possible, as much attraction as can ever be known in the world and beyond—everything is found in its fullest possibility in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

When Kṛṣṇa personally appeared in this world, He Himself declared, “*I am the Supreme Lord!*” In the Teachings of the *Gītā* we find this all through:

**tam eva śaraṇaṁ gaccha
sarvva-bhāvena bhārata....**

(18.62)

And:

**mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya
te 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyas tathā śūdrās
te 'pi yānti parām gatim**

(9.32)

“O Arjuna, whoever takes full shelter in Me, whether they are low-born as sinful outcastes, women, *vaiśyas* or *śūdras*—they too will attain the Supreme Objective; taking their own internal divine form they go to the topmost plane, the Plane of My Service.”

**sarvva-dharmmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja**

Kṛṣṇa is saying, “I am the Supreme Lord, the Supreme God. Take shelter in Me!”

**man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī mām namaskuru**

“Give yourself to Me, be My devotee, worship and honour Me.”

**daiva hy eṣā guṇamayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etām taranti te**

Here, the Lord refers to Māyā, the illusory power, as His Māyā; so, naturally, “I give liberation from that Māyā to anyone who surrenders to Me, furthermore, I give them entrance into My Pastimes. I am so powerful, I am *Bhagavān*.”

At that time, Kṛṣṇa spoke in that very manner—yet there was no one, without exception, who could oppose Him. As we mentioned before, there are many Forms of the Lord, such as Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana, etc. He reveals Him-

self in these various Forms according to the particular nature of His various Pastimes. But the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are so elevated; the Lord makes the law, the Lord breaks the law, yet nothing can touch Him. In such a Form the Supreme Lord has His Transcendental Play. Therefore it is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28):

**ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayaṁ**

The Lord has infinite Expansions and Sub-expansions, all embodying the Supreme Potency of Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa is the Original Supreme Godhead Himself, *Bhagavān*. So in His Original Form—*Bhagavān*—Kṛṣṇa plays His Pastimes; and in His indwelling Supersoul Form—*Paramātmā*—He resides within the hearts of all living beings. Therefore the Divine Principles of Vaiṣṇavism teach us—*jīve sammāna dibe jāni* ‘*kṛṣṇa*’-*adhiṣṭhāna* (C.c. Antya 20.25)—to give obeisances to all souls, to give respect to all, knowing Kṛṣṇa to be resident there. If it is your son, you must still offer him obeisances; but that is to be done mentally. Otherwise it will not be to the child’s benefit, for he will think, “My father is offering me obeisances, so I am superior to him.” But he should be respected with the knowledge that the Lord is residing within his heart. This is the principle.

So today you have all assembled here to hear the messages of the Lord. The Lord Himself is your own natural wealth, and in your hearts the Lord is gloriously presiding. He has many, many Forms, and we have many, many paths to reach Him; but the Supreme Path is

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Bhakti, Devotion. The Transcendental Knowledge given by the Lord in *Gītā* is greatly respected all over the world. Why? Because the Teachings given there are for one and all. The book itself is very compact—700 verses. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is 18,000 verses, and the *Mahābhārata* is 100,000 verses. The *Padmapurāṇa* is also a full 100,000 verses long.

The *Gītā* is only 700 verses long, but it is accepted world-wide. In the *Gītā*, the *karmmi* (worker) finds his interest, the *jñānī* (liberation-seeker) finds his interest, the *yogī* (meditator) finds his interest—and the *bhakta*, or true devotee, finds his interest. Even an anarchist may be found to be keeping the *Gītā* in his pocket, because the way to attain detachment is clearly given therein. This Knowledge of *Gītā* now pervades and commands the respect of the world; even Russia. The Knowledge of the *Gītā* is so unprejudiced. The Lord happily praises the worker in the world:

**niyataṁ kuru karmma tvaṁ
karmma jyāyo hy akarmmanah
śarīra-yātrāpi ca te
na prasidhyed akarmmanah**
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.8)

“Do something! Otherwise you won’t even get your food for your bare maintenance. Man must work, so work in such a way as to invite your highest good. That will be most auspicious for you.” And that is (3.9):

**yajñārthāt karmmaṇo ’nyatra
loko ’yaṁ karmma-bandhanaḥ
tad arthaṁ karmma kaunteya
mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara**

The point is to work in such a way that you don’t become bound by that work. You need liberation from such bondage, so you should work to attain that end. One poet of India wrote that, “At birth, a child must cry, but everyone laughs and smiles, happily discussing, ‘Oh, very nice! You have a child; is it a boy or a girl? Oh, it is healthy. Just see, it is crying.’ So at birth, all a baby can do is cry, but the rest of the world laughs. But you have to work in such a way that you can leave the world laughing—you can be detached—and the rest of the world may weep for you.” There is such a work, and that work is to render Service to the Supreme Lord.

**yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi
yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva mad arpaṇam**
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.27)

“O son of Kuntī, whatever work you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away, whatever vows you may follow—do all as an offering unto Me.”

Kṛṣṇa is saying, “In this way, work only for Me, and you will never be bound in this world. Who am I? I am Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Yajñārthāt karmmaṇo ’nyatra loko ’yaṁ karmma-bandhanaḥ*.” Therefore if you work for Viṣṇu, you cannot but be blessed with all success. Everything you do will become auspicious.

You can think like this: ‘Oh, there are so many flowers in my garden, but they are being wasted by falling all over the road. If I collect the flowers from those trees and offer them to the Lord,

they will then become worshippingable, and I shall take them and touch them to my forehead.’ ”

Similarly we see so much grass on the pathways, and daily we may trample it underfoot. But if any auspicious grass has been used in the worship of the Lord, we touch it to our heads in respect.

Therefore the Lord is teaching us, “Take everything for worship. Make your intelligence mature, then all your bondage will leave you and even in this world you will find true happiness. One whose heart is purified can tolerate both the joys and sorrows of this world. One who has gained real consciousness never laments over anything in this world (*gatāsūn agatāsūnś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ* [2.11]).”

This will be the proper adjustment. Whoever has appeared in our house, either as a son or a daughter, our duty is to attend to them with our best ability. We must think that the Lord has placed them under our care, so now we must serve them. Even if one or more of them suddenly dies, we shall not be sad, knowing that the Lord has taken them. Everything is the wealth and property of the Lord. Whatever we eat we shall first offer to Him and then take His Divine Remnants, *Prasāda*. If we shall give anything to anyone we shall first offer it to the Lord and give that to a devotee for their service to Him. In this way if we live our normal lives in the world, whatever we do will be auspicious. When we surrender ourselves to the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa, whatever we do, whether family life or anything, the Supreme Lord becomes our centre.

When the visible universe is considered to revolve around the sun, the

scientific term applied is ‘heliocentric’; and when the earth is considered the central point of reference, the term used is ‘geocentric’; but we need to make our lives ‘Godcentric.’ We need to invite Him into our families. If whatever we do, we first offer to Him, then all our activities will become unselfish. More than that, they will also become transcendental. Nothing inauspicious will be able to enter there—everything will be auspicious. This is the Service of the Supreme Lord, *Bhagavān*. “*Sarvvaṁ karmmākhilam pāṛtha jñāne parisamāpyate* (*Gītā* 4.33)—all these varieties of sacrificial works culminate in Knowledge Divine.” This means that the acme of Knowledge is *Bhakti*:

**tapasvibhyo ’dhiko yogi
jñānibhyo ’pi mato ’dhikaḥ
karmmibhyaś cādhiko yogi
tasmād yogi bhavārjjuna**

**yoginām api sarvveṣām
mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.46,47)

**bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvvaṁ iti
sa mahātmā sudurllabhaḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.19)

Such are the Teachings of the Lord in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The main point is that you are to give yourself to Him. There is no question of seating Him on a far and distant throne and just offering some worship. He is in your heart, He appears in your temple—He is within all living beings. He resides everywhere at all times (*vāsudevaḥ sarvvaṁ iti*).

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Knowing this, you will easily know what is needed of you: *Bhakti*, *Sevā*—the service of a divine slave. The Sanskrit word '*Bhakti*' originates from the root '*bhaj*': *bhaj-dhātuh sevāyām*. The fundamental potency of the root '*bhaj*' is service. So we want to live in the plane of full service.

The Scriptures inform us that where we live at present is the plane of exploitation—if we dig a hole in the ground, wherever we throw the earth must become a hill. This example is a nice analogy of this world. We fulfil our occupations and maintain our bodies, but we are bound to commit violence. Without violence we cannot survive. The Scriptures prohibit us from taking the life of other living beings, especially from taking meat, fish, and so on. Still, we must eat something to survive. For our survival we must feel the need to secure food.

The question may then arise that in our garden there are very nice vegetables and fruits. But how shall we eat them? We shall have to cut the vegetables, but that is also killing, for even within fruits there are millions of atomic life-forms, and we cannot avoid eating them along with the fruit. If we examine cow's milk under a microscope we shall also find millions of life-forms moving hither and thither. We enjoy yoghurt very much, and we are very careful to see that it is set properly when making it, but under a microscope we shall see that it is absolutely full of living bacteria.

So what will you eat? Atomic bacteria and microbes? Whatever you eat, you are bound to murder other living entities. And if you stop eating altogether, you will nonetheless have to breathe; without at least breathing you will never survive.

But with every breath billions of atomic living entities enter into our bodies.... Therefore we are not fit to maintain ourselves, and this is why this world is called the plane of exploitation. We cannot live without killing others. We cannot survive. So we are bound to commit violence.

But the Scriptures say, "Why have you opened your own account? You don't need this account." If two or three policemen chase a murderer but are unable to catch him, they may shoot; one or two people may be killed, one or two may be injured, but what can be done? One of the policemen may be injured or even lose his life in the attempt to catch the culprit. Then what are the consequences?

All the responsibility is absorbed in the government's account. The injured policeman who caught the criminal will be promoted or have his salary doubled. All his medical necessities will be provided. Otherwise, even if he is unable to return to his work for the rest of his life he will be awarded double pension as compensation. He will be rewarded.

If you shoot someone you will be arrested immediately for the most heinous crime, but if someone is killed by a policeman in the attempt to catch a criminal, all responsibility is absorbed in the account of the government.

However, one who cannot survive without exploiting others or giving pain to others needs, to be saved himself. And this is possible if such a person offers everything to the account of the Lord: "O Lord, this is all Your wealth—this house, family, sons, everything. I am a servant in *Your* family, and I shall do service to all. I will also get *Prasāda*, and all my needs will be fulfilled." In this

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way, one who makes his family ‘God-centric’ will gain all success for them.

We can consider, therefore, three stages in general: the plane of exploitation, the plane of renunciation, and the plane of dedication. A surrendered soul—one who has given his all and himself to the Lord—he can do no wrong. Whatever he does goes to the Lord’s account. The Lord Himself said

**yānti deva-vratā devān
pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ
bhūtani yānti bhutejyā
yānti mad-yājino ’pi mām**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.25):

“The worshippers of ‘other gods’ (demigods) gain entrance into the corresponding abode of the god worshipped; the worshippers of the forefathers who regularly perform the *śrāddha* ceremonies reach the forefathers’ abode, Pitṛloka; and My devotees reach Me.”

“My devotees attain to My abode. My devotees are transcendental to the three qualities of mundane nature: goodness (truthfulness, illumination), passion (agitation, activation), and ignorance (foolishness, stupefaction)—(*sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*).”

**ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthā
madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā
adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.18)

“The good go upwards (as far as Satyaloka); the passionate remain in the middle (in the human plane); and the ignorant must fall (to the hellish regions).”

So those who remain in those particular qualities will receive a corresponding result. But the Lord says, *man-*

niketan tu nirguṇam—“Whoever lives in My home lives in the Transcendental Plane. He is not bound by those mundane qualities. Whatever is done in My Plane is done with Devotion for Me, *Bhakti*, and that Devotion is the source of all Blessings and Benedictions.” Thus *Bhakti* has been given the absolutely highest position in all Scriptures. Whether you are capable of doing anything or not, offer yourself, surrender yourself unto the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Whether you are a *grhastha*, *sannyāsī* or *brahmacārī* is not the point, whatever you may be, you will get your supreme benefit. This is the direction of our Vedic Religion.

So, as I said before, you have assembled here today to hear about *Bhagavān*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I have tried with all my might to speak to you about Him. And you have given me much time in which to do so. I consider myself blessed because you have all so patiently heard these talks about the Lord. I want to do some good for you all. There are so many forms of religion, but real religion is in your hearts. That is your potency, and that is your wealth—and that is Love for the Supreme Lord, Divine Love, *Prema*. It is in the hearts of all, and it is for all. The Lord is engaging in a loving search for the lost servants. As the Lord searches for His servants, you also have the tendency to search for Him.

We can take some help from the ground, like a small child trying to walk for the first time. In the beginning he falls down, but taking the help of the ground he again stands, regains confidence and finally, after a few attempts, begins to walk. When the same child grows, he

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may well be able to run the four-minute mile. He gets such strength. Similarly, we live in this world, and taking what help we can get in this world we can begin to walk on the path of the life of Devotion for the Supreme Goal. Then we can have our super benefit. We need to invite the attitude to want to do good for others. In that way we will get our own benefit and we shall be able to do good for the entire world. *Viśvaṁ pūrṇa-sukhyate*. We want to be able to live our lives and maintain our families through our Service without exploiting others, and automatically we shall see that no burden will ever come to us.

If we are not the cause for the birth of others, then we, accordingly, will not be born. This is also thought out by many *brahmacārīs*, so they avoid marriage and go on in life as free men. But those who marry—they also have their religious life. Actually, according to the Scriptures they hold the highest position in the world of religious thought because they are the maintainers of all the other *āśramas*, the religious categories into which humankind is divided. So from whatever position you may be in now, you can start on the journey towards Kṛṣṇaloka. You are already in the life of searching for happiness and preventing unhappiness, but it is already the law of nature of this world that joy and sorrow will come and go automatically.

**mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥka-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās
tāṁs titikṣasva bhārata**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.14)

“O son of Kuntī, the contact of the

senses reacting with their objects give the sensations of cold and heat, pleasure and pain. But they are all temporary, always coming and going. So tolerate them, O Bhārata.”

When joy comes, it is followed by sorrow. After the sun rises, it later sets; again it rises, again it sets. So happiness comes, then sadness; after sadness again comes happiness. There is no shortage of happiness in this world. It will come automatically. But when we have attained this human form of life, and when we have heard about the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and come to know a little about His Holy Abode through the Scriptures and the association of devotees, we shall get the aspiration to find our own home, the soil of the soul. If we simply make the attempt to proceed to that Transcendental World we will come to our natural position.

We all know that none of us can remain in this world. We all have to leave one day. But if we only once aspire to proceed to our own home, we will get much opportunity. The Lord will surely bless us. The Lord says that even if one dies before completing his spiritual practising life, in the next life he will be given a higher position (*śucīnām śrīmatām geḥ yoga-bhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate*). One who only once makes the attempt for auspiciousness is never a victim of inauspiciousness (*na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatiṁ tāta gacchati*). He can progress to a higher and higher destiny.

The Wisdom of the *Gītā* is so beautiful. Everything needed to be known, for everyone, is found there. This is why the *Gītā* is preached throughout the world. The elevated saintly persons declare that

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Śrī Gītā is the entry standard for spiritual life. If one can first properly appreciate the *Gītā*, then he can aspire for a higher position; it is like passing the entrance examination before entering college. Everybody's primary benefit is to be found, therefore, in the *Gītā*.

I thank you all very much for giving me this time today. By the wish of all you devotees, by your grace, I came here today, so I must try to give you something. Please go on together chanting the Holy Name of the Lord, *Harināma-saṅkīrtana*, and from this, all Transcendental Knowledge will be revealed in your hearts. *Harināma-saṅkīrtana* is the *yuga-dharma* of Religion for the age, and if you continue happily with this, the Lord who is already within your

hearts will graciously manifest Himself—the Lord and His Name are identical:

**nāma-cintāmaṇiḥ
kṛṣṇa-caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ**

(*Padmapurāṇa*)

“The Holy Name ‘Kṛṣṇa’ is the wish-fulfilling Gem, Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Living Form of Ecstasy, the Absolute Whole, Transcendental to Māyā, the Eternal Independent; because, the Name and the Named are identical.”

So by the Grace of the Supreme Lord we have today this opportunity to chant His Holy Name, and we shall do that for the auspicious conclusion of this meeting.



— 8 —

Everyone's Real Friend

At the end of a gathering in Mauritius. A short talk given
by

His Holiness Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj

We are very fortunate to have had the opportunity in Mauritius to hear from Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. In a very simple and charming way he has delivered to us some words about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As it was mentioned by a respected guest earlier today, “I see Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Prabhupāda in Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj.” This is no accident, because Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj are very intimately connected. For many years in India they lived together, and Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj was like a son to Śrīla Prabhupāda. He said, “I consider Govinda Mahārāj as my most beloved son, actually.”

It was from Śrīla Prabhupāda that Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj studied *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself studied from Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's Guru, Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. So these three form a very intimate group.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda left the world in 1977 we had Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj to guide and shelter us. We all felt the need that after Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's disappearance there would be someone to continue presenting these teachings in a genuine and authentic way. I knew from both Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj that the person would be Śrīla

Govinda Mahārāj. For this reason I, and others, many times invited him to travel around the world. It is therefore a special event for me that he has kindly taken me with him on these travels.

Here in Mauritius we have all had the opportunity to hear how Śrīla Mahārāj has given us a very happy idea about serving Kṛṣṇa. He has also expressed much appreciation for this lovely country.

The Vaiṣṇavas never say, “I am Guru.” They never show themselves as being superior to us. Śrīla Mahārāj always said, “I am a simple man. Śrīla Prabhupāda was a great Guru, but I am a simple man and I do not know if I can do such big things.”

But gradually from all over the world people came to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's home, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh in Nabadwīp, and as they went back to their own homes around the world they also felt, “We need such a teacher.” Consequently they sent more and more invitations. The result is that now, like Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj is doing these same things and is spreading the exalted teachings of the *Śrī Rūpānuga Sampradāya* around the world.

The Vaiṣṇava, the devotee of God, the devotee of Kṛṣṇa, is the real friend of

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all living beings and of all human society. He is their natural friend, and he has no enemy in the world. He gives us the teachings of how we also can become Vaiṣṇavas. 'Vaiṣṇava' means 'the servant of God, Viṣṇu.' One who belongs to Viṣṇu is called a Vaiṣṇava. Vaiṣṇavas are not sectarian religionists.

Dharmma is often translated as 'religion'. But *dharmma* comes from the original root word *dhri* which means 'to hold'. It means that our very nature, the substantial part that holds us in our life, is *dharmma*. *Vaiṣṇava-dharmma* is our original nature, and it is also called *jaiva-dharmma*. *Jaiva* comes from the word *jīva*. As Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj explained here, the *jīva* is the soul; that is, you and I. We are souls, and our nature is to serve God, to serve Kṛṣṇa. But now our original spiritual nature has become covered by mundane association, the material world. Therefore the Vaiṣṇava saints come from time to time to awaken us to our original natural self of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa. In Bengali this is called *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa.'* We are not only servants of Kṛṣṇa in the morning or in the evening, but eternally. Eternal means that there is no beginning, and no end. It is our natural position to serve Him, and we can serve Him through the mercy and grace of the Vaiṣṇava teachers like Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj.

Service to Kṛṣṇa is the most natural function of the soul. It is not a matter of converting anybody from this religion to that religion. It is already the natural function within the soul of all beings. And, as Śrīla Mahārāj has kindly told us, if we start this knowledge from our

childhood and through our youth-hood, it will stay with us eternally. In such a way we shall have a start in life and we shall have some purpose.

In French there is a nice expression, '*raison d'être*'. We must have '*raison d'être*', we must have a goal in life, we must have a purpose in life, not only eating. When we are hungry we can only think about eating, and when we are tired we can only think about sleeping. Later on we may marry and have a family and we may have to fight for our family and for our country. But these things alone are not everything. There is '*raison d'être*'. There is a reason for living, beyond and above our bodily existence.

Śrīla Mahārāj has pointed out to us that we are not this body. The person in this body goes from boyhood to youth to old age. An old person once had a young body, but in both bodies he is the same person, the same soul. Similarly you were also in a young baby's body, now you are in a young lady's or gentleman's body. Your body will become older and old, but you are the same person. From young, to being youthful, to adult, to older, you are the same person; only the body is changing. And that person is spiritual. He or she is *jīvātmā*, a living soul. The soul is spiritual and has some spiritual work to do, some spiritual function to do, and that is service to God.

It is Śrīla Mahārāj's observation, and also mine by his grace, that in Mauritius you all naturally have that Godly heart. It is a very happy thing to see, because your future will be very great and bright.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda came here it

Everyone's Real Friend

was reported that he said, “This country can all become Vaiṣṇavas. They can all become devotees of God.” He had that vision to see. And Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj also has told us like that. He feels very much happy and at home here.

Just as we were so fortunate to have

the association of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are now so lucky to have Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. He is carrying the same current. He is a personality of the same soil, the same land. He can, and is, giving us these teachings.



— Appendix I —

Āchāryya-charaṇa-vandana

Glorification of Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Composed (and translated) by His Holiness Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj

**jaya śrīla mahārāja caraṇāravinda
śrī bhakti sundara deva-goswāmī govinda [1]**

**jagatera sumaṅgala karibāra āše
tumi avatīrṇa hailā snigdha guru-veše [2]**

**praphulla nalina yena hāsimākhā mukha
dekhi vṛddha-bāla-yuvā pāya mahā-sukha [3]**

**svadeše-videše harināmera pracāre
abhinava gaura-preme bhāsāle sabāre [4]**

**śrī-kare lekhanī yena ananta phowārā
sumadhura divyavāṇī-vigalita-dhārā [5]**

**su-siddhānta-dhārādhara satya sugambhīra
śrī-guru-vaiṣṇava-sevā-niṣṭha mahādhīra [6]**

**sādhu-priya saralatā tomāra bhūṣaṇa
amānī mānada sadā miṣṭha-sambhāṣaṇa [7]**

**guru-mahārāja yatirāja-rājeśvara
śrī-bhakti-rakṣaka deva-goswāmī śrīdhara [8]**

**parama santuṣṭa tava viśrambha-sevāya
nija-hāte vyāsāsane vasā'la tomāya [9]**

**sukhe manonīta kailā uttarādhikārī
ehena apūrvva sneha kothāo nā heri [10]**

**rūpa-sarasvatī-śrīdhara-dhārā-srotasvinī
tava hṛde vahe sadā bhuvana pāvanī [11]**

**śīva-guru-saṅkarṣaṇa karuṇā-nilaya
nityānanda-rūpe tava hṛde vilasaya [12]**

**sujana sudhīra-gaṇa tava guṇa-gāya
durbhāgā vañcita aparādhe mare hāya [13]**

**guru-gaura-kṛṣṇa-sevā-saubhāgya-prakāśe
sānande sāgara bhāse saṅkīrtana rāse [14]**

*All Glories to the Divine Master and
the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Chaitanya*

Āchāryya-charaṇa-vandana

Glory to the Lotus Feet of our Śrī Gurudeva
Śrī Bhakti Sundara Deva-Goswāmī Govinda. [1]

Wishing Grace Divine upon the whole of the creation,
From Goloka came thee down, most Gracious Incarnation. [2]

Hundred-petalled lotus flower—Lotus Face ablooming,
Young and old behold thee, all their heart's joy overflowing. [3]

Both home and abroad Lord's Hallowed Name thou art apreaching,
Flood of Love for Gaura entire planet inundating. [4]

Benedictine fountain from thy pen in hand awriting,
Sweetest songs of Love Divine a flow is never ending. [5]

Agent of the Waves of Perfect Truth—fathomless ocean,
Serve Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇava! thy life's dedication. [6]

Truthful heart adored by saints—thy natural compassion,
Always humble, giving honour, in sweet conversation. [7]

Guru Mahārāj of Nyāsī Kings the Great Grandfather,
Śrī Bhakti Rakṣaka Deva-Goswāmī Śrīdhara— [8]

Satisfied supremely with thy Service dedicated,
By his own hand did he place thee on his chair exalted. [9]

Joyfully as his successor he hath thee achosen,
Such benign affection ne'er we find in all creation. [10]

Rūpa-Saraswatī-Śrīdhara River flowing freely
From thy heart throughout the world makes everything so Holy. [11]

Supreme God of Good our Guide, compassion's Divine Treasure
Ever plays within thy heart as Nityānanda's Pleasure. [12]

Faithfully the true devotees sing thy Supreme Glories,
Lost, deluded souls dishonour thee, alas! and perish. [13]

By thy Grace shall we now serve our Lord and Golden Master,
Sāgara exults in thy Sweet Chanting Dance forever. [14]

Tridaṇḍibhikṣu Śrī Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar
Śrī Gaura-Purṇimā
8th March, 1993

— Appendix II —

Chanting the Mahāmantra

From *The Search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Reality the Beautiful*

by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Before chanting the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, we must first chant the Pañca-tattva Mantra:

**Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Chaitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda
Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsādi Gaura-bhakta-vṛnda**

The Pañca-tattva, or five features of the Absolute Truth, came to give the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* to the fallen devotees of this age, so they are the general representation of Guru for us. They help us to enter into the domain of Kṛṣṇa and also the plane of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

After chanting the Pañca-tattva *Mantra*, we should chant the *Mahāmantra*:

**Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare**

This *Harināma Mahāmantra* is found in the *Upaniṣads*, as well as in the *Agni Purāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. In the *Kalisantarāṇa Upaniṣad*, it is recommended as the highest *Mantra*, and the scholars have mentioned this *Mantra* as a means of address only; no appeal should be attached to that. This Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* is the *yuga dharmma nāma*, or the process of God realisation especially meant for the present age: Kali-yuga. We find the *Mahāmantra* mentioned everywhere in the *Purāṇas*. This *Mantra* can be chanted silently, mentally, or aloud. It has been given to us by Mahāprabhu as the general recommendation for the fallen souls. He has given it for all, whether they are qualified or unqualified. The only condition for receiving it is *śraddhā*, faith.



— Appendix III —
Daśa-vidha Nāmāparādha

The Ten Offences to the Holy Name
(to be carefully avoided by the devotees)

by His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

(Translated from the original Bengali by Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj)

Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*—
of all mantras the best,
Throughout the world is preached
by saints' potent grace behest;
Such saints to the Name devoted,
such pure souls great:
Never dare offend them—
never show them hate.

•
Lord Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda,
of all lords the Leader—
The great Śiva and all the gods
serve His feet forever;
The touchstone of the Name
is Kṛṣṇa incarnate—
His pastimes, nature, form, also
think not separate.

•
“Guru's a form of Kṛṣṇa—
the Scriptures corroborate;
In the form of Guru,
Kṛṣṇa blesses the fortunate.”
Never offend that Guru
by thinking him mere mortal;
Gain your highest objective—
serve the Name for time eternal.

The Vedas with Mother Gāyatrī
and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
Illuminate the lotus feet
of Śrī Hari's name;
Whoever vilifies
those Holy Vedic Scriptures—
Never keep their company,
know them as offenders.

•
The glories of the Name—
all Scriptures' exaltation;
Dare not think their praise
to be exaggeration.
Agastya, Ananta, Brahmā,
Śiva, etc., ever
Sing the glories of that Name
with full-hearted fervour.
Who can cross the ocean
of the glories of that Name?
Whoever says 'exaggeration'
have their sin to blame.

•
The Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa—
eternal wealth of Goloka:
Who thinks those Names imaginary,
mundane—he's offender.

All Scriptures claim the Name
all sin it can destroy,
But those who spend their time in sin
making it a ploy—
Such a wicked attitude
is that of an offender
Deceived by illusion,
perpetually to suffer.

•

Incomparable Name of Kṛṣṇa—
the treasure of ecstasy:
Never dare compare it with
auspicious piety.

•

Those who're faithless t'ward the Name—
deceived by Providence:
Giving them the Holy Name
surely's an offence.

•

Despite them hearing the infinite
glories of Kṛṣṇa's Name,
Those whose hearts don't melt in love
are rascals of ill fame;
Only pride and avarice
their thoughts and deeds do yield—
The Pure Name of Kṛṣṇa
to them is ne'er revealed.

•

Casting off these ten offences,
leaving no exception,
Those pure souls who chant the Name
in Holy Congregation—
The miracle of love for Kṛṣṇa
they will surely savour,
The Name Divine Himself will shine
within their hearts forever.

•

(Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu Śrī
Bhakti Sundar Govinda)



Publications available

from
Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp
Website: <http://www.scsmath.com>

i) By and about Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa—Reality the Beautiful
Śrī Guru and His Grace
The Golden Volcano of Divine Love
Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā—(The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute)
Loving Search for the Lost Servant
Śrī-Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam (Positive and Progressive Immortality)
Subjective Evolution—(The Play of the Sweet Absolute)
The Guardian of Devotion
Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion Vols. I, II, III, IV
Home Comfort—An Introduction to Inner Fulfilment
Holy Engagement
Exclusive Guardianship—(Concise Conclusions of Devotional Life)
Absolute Harmony
Śrī Kīrtana Mañjuṣā—(The Treasure Chest of Divine Kīrtanas)
Śrī Śrī Prema Dhāma Deva Stotram
Śrī Gauḍīya Darśan 1983-88, & 91
The Mahāmantra
Ocean of Nectar
Words from the Guardian of Devotion

ii) By and about Śrīla B.S. Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

The Divine Servitor
Dignity of the Divine Servitor
Golden Reflections
Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration
Divine Message for the Devotees
Śrī Gauḍīya Darśan 1989, 90, 92

iii) Various

Śrī Brahmā-saṁhitā
The Bhāgavata (Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura)
Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu—His Life and Precepts (Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura)
Śrī Nabadwīp Bhavataṅga (Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura)
Relative Worlds (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura)
Śrī Chaitanya Saraswatī—(The Voice of Śrī Chaitanyadev)
Omni-Science
Śrī Vaiṣṇava Toshani
Counterpoint
Kalyan Kalpataru (Magazine)
Guardian of Devotion (Calcutta Publication)
Kīrtan Guide
Vaiṣṇava Calendar



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Publications are also available in
Bengali, Dutch, Hindi, Hungarian,
German, Italian, Oriya, Portuguese,
Spanish, Swedish, and Tamil.

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What we need are good friends and association. Then we can proceed happily. And the other factor is that if our surrender is perfect, then from the upper level faith will come to us and protect us. If someone is fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa in His form as Guru or *sādhū*, then Kṛṣṇa will certainly protect him. He must protect him.



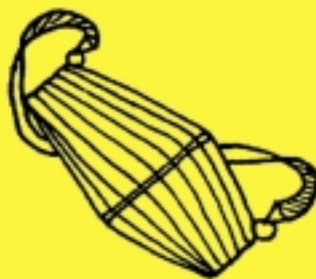
A teacher is always necessary, whether we reach a very junior class, a senior class, or a higher class. Even if we want to eat something, there also a teacher is necessary. Guidance is *always* necessary! Guidance is always good for everyone.



—Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Kīrttan Guide

4th Edition



*Intended as a helpful guide
to bhajans and prayers commonly sung and chanted
at*

*Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Kolerganj, P.O. Nabadwip,
District Nadia, West Bengal, Pin 741302, India
<http://scsmath.com>*

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THE DAILY PROGRAMME **at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp**

The 1st line of each *bhajan* is given along with its corresponding page in the *Kīrttan Guide*.

DAILY MORNING PROGRAMME

Begins with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *ārati* at his *Samādhi Mandir* (*Viraha-Milan Mandir* —The Temple of Union in Separation):

jaya 'guru-mahārāja' yati rājeśvara 17

Followed by *ārati* of Śrī-Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundarjīu (the Deities of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh):

kali-kukkura-kadana yadi cāo he 19

yaśomatī-nandana braja-baro nāgara 20

jay śacīnandana sura-muni-vandana 21

Then *parikramā* of both Temples:

gurudeva! kṛpā-bindu diyā 22

udilo aruṇa pūraba-bhāge 23

Then offering obeisances to Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī:

vrndāyai tulasī-devyai... v

Immediately followed by obeisances to the Vaiṣṇavas:

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas' ca... iii

The devotees offer obeisances to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj at his *Samādhi Mandir*; the Deities; Śrīmatī Gaṅgadevī and to Śrī Āchāryyadeva Śrīla Govinda Dev-Goswāmī. The mantra for paying obeisances to the Holy River Gaṅgadevī is:

sadya pātaka saṁhantri sadya duḥka vināśinī
sukhadā bhaktidā gaṅgā gaṅgeva paramāgati

Then the **MORNING BHAJANS**, beginning with:

Recitation of the *Vandana* Prayers i to v

Followed by the songs:

jaya jaya gurudever ārati ujjvala ix

saṁsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka 37

śrī-kṛṣṇa-chaitanya-prabhu jīve dayā kari' 39

bhaja re bhaja re āmār mana ati manda 40

After the *bhajans* is a reading from *Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata* in Bengali.

Closing with the song:

hari haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ 43

Daily after morning *Prasādam* is a class in English (or Spanish, etc.) held on Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Samādhi Mandir*.

THE MIDDAY PROGRAMME commences with the offering of *bhoga* while singing:

bhaja bhakata-vatsala śrī-gaurahari 26

Followed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *ārati* at his *Samādhi Mandir*:

jaya 'guru-mahārāja' yati rājeśvara 17

Then *ārati* of the Deities:

yaśomatī-nandana braja-baro nāgara 20

jay śacīnandana sura-muni-vandana 21

Before honouring (taking) *Prasādam* the devotees chant (except on *Ekādaśī* days and other days when no grains are taken):

mahāprasāde govinde 30

śarīra abidyā-jal 30

In the afternoon is a reading from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Bengali.

THE EVENING PROGRAMME begins with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *ārati* at his *Samādhi Mandir*:

jaya 'guru-mahārāja' yati rājeśvara 17

Then *Gaura-ārati* of the Deities:

(kiba) jaya jaya gourācānder ārotiko śobhā 31

Then (Formerly this was only sung on Fridays, the day Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura appeared):

jayare jayare jaya gaura-saraswatī 33

Followed by *parikramā* of the both Temples:

gurudeva! kṛpā-bindu diyā 22

and sometimes:

kabe śrī caitanya more-koriben doyā 35

Daily Programme

Obeisances to Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī:

vrndayai tulasī-devyai...

v

and her *parikramā*:

namo namaḥ tulasī mahārāṇī

36

After again offering obeisances to Tulasī Devī, the devotees offer their obeisances to the *Vaiṣṇavas*:

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas' ca...

iii

Again the devotees offer obeisances to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj at his Samādhi Mandir; the Deities; Śrīmatī Gaṅgadevī and to Śrī Āchāryyadeva Śrīla Govinda Dev-Goswāmī.

Before the **EVENING BHAJANS**:

Vandana Prayers are recited:

pages i to v

Then the *bhajans*:

jaya jaya gurudever ārati ujjala

ix

śrī guru caraṇa-padma

45

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu doyā koro more

47

(ohe) vaiṣṇava ṭhākura

49

Followed by a selection of songs, most of which are included in the *Kīrttan Guide*.

Near the end of the evening *bhajans* is sung:

sujanārvvuda-rādhita-pāda-yugam

91

Which is always followed by 10 verses from *Śrī Śrī Prema Dhāma Deva Stotram* beginning with verse 1 each Saturday. This is published as a separate book.

Followed by a reading from Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta in Bengali.

The evening programme ends with the *bhajan*:

hari haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ

43

Please see overleaf for guide to additional *bhajans* chanted on special occasions...

Over...

Please note:

DURING THE MONTH OF KĀRTIKA additional *bhajans* are chanted.

The following are **added to the morning bhajans:**

<i>nadiyā-nagare nitāi nece nece gāy re</i>	}	98
<i>jagannātha-suta mahāprabhu viśvambhara</i>		
<i>nagare nagare gorā gāy</i>	}	103
<i>yaśomatī-stanya-pāyī śrī-nanda nandana</i>		
<i>namāmiśvaram sac-cid-ānanda rūpam</i>		95
<i>rādhe jaya jaya mādharma-dayite</i>		82

And added to the evening bhajans:

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's <i>Śikṣāṣṭakam</i> beginning with:	
<i>pīta-baraṇa kali-pāvana gorā</i>	109
['Song 1' to 'Song 8(b)']	pages 109 to 125]

ON THE APPEARANCE DAY of a senior *Vaiṣṇava* **the following song is also chanted** during the morning and/or evening seated *bhajans*:

<i>kṛṣṇa hoite catur-mukha...</i>	83

ON THE DISAPPEARANCE DAY of a senior *Vaiṣṇava* **the following song is also chanted** during the morning and evening seated *bhajans*:

<i>ei-bāro koruṇā koro vaiṣṇava-gosāṇi</i>	72
and for Mahāprabhu's <i>pārṣada</i> devotees:	
<i>ye ānilo prema-dhana koruṇā pracura</i>	42

And, because so many ask:

TILAK is applied in the following order while saying:

Forehead	—	<i>om keśavāya namaḥ</i>
Belly	—	<i>om nārāyaṇāya namaḥ</i>
Chest	—	<i>om mādhavāya namaḥ</i>
Throat	—	<i>om govindāya namaḥ</i>
Right side	—	<i>om viṣṇave namaḥ</i>
Right arm	—	<i>om madhusūdanāya namaḥ</i>
Right shoulder	—	<i>om trivikramāya namaḥ</i>
Left side	—	<i>om vāmanāya namaḥ</i>
Left arm	—	<i>om śrīdharāya namaḥ</i>
Left shoulder	—	<i>om hrīkeśāya namaḥ</i>
Upper back	—	<i>om padmanābhāya namaḥ</i>
Lower back	—	<i>om dāmodarāya namaḥ</i>
Śikhā	—	<i>om vāsudevāya namaḥ</i>

Vandana

**vande 'haṁ śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca
śrī-rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānviṭaṁ taṁ sa-jīvaṁ
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānviṭāṁś ca**

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja prays, “First I offer my respects unto the lotus feet of my initiating spiritual masters and the recruiting spiritual masters and advanced Vaiṣṇavas. Next I offer my obeisances to my *śāstra gurus*, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, his elder brother, Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, and Jīva Goswāmī. On a higher platform I offer my respects unto Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who came with His paraphernalia and associates, along with those great personalities Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Āchāryya. And in the highest stage, I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Govinda, and all of the *gopīs*, headed by Lalitā and Viśākhā devi.”

**om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ**

Applying the soothing salve of *sambandha-jñāna*, a proper acquaintance with the environment, my spiritual master has opened my inner eye and thereby rescued me from the darkness of ignorance, fulfilling my life’s aspirations. I offer my respects unto Śrī Gurudeva.

**gurvabhiṣṭa-supūrakaṁ guru-gaṇair āśiṣa-sambhūṣitaṁ
cintyācintya-samasta-veda-nipuṇaṁ śrī-rūpa-panthānugaṁ
govindābhidham ujjalaṁ vara-tanuṁ bhakty anvitaṁ sundaraṁ
vande viśva-guruṁ ca divya-bhagavat-premṇo hi bīja-pradaṁ**

I worship the holy lotus feet of he who perfectly fulfils the most cherished wish of his divine master; who is adorned resplendently with the blessings of his *guru-varga*; who is adept in all vedic conceptions, both conceivable and inconceivable; who is the faithful follower in the line of Śrī Rūpa; who is known as Śrīla Govinda Mahārāja; whose beautiful divine figure revels in the mellows of divine love; who is the guru of the entire universe and the bestower of the seed of divine love for the Supreme Lord.

**devaṁ divya-tanuṁ suchanda-vadanaṁ-bālārka-celāñcitaṁ
sāndrānanda-puraṁ sad-eka-varanaṁ vairāgya-vidyāmbudhim
śrī-siddhānta-nidhiṁ subhakti-lasitaṁ sārasvatānāṁ varam
vande taṁ śubhadaṁ mad-eka-śaraṇaṁ nyāsīśvaraṁ śrīdharam**

(by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj)

“I fall at the feet of Śrīla Śrīdhara-Deva,
who with charming expression sings his songs of sweet nectar.
Dressed with fine garments like sun newly-risen,
he’s the true saint the devotees have chosen.
His detachment and knowledge are just like an ocean,
the treasure-house of complete, perfect conclusion.
Radiant in pastimes of loving devotion,
the abode of pure ecstasy, bestower of good fortune;
foremost true follower of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta,
foremost great general of the whole renounced order,
my lord and my master, my only shelter, I worship his feet, Śrīla Śrīdhara-Deva.”

**śrī-siddhānta-sarasvatīti vidito gauḍīya-gurv-anvaye
bhāto bhānuriva prabhāta-gagane yo gaura-saṁkīrtanaḥ
māyāvāda-tiṁgilodara-gatān uddhṛtya jīvanimān
kṛṣṇa-prema-sudhābdhi-gāhana-sukhaṁ prādāt prabhuṁ taṁ bhaje**

(by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj)

“In the great *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* teachers’ line,
as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī he’s renowned.
Like the radiant sun in the morning sky,
he appeared to rescue all souls swallowed by
the all-devouring impersonal philosophy.
By spreading the teachings of Lord Gaurāṅga
to sing the Holy Name of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa,
he gave all the chance to dive in the ocean
of love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person.
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, my lord, divine master—
at his feet do I pray to serve him forever.”

**namo gaurakiśorāya bhaktāvadhūta mūrttaye
gaurāṅghri padma-bhṛṅgāya rādhā-bhāva-niṣevine**

(by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj)

“I bow to our Guru, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dās,
the pure devotee beyond social class;
the bee in the lotus of the feet of Śrī Gaurāṅga,
who deep in his heart serves Śrī Rādhā forever.”

**vande bhaktivinodaṁ śrī-gaura-śakti-svarūpakam
bhakti-śāstrajña-samrājaṁ rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhim**

(by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj)

“I bow to Śrī Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda,
Mahāprabhu’s love divine personified.
He’s the king of all knowers
of the purpose of the Scriptures,
and he is the ocean
of Śrī Rādhā’s devotion.”

**gaura-vrajāśritāśeṣair vaiṣṇavair vandya-vigraham
jagannātha-prabhuṁ vande premābhidhīm vṛddha-vaiṣṇavam**

(by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj)

“The great venerable Grandsire of pure devotion,
loved by all Vaiṣṇavas of both Nabadwīp and Vṛndāvana—
I worship the feet of that great Vaiṣṇava Guru,
the ocean of love, Śrīla Jagannātha Prabhu.”

**vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas’ ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ**

I bow down unto the holy feet of the pure Vaiṣṇavas, who are like desire trees able to fulfil all the devotees’ aspirations. The Lord’s devotees are comparable to a vast ocean of causeless mercy, as they deliver the fallen souls from material existence. I offer all respects unto them.

**pañca-tattvātmakam kṛṣṇam bhakta-rūpa-svarūpakam
bhaktāvatāram bhaktākhyam namāmi bhakta-śaktikam**

I offer my obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa in His five-fold aspect known as the *pañca-tattva*: I offer my respects unto Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, who appears as a devotee of the Lord relishing His own internal mellows. Furthermore I bow down before Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, who is the self-same form and elder brother of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Next, I pay homage unto that great personality Śrī Advaita Prabhu, who is an incarnation of the Lord's devotee, and unto the Lord's eternal associates like Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, who serve the Lord in loving devotional relationships. Finally, I bow down at the feet of those devotees who hold the actual potency of unalloyed dedication in their hands: Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara.

**namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ**

I offer my obeisances unto Lord Gaurāṅga, whose divine complexion is a radiant golden hue and who possesses the qualities of the most benevolent incarnation. His spiritual pastimes freely grant pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa to all. He is none other than Lord Kṛṣṇa known in Kali-yuga as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya.

**jayatām suratau paṅgor mama manda-mater gati
mat-sarvasva-padāmbhojau rādhā-madana-mohanau**

O Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanamohana, I am a helpless cripple and my meagre intelligence is absorbed in the vile material sense objects. Kindly let deep devotional attachment arise for the exclusive wealth of my life which is Your lotus feet. May Your Lordships, who are so compassionate and affectionate, be forever victorious!

**dīvyad-vṛndāraṇya-kalpa-drumādhah
śrīmad-ratnāgāra-simhāsana-sthau
śrī gandharvā-śrīla-govinda-devau
preṣṭhālibhiḥ sevyamānau smarāmi**

I constantly meditate upon that Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Gandharvvā-Govinda, who are seated upon a wonderful throne highly decorated with brilliant jewels. They are sitting within the illustrious forest of Vraja, beneath a mind attracting desire tree, accompanied by Their dedicated servitors such as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Lalitā Devī, and other intimate servants like the *priyanarma sakhīs*.

**śrīman rāsa-rasārambhī vaṁśī-vaṭa-taṭa-sthitah
karṣan veṇu-svanair gopīr gopīnāthaḥ śrīye 'stu naḥ**

Śrī Gopīnātha, who instigates the exchange of devotional mellows, is standing upon the banks of the Yamunā River at the special place known as Vaṁśivaṭa. There, the sweet tune of His flute is naturally attracting the hearts of the cowherd maidens of Vraja Dhām. May that charming Lord bring us within His auspicious embrace.

**vṛndāyai tulasī-devyai priyāyai keśavasya ca
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-prade devi satyavatyai namo namaḥ**

I eternally offer my respects unto Śrī Vṛndādevī, Śrīmatī Tulasī Mahārāṇī, who is the dearest object of Lord Keśava's affection. I bow down before Satyavati who can bestow pure dedication unto Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**atha natvā mantra-gurūn gurūn bhāgavatārthadān
vyāsān jagat-gurūn natvā tato jayo mudirayet**

Then, let me bow down before all my spiritual masters: the guru who gave me the divine mantra, as well as all those who have taught me the meaning of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the spiritual master of the entire universe and the giver of the all-conquering conclusions of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

**jayaḥ sa-parikara śrī-śrī-guru-gaurāṅga-gāndharvvā-govinda-sundara-
pādapadmānām jayastu!**

Let the holy lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and Śrī Śrī Gāndharvvā-Govindasundara, along with their eternal associates, be victorious over all!



**namaḥ om viṣṇupādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
swāmī śrī bhaktivedānta prabhupādāya te namaḥ
gurvajñam śīrasi-dhṛtvā śaktyāveśa sva-rūpine
hare-kṛṣṇeti mantreṇa pāścatya-prācya-tāriṇe
viśvācārya prabaryāya divya kārūṇya mūrtaye
śrī bhāgavata-mādhurya-gīta-jñāna pradāyine
gaura-śrī-rūpa-siddhānta-saraswatī niṣevine
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāmbhoja-bhṛṅgāya gurave namaḥ**

I offer my humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, who is Kṛṣṇa's beloved associate and who came down to this plane from Goloka. Taking the order of his guru on his head, he is the *śaktyāveśa* (empowered) *avatar* of Nityānanda Prabhu personified. He distributed the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the Eastern and Western world, delivering and uplifting all fallen souls. He is the best of millions of *jagat-gurus*, because he is the personification of divine mercy. He has distributed the sweet nectar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the transcendental knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā* all over the world. He is constantly engaged in exclusive devotional service to Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, and Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. I offer my humble obeisances unto Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is like a bumble-bee always tasting the nectar of the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Govinda.



Pañca-tattva Mahā-mantra

**śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda**

There are ten offenses in the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, but these are not considered in the chanting of the Pañca-tattva *mantra*. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is the most magnanimous incarnation, for He does not consider the offences of the fallen souls. Thus to derive the full benefit of the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*, we must first take shelter of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-Mantra

**hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma
rāma rāma hare hare**

In the Name of Rāma within the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, the Gauḍiṇi Vaiṣṇavas will find Rādhā-rāmana Rāma. That means, “Kṛṣṇa, who gives pleasure (*rāman*) to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.” In our conception, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is wholesale Kṛṣṇa consciousness, not Rāma consciousness. Śrī Chaitanya’s highest conception of things is always *svayam bhagavān*, *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, *rādhā-govinda līlā*. That is the real purpose of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s advent and teachings. In that consideration, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra does not mention the *rāma līlā* of Āyodhya at all. There is no connection with that in the highest conception of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. ...The inner conception of the mantra is responsible for our spiritual attainment... The inner conception of the devotee will guide him to his destination.

(Loving Search for the Lost Servant page 92)



Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

Śrī Guru Ārati

Glorification of Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
by Śrī Rasabdhi Brahmachārī translated by Devamoyī Devī Dāsī

(1)

**jaya jaya gurudever ārati ujjvala
govarddhana-pāda-pīṭhe bhuvana-maṅgala**

All glories to the effulgent arati of Śrī Gurudeva, which is going on at the foot of Govarddhan, benefitting the whole world.

(2)

**śrī bhakti sundara deva prabhu śiromaṇi
gosvāmī govinda jaya ānandera khani**

All glories to Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda Goswāmī, who is our supreme master and is like a reservoir of joy.

(3)

**ājānu lambita bhuja divya kalevara
ananta pratibhā bharā divya guṇadhara**

His graceful long hands touch his knees and his body is beautiful and transcendental. He is an ocean of infinite genius and transcendental qualities.

(4)

**gaura-kṛṣṇe jāni tava abhinna svarūpa
saṁsāra tarite ebe śuddha-bhakta-rūpa**

We consider your real identity to be non-different from Kṛṣṇa and Gaurāṅga. But now, to deliver this material world, you have assumed the form of a pure devotee.

(5)

**rūpānuga-dhārā tumi kara ālokita
prabhākara sama prabhā bhuvana-vidita**

You are brightening the line of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī. Your effulgence, which is comparable to that of the sun, is known throughout the whole world.

(6)

**śuddha bhakti pracārite tomā sama nāi
akalaṅka indu yena dayāla nitāi**

There is no one like you to preach pure devotion. You are the spotless moon, and you are merciful like Lord Nityānanda.

(7)

**ullasita viśvavāsī labhe prema-dhana
ānande nāciyā gāhe tava guṇagaṇa**

As ecstatic people all over the world are attaining the treasure of love of Kṛṣṇa, they are dancing and singing your glories.

(8)

**sthāpilā āśrama bahu jagata mājhāre
pāramahansa-dharmma-jñāna śikṣāra pracāre**

To teach the essence of the highest knowledge and to preach it to all, you have established many ashrams all over the world.

(9)

**cintyācintya veda-jñāne tumi ādhikārī
sakala saṁśaya chettvā susiddhāntadhārī**

You have mastery over the knowledge of the Vedas, both conceivable and inconceivable. You are the treasurer of bona fide conclusions, which can destroy all doubt.

(10)

**tomāra mahimā gāhe goloka maṇḍale
nitya-siddha parikare tava līlāsthale**

Your glories are being sung in the spiritual world of Goloka, the realm of your pastimes, by your servants who are eternally liberated.

(11)

**patita pāvana tumi dayāra samīra
sarvva-kārye sunipuṇa satya-sugambhīra**

To deliver the fallen souls, you are like a breeze of mercy. You are expert in all service, and you are established in truth and gravity.

(12)

**apurvva lekhanī dhārā pragāḍha pāṇḍitya
sadā hāsya miṣṭa bhāṣī suśīla kavītvā**

Your beautiful and unprecedented writing reflects your deep scholarship. You are always smiling and speaking sweet words, which remind one of your soothing poetry.

(13)

**sādhū-saṅge sadānandī sarala vinayī
sabhā-madhye vaktā śreṣṭha sarvvatra vijayī**

You are always straightforward and humble, and you are always joyful in the association of pure devotees. In a spiritual gathering, you are always the best speaker. In every field of life, you always come out victorious.

(14)

**gauḍīya gagane tumi ācāryya-bhāskara
nirantara sevāpriya miṣṭa kaṇṭhasvara**

In the sky of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world, you are a preceptor who is prominent like the sun. You are always fond of service, and your sweet voice inspires others to do service also.

(15)

**tomāra karuṇā māge trikāla vilāse
gāndharvvikā-giridhārī sevā-mātra āse**

Past, present, and future—for all eternity, we beg your mercy. Only by your mercy will one receive devotional service to Śrī Śrī Gāndharvvikā-Giridhārī.

over...

(16)

**kṛpā koro ohe prabhu śrī-gaura-prakāśa
āraṭi karaye sadā e adhama dāsa**

O my lord, who is the manifestation of the mercy of Śrī Gaurāṅga, please be merciful to me. This insignificant servant of yours is always praying this way while worshipping you.



Illumination

Illumination of verses 9.43 – 46, *Sri Sri Prapanna-jivanamritam*
by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

**labdha-śuddha-bhakti-bijasya nirviṇṇasyānubhūta-duḥkhātmaka-
kāma-svarūpasyāpi tat tyāgāsāmarthya-garhaṇa-śīlasya tatra
niṣkaṇṭha-niṣṭhā-pūrvvaka-yājita-bhakty-aṅgasya bhaktasya śanair
bhagavān hṛdayoditaḥ san nikhilāvidyā tat kāryyāṇi ca vidhvaṁsayan-
niravacchinna-nija-cinmaya-vilāsa-dhāmaivāviṣkaroti**

For one who receives the seed of devotion, who is selfless and penitent, denouncing his inability to abandon mundane enjoyment despite realizing it to be the embodiment of suffering, and who sincerely gives himself incessantly to all the practices of devotion — in the heart of such a devotee, the Supreme Lord ascends like the rising sun to annihilate all ignorance with its reactions, revealing His divine personality in all its pristine glory.

The Ten Offences to the Holy Name

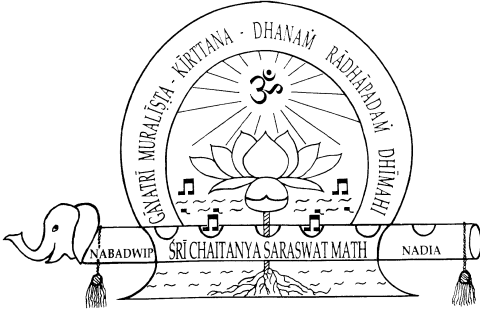
Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*—
of all mantras the best,
Throughout the world is preached
by saints' potent grace behest;
Such saints to the Name devoted,
such pure souls great:
Never dare offend them—
never show them hate.
•
Lord Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda,
of all lords the Leader—
The great Śiva and all the gods
serve His feet forever;
The touchstone of the Name
is Kṛṣṇa incarnate—
His pastimes, nature, form, also
think not separate.
•
“Guru's a form of Kṛṣṇa—
the Scriptures corroborate;
In the form of Guru,
Kṛṣṇa blesses the fortunate.”
Never offend that Guru
by thinking him mere mortal;
Gain your highest objective—
serve the Name for time eternal.
•
The Vedas with Mother Gāyatrī
and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
Illuminate the lotus feet
of Śrī Hari's Name;
Whoever vilifies
those Holy Vedic Scriptures—
Never keep their company,
know them as offenders.
•
The glories of the Name—
all Scriptures' exaltation;
Dare not think their praise
to be exaggeration.
Agastya, Ananta, Brahmā,
Śiva, etc., ever
Sing the glories of that Name
with full-hearted fervour.
Who can cross the ocean
of the glories of that Name?

Whoever says 'exaggeration'
have their sin to blame.
•
The Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa—
eternal wealth of Goloka:
Who thinks those Names imaginary,
mundane—he's offender.
•
All Scriptures claim the Name
all sin it can destroy,
But those who spend their time in sin
making it a ploy—
Such a wicked attitude
is that of an offender
Deceived by illusion,
perpetually to suffer.
•
Incomparable Name of Kṛṣṇa—
the treasure of ecstasy:
Never dare compare it with
auspicious piety.
•
Those who're faithless t'ward the Name—
deceived by Providence:
Giving them the Holy Name
surely's an offence.
•
Despite them hearing the infinite
glories of Kṛṣṇa's Name,
Those whose hearts don't melt in love
are rascals of ill fame;
Only pride and avarice
their thoughts and deeds do yield—
The Pure Name of Kṛṣṇa
to them is ne'er revealed.
•
Casting off these ten offences,
leaving no exception,
Those pure souls who chant the Name
in Holy Congregation—
The miracle of love for Kṛṣṇa
they will surely savour,
The Name Divine Himself will shine
within their hearts forever.
•

(Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda)

The Logo of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj



gāyatrī muraliṣṭa-kīrttana-dhanam rādhāpadam dhīmahī

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj composed this verse, and only he is able to. I have never seen in any book from Mahāprabhu's time right up to Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura's time the type of explanation of Gāyatrī as given by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Actually, Mahāprabhu is our parent, and the seeds came from Kṛṣṇa.

Mādhavendra Purī was the sprout of those seeds, Mahāprabhu was the actual tree, and the fruits are Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātan Goswāmī, and others. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is also in the line of the fruits. It is not that the persons are the fruits, but what they gave are the fruits of Mahāprabhu's conception.

Om is the very gist of *Gāyatrī*, and from that *Om* come merciful rays like the rays of the sun. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, where always *saṅkīrttan* is going on, is inside the flute of Kṛṣṇa, and from there comes this sound *Om*. *Om*, the meaning of *Gāyatrī*, is coming from Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, and from here the explanation of *Gāyatrī* has been given by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj:

gāyatrī muraliṣṭa-kīrttana-dhanam rādhāpadam dhīmahī

The position of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is like water; and the servitors of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh are like lotuses; and the position of the worshipful Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Divine Form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa—*Om*. Everything is within *Om*. *Om* is coming from the flute of Kṛṣṇa, and the meaning of *Om*, of *Gāyatrī*, is, *gāyatrī muraliṣṭa-kīrttana-dhanam rādhāpadam dhīmahī*. Kṛṣṇa's flute does not make any other tune except the glorification of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and that is the real meaning and gist of the *Gāyatrī* Mantram.

The sun's merciful rays give nourishment to the lotus, but if there is no water then the lotus must become burnt by the rays of the sun.

The flute is the special symbol of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. Before we adopted the flute as our symbol, it was not to be found anywhere. Now many others also have copied this, but it first came from here, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. What is the song of the flute? It is the glorification of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and this is depicted in the logo of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh.

Praṇām Mantrams

to Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

composed and translated by

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

(1)

**śrī-svarūpa-rāya-rūpa-jīva-bhāva-sambharaṁ
varṇa-dharmma-nirvviśeṣa-sarvvaloka-nistaram
śrī-sarasvatī-priyaṅ ca bhakti-sundarāśrayaṁ
śrīdharāṁ namāmi bhakti-rakṣakaṁ jagad-gurum**

(1st line:) Who is carrying the divine conception of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and nourishing it exclusively in the preceptorial line of Svarūp Dāmodar, Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, Jīva Goswāmī, etc.; and (2nd line:) whose divine preaching activities are rescuing the conditioned souls from this mundane world without discriminating and considering the *varṇa-dharmma* (creed, caste, religion, etc.) or the degree of fallenness; and (3rd line:) who is the dearmost servitor of his Gurudev, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the only shelter of Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda — (4th line:) I bow down to that divine protector of the whole universe, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

(2)

**sindhu-candra-parvvatendu-śāka-janma-līlanam
śuddha-dīpta-rāga-bhakti-gauravānuśīlanam
bindu-candra-ratna-soma-śāka-locanāntaram
śrīdharāṁ namāmi bhakti-rakṣakaṁ jagad-gurum**

(1st line:) Whose divine pastime of appearing in this mundane world manifest in the year 1817* *Śakābda*; and (2nd line:) whose holy practising life is exclusively in the line of the super-exalted *Rāga-mārga*, which is the supreme destination of the *Rūpānuga Sampradāya*, but, for the benefit of the conditioned souls, he firmly established the worship of that, guarded by the standing of the super-vedic foundation of *viddhi-mārga*; and (3rd line:) whose day of disappearance from this mundane world was in the year 1910** *Śakābda* — (4th line:) I bow down to that divine protector of the whole universe, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

* *Sindhu* indicates 7; *candra* 1; *parvvat* 8, and *indu* 1. By Sanskrit law it will be written in the reverse order: 1817.

** *Bindu* indicates 0; *candra* 1; *ratna* 9, and *soma* 1. Hence, 1910.

Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Chaitanya-Ārati

Composed by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
for the Āratīs to the Deities in our Jagannath Puri Branch Temple

**jaya guru mahārāja karuṇāsāgara
śrī bhakti rakṣaka deva-goswāmī śrīdhara**

**prakāśile nilācale bhuvanamaṅgala
nitāi-caitanya-deva-sevā samujjvala**

**gorāpreme mātōyārā nityānandarūpa
rasarāja mahābhāva caitanya-svarūpa**

**kasita-kāñcana jini śrī-aṅga lābani
dūhūgale vanamālā bhāvera dolani**

**murachita kotikāma rūparāsaraṅge
madhūra narttana-bhāva varābhaya bhaṅge**

**koti-candra-bhānuśobhā ratna-simhāsane
prema netre dekhe mahābhāgyavāna jane**

**mṛdaṅga mandirā bāje suśaṅkha-dhvānita
śruti-moli-ratnamālā-dīpa-nirājita**

**bhuvanamohan dūhū rūpera ārati
gupta-vrindāraṇyavāsī dekhe niravadhi**

**śrī svarūpa rāmānanda rūpa-sanātana
raghunātha haridāsa gadādhara dhana**

**sārvvabhauma gopinātha jīvānugajana
dekheṇa āratīśobha durllabha-darśana**

**nadiyā prakāśe nityānanda-gauranidhi
patitapāvanakṣetra milāila vidhi**

**avicintya nityānanda-caitanya-prakāśa
śrī guru-prasāde dekhe ei adhama dāsa
(śrī guru-prasāde dekhe śrī govinda dāsa)**

“Kī Jaya!” Chants

(Chanted after *āratis*, etc)

jaya sa-parikara śrī-śrī-guru-gaurāṅga-gāndharvvā-govinda-sundara giridhārī
gopāljiu kī jaya!

jaya om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa-parivrājakācāryya-varyya aṣṭottara-śata-śrī
śrīmad bhakti sundar govinda dev-goswāmī mahārāj kī jaya!

jaya om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa-parivrājakācāryya-varyya aṣṭottara-śata-śrī
śrīmad bhakti rakṣak śrīdhar dev-goswāmī mahārāj kī jaya!

jaya om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa-parivrājakācāryya-varyya aṣṭottara-śata-śrī
śrīmad bhakti siddhānta saraswatī ṭhākura kī jaya!

jaya om viṣṇupāda śrīla gaura-kiṣora dāsa bābājī mahārāj kī jaya!

jaya om viṣṇupāda śrīla sat-cit-ānanda bhaktivinoda ṭhākura kī jaya!

jaya om viṣṇupāda śrīla jagannātha dāsa bābājī mahārāj kī jaya!

śrī rūpānuga guru-varga kī jaya!

namācāryya śrīla haridāsa ṭhākura kī jaya!

ananta-kotī vaiṣṇava-vṛnda kī jaya!

śrī baladeva vidyābhūṣaṇa kī jaya!

śrīla viśvanātha chakravartī prabhu kī jaya!

śrī narottama-śyāmānanda-śrīnivāsa-ācāryya-prabhu kī jaya!

śrīla vṛndāvana dāsa ṭhākura kī jaya!

śrīla kṛṣṇa dāsa kavirāja kī jaya!

sapaṛṣada śrī nityānanda prabhu kī jaya!

sapaṛṣada śrīman mahāprabhu kī jaya!

jaya śrī-śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇa gopa-gopīnātha śyāma-kuṇḍa rādhā-kuṇḍa giri-
govarddhana kī jaya!

śrī lakṣmī-varāhadeva kī jaya! (In our Nabadwip Maṭh)

śuddha bhakti vighna vināśāya śrī nṛsiṃhadeva kī jaya!
bhakta-prabara prahlāda mahārāj kī jaya!
tulasī mahārāṇī kī jaya!
gaṅgā-yamunāji kī jaya!
grantarāja śrīmad-bhāgavatam chaitanya-charitāmṛta kī jaya!
viśva-vaiṣṇava rāja sabhā kī jaya!
ākara maṭha-rāja śrī chaitanya maṭh kī jaya!
tadiya śākha-maṭh kī jaya!
śrī chaitanya sārāswat maṭh kī jaya!
viśva-byāpī tadiya śākha-maṭh kī jaya!
śrīdhām māyāpur kī jaya!
śrīdhām nabadwīp kī jaya!
vṛndāvan-puruṣottam dhām kī jaya!
baladeva-subhadrā-jagannāthji kī jaya!
samaveta vaiṣṇava-maṇḍala kī jaya!
samaveta bhakta-vṛnda kī jaya!
harināma-saṅkīrttana kī jaya!
nitāi-gaura-premānande hari bol!



Śrī Śrī Śaḍ-Gosvāmy-aṣṭaka

by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya

(1)

**kr̥ṣṇotkīrttana-gāna-nartana-parau premāmṛtāmbho-nidhī
dhīrādhīra-janapriyau priya-karau nirmatsarau pūjītau
śrī-caitanya-kṛpā-bharau bhuvi bhuvo bhārāvahantāarakau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who are always engaged in chanting the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa and dancing. They are just like the ocean of love of God, and they are popular both with the gentle and with the ruffians, because they are not envious of anyone. Whatever they do, they are all-pleasing to everyone, and they are fully blessed by Lord Chaitanya. Thus they are engaged in missionary activities meant to deliver all the conditioned souls in the material universe.

(2)

**nānā-śāstra-vicāraṇaika-nipuṇau sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau
lokānāṁ hita-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane mānzau śaraṇyākarau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-bhajanānandena mattālikau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honoured all over the three worlds, and they are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the *gopīs* and are engaged in the transcendental loving service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

(3)

**śrī-gaurāṅga-guṇānuvarṇana-vidhau śraddhā-samṛddhy-anvitau
pāpottāpa-nikṛntanau tanu-bhṛtām govinda-gānāmṛtaiḥ
ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanaika-nipuṇau kaivalya-nistārakau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who are very much enriched in the understanding of Lord Chaitanya and who are thus expert in narrating His transcendental qualities. They can purify all conditioned souls from the reactions of their sinful activities by pouring upon them transcendental songs about Govinda. As such, they are very expert in increasing the limits of the ocean of transcendental bliss, and they are the saviours of the living entities from the devouring mouth of liberation.

(4)

**tyaktvā tūrṇam aśeṣa-maṇḍala-pati-śreṇīm sadā tuccha-vat
bhūtvā dīna-gaṇeśakau karuṇayā kaupīna-kanthāśritau
gopī-bhāva-rasāmṛtābdhi-laharī-kallola-magnau muhur
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who kicked off all association of aristocracy as insignificant. In order to deliver the poor conditioned souls, they accepted loincloths, treating themselves as mendicants, but they are always merged in the ecstatic ocean of the *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa and bathe always and repeatedly in the waves of that ocean.

(5)

**kūjat-kokila-haṁsa-sārasa-gaṇākīrṇe mayūrākule
nānā-ratna-nibaddha-mūla-viṭapa-śrī-yukta-vṛndāvane
rādhā-kṛṣṇam ahar-niśam prabhajatau jīvārthadau yau mudā
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who were always engaged in worshiping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana, where there are beautiful trees full of fruits and flowers which have under their roots all valuable jewels. The Goswāmīs are perfectly competent to bestow upon the living entities the greatest boon of the goal of life.

(6)

**saṅkhyā-pūrvaka-nāma-gāna-natibhiḥ kālāvasān-kṛtau
nidrāhāra-vihārakādi-vijitau cātyanta-dinau ca yau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa-smṛter madhurimānandena sammohitau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who were engaged in chanting the holy names of the Lord and bowing down in a scheduled measurement. In this way they utilised their valuable lives, and in executing these devotional activities they conquered over eating and sleeping and were always meek and humble, enchanted by remembering the transcendental qualities of the Lord.

(7)

**rādhā-kuṇḍa-taṭe kalinda-tanayā-tīre ca vaṁśīvaṭe
premonmāda-vaśād aśeṣa-daśayā grastau pramattau sadā
gāyantau ca kadā harer guṇa-varam bhāvābhībhūtau mudā
vande rūpa-sanātana raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who were sometimes on the bank of the Rādhā-kuṇḍa lake or the shores of the Yamunā and sometimes at Vaṁśīvaṭa. There they appeared just like madmen in the full ecstasy of love for Kṛṣṇa, exhibiting different transcendental symptoms in their bodies, and they were merged in the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

(8)

**he rādhe vraja-devīke ca lalite he nanda-sūno kutaḥ
śrī-govariddhana-kalpa-pādapa-tale kālindī-vane kutaḥ
ghoṣantāv iti sarvato vraja-pure khedair mahā-vihvalau
vande rūpa-sanātana raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, who were chanting very loudly everywhere in Vṛndāvana, shouting, “Queen of Vṛndāvana, Rādhārāṇī! O Lalitā! O son of Nanda Mahārāja! Where are you all now? Are you just on the hill of Govariddhana, or are you under the trees on the bank of the Yamunā? Where are you?” These were their moods in executing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



Ācāryya-vandanā

jayore jayore jaya paramahaṁsa mahāśaya
śrī bhaktisiddhānta saraswatī
goswāmī ṭhākura jaya parama karuṇāmaya
dīnahīna agatira gaṭi

nīlācale haiyā udaya
śrī gauḍamaṇḍale āśi' prema bhakti parakāśi
jīvera nāśilā bhava-bhaya

tomāra mahimā gāi hena sādhya mora nāi
tabe pāri yadi deho śakti
viśvahite avirata ācāra-pracāre rata
viśuddha śrī rūpānugā bhakti

śrī pāṭ khetari dhāma ṭhākura śrī narottama
tomāte tāñhāra guṇa dekhi
śāstrera siddhānta-sāra śuni lāge camatkāra
kutā kika dite nāre phāñki

suddha bhakti-mata yata upadharma-kavalita
heriyā lokera mane trāsa
hāni' susiddhānta-vāṇa upadharma khāna khāna
saj janera vāḍāle ullāsa

smārttamāta jaladhara śuddha bhakti rabi-kara
ācchādila bhāviyā antare
śāstra sindhu manthanete susiddhānta jhañjhāvāte
uḍāilā dig digantare

sthāne sthāne kata maṭha sthāpiyācha niṣkapaṭa
prema sevā śikhāite jīve
maṭhera vaiṣṇava gaṇa kore sadā vitarāṇa
hari guṇa-kathāmṛta bhave

śuddha-bhakti-mandākinī vimala pravāha āni
śītala karilā taptaprāṇa
deśe deśe niṣkiñcana prerilā vaiṣṇava gaṇa
vistārite hariguṇa gāna

pūrvve yathā gaura hari māyāvāda cheda kari
vaiṣṇava karilā kāsivāsī
vaiṣṇava darśana-sukṣma vicāre tumi he dakṣa
temati toṣilā vārāṇasī

daivavarṇāśrama-dharmma hari bhakti yāra marmma
śāstra yukte karilā-nīscaya
jñāna-yoga-karmma caya mulya tāra kichu naya
bhaktira virodhī yadi haya

śrī gauḍamaṇḍala bhūmi bhakta saṅge parikrami
sukṛitti sthāpilā mahāśaya
abhinna vraja maṇḍala gauḍabhūmi premojvala
pracāra haila viśvamaya

kuliyāte pāyaṇḍirā atyācāra kaila yā'rā
tā savāra doṣa kṣamā kari'
jagate kaile ghoṣaṇā 'taroriva sahiṣṇunā'
hana 'kīrttanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ'

śrī viśvavaiṣṇava-rāja sabhāmadhye 'pātrarāja'
upādhi-bhūṣaṇe vibhūyita
viśvera maṅgala lāgi' haiyācha sarvva tyāgi
viśvavāśī jana-hite rata

karitecha upakāra yāte para upakāra
labhe jīva śrī kṛṣṇa-sevāya
dūre yāya bhava-roga khaṇḍe yāhe karmma bhoga
hari pāda padma yā'te pāya

jīva moha-nidrā gata jāgā'te vaikunṭha dūta
 'gauḍiya' pāṭhāo ghare ghare
uṭhare uṭhare bhāi āra ta samaya nāi
 'kr̥ṣṇa bhaja' bole uccaisvare

tomāra mukhāra vinda vigalita makaranda
 siñcita acyuta-guṇagāthā
śunile juḍāya prāṇa tamo moha antarddhāna
 dūre yāya hṛdayera vyathā

jāni āmi mahāśaya yaśovāñchā nāhi haya
 vindu mātra tomāra antare
tava guṇa viṇādhārī, mora kaṇṭha-viṇā dhari'
 avaśete valāya āmāre

vaiṣṇavera guṇa-gāna karile jivera trāṇa
 suniyāchi sādhu guru mukhe
kr̥ṣṇa bhakti samudaya janama saphala haya
 e bhava-sāgara tare sukhe

te-kāraṇe prayāsa yathā rāmanera āśa
 gaganera cānda dhari vāre
adoṣa-daraśī tumi adhama patita āmi
 nija guṇe kṣamivā āmāre

śrī gaurāṅga-pāriṣada ṭhākura bhaktivinoda
 dīnahīna patitera bandhu
kalitamah vināśite ānilena avanīte
 toma' akalaṅka pūrṇa indu

kora kṛpā vitarāṇa premasudhā anukṣaṇa
 mātiyā uṭhuka jīva gaṇa
harināma-saṁkīrttane nācuka jagata-jane
 vaiṣṇava-dāsera nivedana.



Āchāryya-charaṇa-vandana

In glorification of Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
Composed and translated by His Holiness Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj

jaya śrīla mahārāja caraṇāravinda
śrī bhakti sundara deva-goswāmī govinda [1]
jagatera sumaṅgala karibāra āśe
tumi avatīrṇa hailā snigdha guru-veśe [2]
praphulla nalina yena hāsimākhā mukha
dekhi vṛddha-bāla-yuvā pāya mahā-sukha [3]
svadeśe-videśe harināmera pracāre
abhinava gaura-preme bhāsāle sabāre [4]
śrī-kare lekhanī yena ananta phowārā
sumadhura divyavāṇī-vigalita-dhārā [5]
su-siddhānta-dhārādhara satya sugambhira
śrī-guru-vaiṣṇava-sevā-niṣṭha mahādhīra [6]
sādhu-priya saralatā tomāra bhūṣaṇa
amānī mānada sadā miṣṭha-sambhāṣaṇa [7]
guru-mahārāja yatirāja-rājeśvara
śrī-bhakti-rakṣaka deva-goswāmī śrīdhara [8]
parama santuṣṭa tava viśrambha-sevāya
nija-hāte vyāsāsane vasā'la tomāya [9]
sukhe manonīta kailā uttarādhikārī
ehena apūrvva sneha kothāo nā heri [10]
rūpa-sarasvatī-śrīdhara-dhārā-srotasvinī
tava hṛde vahe sadā bhuvana pāvanī [11]
śīva-guru-saṅkarṣaṇa karuṇā-nilaya
nityānanda-rūpe tava hṛde vilasaya [12]
sujana sudhīra-gaṇa tava guṇa-gāya
durbhāgā vañcita aparādhe mare hāya [13]
guru-gaura-kṛṣṇa-sevā-saubhāgya-prakāśe
sānande sāgara bhāse saṅkīrttana rāse [14]

Āchāryya-charaṇa-vandana

(Translation)

Glory to the Lotus Feet of our Śrī Gurudeva
Śrī Bhakti Sundara Deva-Goswāmī Govinda. [1]

Wishing Grace Divine upon the whole of the creation,
From Goloka came thee down, most Gracious Incarnation. [2]

Hundred-petalled lotus flower—Lotus Face abloom,
Young and old behold thee, all their hearts' joy overflowing. [3]

Both home and abroad Lord's Hallowed Name thou art preaching,
Flood of Love for Gaura entire planet inundating. [4]

Benedictine fountain from thy pen in hand awriting,
Sweetest songs of Love Divine a flow is never ending. [5]

Agent of the Waves of Perfect Truth—fathomless ocean,
Serve Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇava! thy life's dedication. [6]

Truthful heart adored by saints—thy natural compassion,
Always humble, giving honour, in sweet conversation. [7]

Guru Mahārāj of Nyāsī Kings the Great Grandfather,
Śrī Bhakti Rakṣaka Deva-Goswāmī Śrīdhara— [8]

Satisfied supremely with thy Service dedicated,
By his own hand did he place thee on his chair exalted. [9]

Joyfully as his successor he hath thee chosen,
Such benign affection ne'er we find in all creation. [10]

Rūpa-Saraswatī-Śrīdhara River flowing freely
From thy heart throughout the world makes everything so Holy. [11]

Supreme God of Good our Guide, compassion's Divine Treasure
Ever plays within thy heart as Nityānanda's Pleasure. [12]

Faithfully the true devotees sing thy Supreme Glories,
Lost, deluded souls dishonour thee, alas! and perish. [13]

By thy Grace shall we now serve our Lord and Golden Master,
Sāgara exults in thy Sweet Chanting Dance forever. [14]

śrīmac-caitanya-sārasvata-maṭhavana-udgīta-kīrtir jaya-śrīm
bibhrat sambhātī gaṅgā-taṭa-nikaṭa-navadvīpa-kolādri-rāje
yatra śrī-gaura-sārasvata-mata-niratā-gaura-gāthā grṇanti
śrīmad-rūpānuga śrī-kṛtamatī-guru-gaurāṅga-rādhā-jitāśā

In the Holy Abode of transcendental touchstone
Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām—the selfsame Śrī Vṛndāvan,
in the land of Koladwīp, whose inner identity
is the King of mountains Śrī Govarddhan,
near the charming shores of the holy River Bhāgīrathī
who delivers all the fallen souls
stands that grand and glorious King of all Temples—
Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh.

In that beautiful retreat, the surrendered devotees
whose lives are the message of Śrī Gaura,
are eternally absorbed in the loving service
of the Divine Master, the Golden Lord Gaurāṅga
and the Loving Lord Śrī Govindasundar
with His consort Śrīmatī Gāndharvā,
accompanied by all Their beloved associates.

With hearts always filled with good hope
to attain the grace of the Lord,
following faithfully in the line
of Śrī Śrī Rūpa and Raghunāth—
the storekeepers of the unlimited treasure
of pure, sweet love divine,
those surrendered souls ever sing the unending glories
of the transcendental name and qualities
of the most magnanimous, original Supreme Lord
Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅgasundar.

Indeed the hearts of all beings, moving and still,
marvel in the glory of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
as they take shelter in the soothing, affectionate shade
of the victory flag that flies aloft
and sings wholeheartedly to the world the ever-expanding
renown of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh;
bearing that banner of all transcendental benedictions,
Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh ever shines resplendent
in all its divine magnificence.

*Composed by Śrīla B.R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj while residing in a hut on the banks of the Ganges in 1941.
Rendered into English by Śrīpad B.A. Sagar Maharaj from the Bengali translation by Śrīla B.S. Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj.*

Śrī Guru Ārati-stuti

by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

(1)

**jaya ‘guru-mahārāja’ yati-rājeśvara
śrī-bhakti-rakṣaka deva-gosvāmī śrīdhara.**

All glory to you, ‘Guru Maharaj,’
Of sannyasi kings, the Emperor:
The glorious Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak
Dev-Goswami Śrīdhara.

(2)

**patita-pāvana-līlā vistāri’ bhuvane
nistārīlā dina-hīna āpāmara jane.**

Extending in this world your Pastimes
As saviour of the fallen,
You delivered all the suffering souls,
Including the most forsaken.

(3)

**tomāra karuṇāghana murati heriyā
preme bhāgyavāna jīva paḍe murachiyā**

Beholding your holy form
Of concentrated mercy;
The fortunate souls fall in a swoon
Of divine love’s ecstasy.

(4)

**sudīrgha supībya deha divya-bhāvāśraya
divya-jñāna dīpta-netra divya-jyotirmaya.**

Your lofty form full of divine emotion
Is nectar for our eyes;
With divine knowledge and shining eyes,
Your effulgence fills the skies.

(5)

**suvarṇa-sūraja-kānti aruṇa-vasana
tilaka, tulasī-mālā, candana-bhūṣaṇa.**

A golden Sun resplendent,
In robes of saffron dressed;
Adorned with *tilak*, Tulasī beads,
And with sandal fragrance blessed.

(6)

**apūrvva śrī-aṅga-śobhā kare jhalamala
audāryya-unnata-bhāva mādhyurya-
ujjvala.**

The matchless beauty of your holy form,
Dazzling in its brightness;
Your benevolence of most noble heart,
In the moonglow of love’s sweetness.

(7)

**acintya-pratibhā, snigdha, gambhīra,
udāra
jaḍa-jñāna-giri-vajra divya-dikṣādhāra.**

Inconceivable genius, affection,
Gravity, magnanimity—
A thunderbolt crushing mundane
knowledge,
The reservoir bestowing divinity.

(continued...)

(8)

**gaura-saṅkīrttana-rāsa-rasera āśraya
“dayāla nitāi” nāme nitya premamaya.**

In the Golden Lord’s Saṅkīrttan Dance,
You revel ecstatically;
“Dayāl Nitāi, Dayāl Nitāi!”
You ever call so lovingly.

(9)

**sāṅgopāṅge gaura-dhāme nitya-parakāśa
gupta-govarddhane divya-līlāra-vilāsa.**

Eternally present in Nabadwip Dham
With your associates, by your sweet will,
You enjoy your holy Pastimes
On hidden Govarddhan Hill.

(10)

**gauḍīya-ācāryya-goṣṭhi-gaurava-bhājana
gauḍīya-siddhāntamaṇi kaṇṭha-
vibhuṣaṇa.**

You’re the fit recipient of your dignity
In the Gauḍīya Ācāryya assembly,
The jewel of the Gauḍīya-siddhānta
Adorning your chest so nobly.

(11)

**gaura-sarasvatī-sphūrtta siddhāntera
khani
āviṣkṛta gāyatrīra artha-cintāmaṇi.**

You’re the living message of Śrī Gaura,
You’re the mine of perfect conclusions;
You revealed the Gāyatrī’s inner purport:
The gem fulfilling all aspirations.

(12)

**eka-tattva varṇanete nitya-nava-bhāva
susaṅgati, sāmāñjasya, e saba prabhāva.**

When you speak, one subject alone
Is revealed in ever-new light;
Proper adjustment, and harmony—
All these are your spiritual might.

(13)

**tomāra satirtha-varga sabe eka-mate
rūpa-sarasvatī-dhārā dekhena tomāte.**

All your dear Godbrothers
Declare unanimously
They see within your Holiness
The line of Rūpa-Sarasvatī.

(14)

**tulasī-mālikā-haste śrī-nāmā-grahaṇa
dekhi’ sakalera haya ‘prabhu’ uddīpana.**

Seeing you take the Holy Name,
With Tulasī beads in hand,
Awakens the thought of the Lord
In everybody’s mind.

(15)

**koṭī-candra-suśītala o pada bharasā
gāndharvā-govinda-līlāmṛta-lābha-āśā.**

Your feet, cooling like ten million
moons—
In their service all faith do I place;
The nectar of Rādhā-Govinda’s Pastimes
One day we may drink, by your grace.

(continued...)

(16)

**avicintya-bhedābheda-siddhanta-prakāśa
sānande āratī stuti kare dina-dāsa.**

O personification of perfect conclusions
Inconceivably one, yet different!
I sing this prayer at your *āratī*,
With joy—your humble servant.



Prabhāti Gīti

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**kali-kukkura-kadana yadi cāo he
kaliyuga-pāvana kali-bhaya-nāśana, śrī śacī-nandana gāo he**

Oh mind, you are like a miserable dog of Kali! If you want deliverance from fear in this dark age of Kali, then sing the Holy Name of the son of Śacī.

(2)

**gadādhara-mādana nitāi-era prāṇadhana, advaitera prapūjita gorā
nimai viśvambhara śrīnivāsa-īśvara, bhakata samūha-citacorā**

He is the transcendental cupid of Gadādhara, the life and soul of Nitāi, and the worshipable God of Śrī Advaita Āchāryya. Nimāi Viśvambhara is the sustainer of the universe, the master of Śrīvāsa, and He steals the hearts of all the devotees.

(3)

**nadiyā-śaśadhara māyāpura-īśvara, nāma-prabarttana-sūra
grhījana-śikṣaka nyāsikula-nāyaka, mādharma-rādhābhava pūra**

Mahāprabhu is the moon of Nadia, the Lord of Māyāpur, and heroic saviour who inaugurated the worship of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. He is the teacher of all family men and the commander-in-chief of all *sannyāsīs*. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is filled with the ecstatic love of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī for Kṛṣṇa.

(4)

**sārvabhauma-śodhana gajapati-tāraṇa, rāmānanda-poṣaṇa-vīra
rūpānanda-varddhana sanātana pālana, haridāsa-modana-dhira**

He purified Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācāryya and rescued Prataparudra Mahārāj, the great king of Orissa. He is the hero and protector of Rāmānanda Rāy. He increases the ecstasy of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and He is the guardian of Sanātana Goswāmī. He delights the sober Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

(5)

**vraja rasa-bhāvana duṣṭamata-śātana, kapaṭi-vighātana-kāma
śuddha bhakta-pālana śuṣka jñāna-tāḍana, chala bhakti-dūṣaṇa-rāma**

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya is absorbed in the mellows of Vṛndāvana. He removes the filthy thoughts of the mind, destroying lust and deceit. He drives away dry empiric knowledge which obscures the beauty of pure devotion. He is the protector, maintainer and constant guardian of His pure devotees.

Śrī Nāma-Kīrttana
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**yaśomatī-nandana braja-baro nāgara, gokula-rañjana kāna
gopi-parāṇa-dhana madana manohara, kālīya-damana-vidhāna**

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the beloved son of Yaśodāmāyī, the transcendental lover of the land of Vraja and the delight of Gokula. One of His nicknames is Kāna. He is the life and soul of the *gopīs*. He is the enchanter of Cupid and the conqueror of the Kālīya serpent.

(2)

**amala harinām amiya-vilāsā
vipina-purandara navīna nāgara-bora, baṁśī-badana suvāsā**

The Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa are spotless and full of sweetness and beauty. Kṛṣṇa is the king of the forest of Vṛndāvan. He is the ever-fresh youth, an excellent dresser, and the best of lovers. He always plays sweet melodies upon His flute.

(3)

**braja-jana-pālana asura-kula-nāśana, nanda-godhana rākhoyālā
govinda mādhaba navanīta-taṣkara, sundara nanda-gopālā**

Kṛṣṇa is the guardian of all who live in Vṛndāvan, and the destroyer of demons. He tends the cows and is known as Govinda, for He delights the cows, the earthly and the spiritual senses. He is Mādhava, the husband of the goddess of fortune. Kṛṣṇa, the beautiful cowherd boy of Nanda Mahārāj, loves to steal butter.

(4)

**yāmuna-taṭa-cara gopī-basana-hara, rāsa-rasika kṛpāmoya
śrī-rādhā-vallabha vṛndāvana-naṭabara, bhaktivinod-āśraya**

Wandering on the banks of the Yamunā River, Kṛṣṇa stole the garments of the *gopīs* while they were bathing. He enjoys the mellows of the *rāsa* dance. He is the most merciful, beloved lover of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. He is the great dancer of Vṛndāvan, and the supreme shelter of Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura.

Śrī Śacinandana-vandanā

by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

(1)

**jay śacinandana sura-muni-vandana, bhava-bhaya-khaṇḍana jayo he
jay hari-kīrttana narttanā varttana, kalimala-karttana jayo he**

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the son of Śacīdevī. Great sages and demigods always sing His praise, for by doing so, the fear of repeated birth and death is cut to pieces. All glories to the *kīrttan* of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, for when one chants the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa and dances in ecstasy, the filth of this iron age of Kali disappears.

(2)

**nayana-purandara viśvarūpa snehadhara, viśvambhara viśvera kalyāṇa
jay lakṣmī-viṣṇupriyā viśvambhara priyahiyā, jaya priya kiṅkara īśāna**

Śrī Chaitanya delights all eyes with His charming beauty. He is the most dearly beloved Lord of all and the intimate brother of Viśvarūp. He brings the highest auspiciousness to everyone, for He floods the entire universe with the nectar of love of Godhead and thus saves all living beings. All glories to Lakṣmīpriyā and Viṣṇupriyā Devī, who are very dear to Śrī Nīmāi Paṇḍit. All glories to their family servant, Īśāna.

(3)

**śrī sītā-advaita-rāy mālinī-śrīvāsa jay, jay candraśekhara ācāryya
jay nityānanda rāy gadādhara jay jay, jaya haridāsa nāmācāryya**

All glories to Sītā Ṭhākuraṇī and Śrī Advaita Āchāryya, all glories to Mālinī-devī and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, and all glories to Āchāryya Candraśekhara. All glories to Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu, Gadādhara Paṇḍit and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the Nāmācāryyas.

(4)

**murāri mukunda jay premanidhi mahāśaya, jaya jata prabhu pāriṣad
vandi savākāra pāya adhamere kṛpā hoy, bhakti sapārśada-prabhupād**

All glories to Murāri Gupta, and all glories to Mukunda Datta. All glories to all the other eternal associates of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. By singing the glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda all those great souls who are eternal associates of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, even the lowest of men can obtain the highest treasure of love.

Gurudeva

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**gurudeva!
kṛpā-bindu diyā, koro’ei dāse,
ṭṛṇāpekṣā ati dīna
sakala-sahane, bolo diyā koro,
nija-māne sprhā-hīna**

Gurudeva, give to this servant just one drop of mercy. I am lower than a blade of grass. Give me all help. Give me strength. Let me be as you are, without desires or aspirations.

(2)

sakale sammān, korite śakati,
deho nātha! yathā yatha
tabe to' gāibo, harināma-sukhe,
aparādha habe hata

I offer you all respects, for thus I may
have the energy to know you correctly.
Then, by chanting the Holy Name in great
ecstasy, all my offences will cease.

(3)

kabe heno kṛpā, lobhiyā e jana,
kṛtārtha hoibe, nātha!
śakti-buddhi-hin, āmi ati din,
koro more ātma-sātha

When will such mercy fall to this one
who is weak and devoid of intelligence?
Allow me to be with you.

(4)

yogyatā-vicāre, kichū nāhi pāi,
tomāra karuṇā-sāra
karuṇā nā hoile, kāndiyā kāndiyā,
prāṇa nā rākhibo āra

If you examine me, you will find no
qualities. Your mercy is all that I am
made of. If you are not merciful unto me,
I can only weep, and I will not be able to
maintain my life.

Arunodaya-kīrttana

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(part one)

(1)

udilo aruṇa pūraba-bhāge,
dwiḥa-maṇi gorā amani jāge,
bhakata-samūha loiyā sāthe,
gelā nagara-brāje

Just before sunrise, as the eastern sky
turned crimson, the jewel of the twice-
born, Śrī Gaurahari, awoke. Taking His
devotees with Him He began the *kīrttan*,
wandering through the countryside towns
and villages.

(2)

‘tāthai tāthai’ bājalo khol,
ghana ghana tāhe jhāñjera rol,
preme ḍhala ḍhala sonāra aṅga,
caraṇe nūpura bāje

The *mṛdaṅgas* went “tāthai tāthai”
to the rhyming chiming of the cymbals, as
Mahāprabhu’s golden form shivered in
ecstasy and His footbells jingled.

(3)

**mukunda mād̥hava yād̥ava hari,
bolore bolore vadana bhoṛi',
miche nida-baṣe gelo re rāti,
divasa śarīra sāje**

(4)

**emana durlabha mānava-deho,
pāiyā ki koro bhāva nā keho,
ebe nā bhajile yaśodā-suta,
carame paḍibe lāje**

(5)

**udita tapana hoile asta,
dina gelo-boli' hoibe byasta,
tabe keno ebe alasa hoy,
nā bhaja hṛdoya-rāje**

(6)

**jivana anitya jānaha sār,
tāhe nānā-vidha vipada-bhār,
nāmāśraya kori' jatane tumi,
thākaha āpana kāje**

(7)

**kṛṣṇa-nāma-sudhā koriyā pān
juḍāo bhakativinoda-prāṇ,
nāma binā kichū nāhiko āro,
caudda-bhuvana-mājhe**

(8)

**jīvera kalyāṇa-sādhana-kām,
jagate āsi' e madhura nām,
avidyā-timira-tapana-rūpe,
hṛd-gagane birāje**

Mahāprabhu would call out to the still sleeping people, “Don’t waste your nights uselessly sleeping and your days decorating your bodies! Cry out the names Mukunda, Mād̥hava, Yād̥ava and Hari!

“You have attained this rare human form of life. What are you doing? Don’t you care for this gift? If you don’t worship the darling of Mother Yaśodā now, then great sorrow awaits you at the time of death.

“With every rising and setting of the sun, a day passes and is lost. Why then do you remain idle, refusing to serve the Lord of the heart?

“Know for certain that this life is full of various miseries. Take shelter of the Holy Name as your only business.”

Drink the pure nectar of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, and thus satisfy the soul of Ṭhākura Bhakativinoda. There is nothing but the Name to be had in all the fourteen worlds.

To penetrate the darkness of ignorance and bless all souls within this universe, the beautiful Name of Kṛṣṇa has arisen like the shining sun.

Aruṇodaya-kīrttana

(part two)

(1)

**jīv jāgo, jīv jāgo, gauracāṇḍa bole
kota nidrā jāo māyā-piśācīra kole**

Lord Gaurāṅga calls, “Wake up, sleeping souls! Wake up, sleeping souls! You have slept so long in the lap of the witch Māyā.

(2)

**bhajibo boliyā ese saṁsāra-bhitare
bhuliyā rohile tumi avidyāra bhare**

“You came into this world saying, ‘O my Lord, I will certainly worship You,’ but having forgotten this promise, you have remained in great ignorance.”

(3)

**tomāre loite āmi hoinu avatāra
āmi binā bandhu āra ke āche tomāra**

“I have descended just to save you. Other than Myself, who else is your friend?”

(4)

**enechi auṣadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi’
hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao tumi māgi’**

“I have brought the medicine for destroying the illusion of *māyā*. Now pray for this *hari-nāma-mahā-mantra* and take it.”

(5)

**bhaktivinoda prabhu-carāṇe paḍiyā
sei hari-nāma-mantra loilo māgiyā**

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda fell at the lotus feet of Lord Gaurāṅga, and after begging for the Holy Name he received that *mahā-mantra*.

Śrī Bhoga-āraṭi Gīti
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**bhaja bhakata-vatsala śrī-gaurahari
śrī-gaurahari sohi goṣṭha-bihāri,
nanda-yaśomati-citta-hārī**

Just worship Śrī Gaurahari, who is always affectionate toward His devotees. He is the same Supreme Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who sported in the cowherd pastures of Vraja and stole the hearts of Nanda and Yaśodā.

(2)

**belā ho'lo, dāmodara, āisa ekhano
bhoga-mandire bosī' koraho bhojana**

Mother Yaśodā calls to Kṛṣṇa, “My dear Dāmodara, it is very late. Please come right now, sit down in the dining hall, and take Your lunch.”

(3)

**nandera nirdeśe baise giri-bara-dhārī
baladeva-saha sakhā baise sārī sārī**

On the direction of Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa, the holder of Govarddhan Hill, sits down, and then all the cowherd boys, along with Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Śrī Baladeva, sit down in rows to take their lunch.

(4)

**śuktā-śākādi bhāji nālītā kuṣmāṇḍa
ḍālī ḍālṇā dugdha-tumbī dadhi mocā-ghaṇṭa**

They are then served a feast of *śuktā* and various kinds of green leafy vegetables, then nice fried things, and a salad made of the green leaves of the jute plant. They are also served pumpkin, baskets of fruit, small square cakes made of lentils and cooked down milk, then thick yogurt, squash cooked in milk, and vegetable preparations made from the flower of the banana tree.

(5)

**mudga-boḍā māṣa-boḍā roṭikā ghṛtānna
śaṣkuli piṣṭaka kṣīr puli pāyasānna**

Then they receive fried squares of mung dahl patties, and urad dahl patties, chapātīs, and rice with ghee. Next, sweets made with milk, sugar, and sesamum; rice flour cakes; thick cooked-down milk; cakes floating in milk; and sweet rice.

(6)

**karpūra amṛta—kelī rambhā kṣīra-sāra
amṛta rasālā, amla dwādaśa prakāra**

There is also sweet rice that tastes just like nectar due to its being mixed with camphor. There are bananas, and cheese which is nectarine and delicious. They are also served twelve kinds of sour preparations made with tamarinds, limes, lemons, oranges, and pomegranates.

(7)

**luci cini sarpurī lāḍḍu rasābali
bhojana korena kṛṣṇa ho'ye kutūhali**

There are purīs made with white flour and sugar; purīs filled with cream; laḍḍus; and dahl patties boiled in sugared rice. Kṛṣṇa eagerly eats all of the food.

(8)

**rādhikāra pakka anna vividha byañjana
parama ānande kṛṣṇa korena bhojana**

In great ecstasy and joy Kṛṣṇa eats the rice, curried vegetables, sweets, and pastries cooked by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

(9)

**chale-bale lāḍḍu khāy śrī-madhumāṅgala
bagala bājāy āra deya hari-bolo**

Kṛṣṇa's funny *brāhmaṇa* friend Madhumāṅgala, who is very fond of laḍḍus, gets them by hook or by crook. Eating the laḍḍus he shouts, "Haribol! Haribol!" and makes a funny sound by slapping his sides under his armpits with his hands.

Over...

(10)

**rādhikādi gaṇe heri' nayanera koṇe
tr̥pta ho'ye khāy kṛṣṇa jaśodā-bhavane**

Beholding Rādhārāṇī and Her *gopī* friends out of the corners of His eyes, Kṛṣṇa eats at the house of Mother Yaśodā with great satisfaction.

(11)

**bhojanānte piye kṛṣṇa subāsita bāri
sabe mukha prakṣāloy ho'ye sāri sāri**

After lunch, Kṛṣṇa drinks rose-scented water. Then all of the boys, standing in lines, wash their mouths.

(12)

**hasta-mukha prakṣāliyā yata sakhā-gaṇe
ānande biśrāma kore baladeva-sane**

After all the cowherd boys wash their hands and mouths, in great bliss they take rest with Lord Balarāma.

(13)

**tāmbula rasāla āne tāmbūla-masālā
tāhā kheyē kṛṣṇa-candra sukhe nidrā gelā**

The two cowherd boys Jambula and Rasāla then bring Kṛṣṇa *pān* made with betel nuts, fancy spices, and catechu. After eating that *pān*, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra then happily goes to sleep.

(14)

**vilāsaka śikhi-puccha-cāmara ḍhulāya
apūrvva śayyāya kṛṣṇa sukhe nidrā jāya**

While Kṛṣṇa happily takes His rest on an excellent bedstead, His servant Viśālākṣa cools Him with a fan of peacock feathers.

(15)

**jaśomatī-ājñā peye dhaniṣṭhā-ānito
śrī-kṛṣṇa-prasāda rādhā bhuñje haye prīto**

At Mother Yaśodā's request the *gopī* Dhaniṣṭhā brings remnants of food left on Kṛṣṇa's plate to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who eats them with great delight.

(16)

**lalitādi sakhi-gaṇa avaśeṣa pāya
mane mane sukhe rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāya**

Lalitā-devī and the other *gopīs* then receive the remnants, and within their hearts they sing the glories of Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa with great joy.

(17)

**hari-līlā ek-mātra jāhāra pramoda
bhogārati gāy ṭhākura bhaktivinoda**

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, whose one and only joy is the Pastimes of Lord Hari, sings this *Bhoga-ārati* song.

bhaja bhakata-vatsala śrī-gaurahari

**(bhaja govinda govinda gopāla
bhaja govinda govinda gopāla)**

**(gīridhārī gopīnātha nanda dulala
bhaja govinda govinda gopāla)**

**(nanda dulala jaya jaya śacī dulala
śacī dulala jaya jaya gaura gopāla)**

**(bhaja govinda govinda gopāla
bhaja govinda govinda gopāla)**

**(śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda)**

**(hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare)**



Mahāprasāda

**mahāprasāde govinde nāma brahmane vaiṣṇave
svalpa pūnya vatām rājan viśvāsa naiva jayate**

For those who have not amassed sufficient pious credits they will never be able to honour Mahāprasāda, Lord Govinda, the Holy Name, the *brahmaṇas* and the Vaiṣṇavas.

Prasāda-sevāya

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**bhāi-re!
śarīra abidyā-jal, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,
jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore
tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,
tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre**

My friends! This mortal body is a net; enmeshed by ignorance, our dull senses will drag us to our death within the sea of sense objects and pleasures of the flesh until we drown within the darkest depths of ignorance. And of the deadly senses, the tongue is the most difficult to control, of each sense, the tongue is greediest.

(2)

**kṛṣṇa baḍo doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,
swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi
sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,
preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi**

My friends! Our Lord Kṛṣṇa is full of grace; to conquer this most greedy sense—the tongue—He has given us *prasāda*, the grace of God; the mercy-remnants of His holy food.

Now let us eat these grains and so be blessed. And sing the glories of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and call out “Nitāi-gaur!” in *kṛṣṇa-prem*.

**(preme bhare dākare)
(dayal nitāi caitanya bole, preme bhare dākare)
(nitāi gaura haribol)**

Gaura-ārati

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**(kiba) jaya jaya gourācaṇḍer ārotiko śobhā
jāhṇavī-taṭa-vane jagamana-lobhā**

**(kiba) (jaga janer mana-lobhā)
(gourāṅger āroti śobhā jaga janer mana-lobhā)
(gourāṅger āroti śobhā jaga janer mana-lobhā)
(nitāi goura hari bol)**

All glories, all glories to the beautiful *ārati* ceremony of Lord Chaitanya. This Gaura-ārati is taking place in a grove in the banks of the Jāhnavī [Ganges] and is attracting the minds of all living entities in the universe.

(2)

**(kiba) dakhīṇe nitāicāṇḍ bāme gadādhara
nikaṭe advaita śrīnivāsa chatra-dhara**

On lord Chaitanya's right side is Lord Nityānanda, and on His left is Śrī Gadādhara. Nearby stands Śrī Advaita, and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura is holding an umbrella over Lord Chaitanya's head.

(3)

**(kiba) bosiyāche gourācāṇḍ ratna-simhāsane
(ratna-simhāsana alo korere bosiyāchen gourācāṇḍ ratna-simhāsane)**

**āroti korena brahmā ādi-deva gaṇe
(gourāṅger āroti kore)
(brahmā ādi-deva gaṇe gourāṅger āroti kore)
(gour kṛpa pābo bole gourāṅger āroti kore)
(gour kṛpa pābo bole gourāṅger āroti kore)
(nitāi goura hari bol)**

Lord Chaitanya has sat down on a jeweled throne, and the demigods, headed by Lord Brahmā, perform the *ārati* ceremony.

(4)

**(kiba) narahari-ādi kori' cāmara ḍhulāya
sañjaya-mukunda-bāsu-ghoṣ-ādi gāya**

Narahari Sarakāra and other associates of Lord Chaitanya fan Him with *cāmaras*, and the devotees headed by Sañjaya Paṇḍita, Mukunda Datta, and Vāsu Ghoṣa sing sweet *kīrttan*.

(5)

**(kiba) śaṅkha bāje ghaṇṭā bāje bāje karatāla
madhura mṛdaṅga bāje parama rasāla**

**(madhur madhur madhur bāje)
(gourāṅger āroti kāle madhur madhur madhur bāje)
(gourāṅger āroti kāle madhur madhur madhur bāje)
(madhura mṛdanga bāje madhur madhur madhur bāje)
(nitāi gaura hari bol)**

Conchshells, bells, and *karatālas* resound, and the *mṛdaṅgas* play very sweetly. This *kīrttan* music is supremely sweet and relishable to hear.

(6)

**(kiba) bahu-koṭi candra jini vadana ujjala
gala-deśe bana-mālā kore jhalamala**

**(mālā) (jhalmol jhalmol jhalmol kore)
(gour gole bono fuller mālā jhalmol jhalmol jhalmol kore)
(gour gole bono fuller mālā jhalmol jhalmol jhalmol kore)
(nitāi gaura hari bol)**

The brilliance of Lord Chaitanya's face conquers millions upon millions of moons, and the garland of forest flowers around His neck shines.

(7)

(kiba) śiva-śuka-nārada preme gada-gada

**(bhaja gour preme gada gadare śiva-śuka-nārada preme gada-gada)
(bhaja gour preme gada gadare śiva-śuka-nārada preme gada-gada)**

(ṭhākur) bhaktivinoda dekhe gorāra sampada

(ei bār āmāy doya koro)
(ṭhākura śrī bhaktivinod ei bar āmāy doyā koro)
(ṭhākura śrī sarasvatī ei bar āmāy doyā koro)
(patit-pāvan śrī gurudev ei bar āmāy doyā koro)
(sapārśada gour hari ei bar āmāy doyā koro)
(nitāi goura hari bol)

Lord Śiva, Śukadeva Goswāmī, and Nārada muni are all there, and their voices are choked with the ecstasy of transcendental love. Thus Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda envisions the glory of Lord Śrī Chaitanya.

Śrī Sāraswat-ārati

by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

- (1) **jayare jayare jaya gaura-sarasvatī
bhaktivinoda nvaya karuṇā murati**
All Glory, all Glory to Śrī Gaura-Sarasvatī,
Of the Line of Bhaktivinoda—Pure incarnate Mercy.
- (2) **prakāśile gaura-sevā bhūvana maṅgala
bhaktisiddhānta śuddha prajñāna ujjala**
You reveal'd Śrī Gaura's Service—the world's greatest fortune,
Brilliant as the Perfect Teaching, **Perfect Truth—Devotion.***
- (3) **rādhā-śyāma ekatanu dakṣe gorā rāya
bāme rādhā madhye svayaṁ śyāma-gopa jaya**
On the right side Rādhā-Śyām in one Form—our Lord Golden,
Left is Rādhā, middle—dark cowherd Himself is shining.
- (4) **vraja rasa nava bhāve navadwīpe rāje
udāre madhura rāga obhinovo sāje**
Braja-Ras in Nabadwīp, effulgent new form charming,
Magnanimity of Sweetest Love in novel posing.
- (5) **mādhuryya kaivalya rāga vrajera niryyāsa
prāpti parākāṣṭhā tāhe gaurāṅga vilāsa**
Unity of Loveliness Divine, essence of Braja,
One can find its acme there in Śrī Gaurāṅga-Līlā.

*“*Bhakti-Siddhānta*”

- (6) **rādhā bhāva-kānti aṅgikari' bhāla mate**
dakṣiṇe āsana rasa garimā dekhāte
Taking Heart and Halo of Śrī Rādhā beautifully,
He is honoured on the right to show His Rasa's Glory.
- (7) **rādhā-rasa-troya-svāda rahasya proyāsa**
nirakhi praphulla rādhā mukhe manda hāsa
Divine Play—the Lord hankers for Rādhā's threefold relish,
Seeing this Her heart blooms, Lotus Face sweet smile embellish.
- (8) **madhye rahi vaṁśīrave ghoṣe vaṁśīdhara**
rādhāra sampade āmī gaurāṅga-sundara
In the centre playing His flute, announces the flute-player,
“In the Glory of My Rādhā, I'm Gaurāṅga-Sundar!
- (9) **madabhīṣṭha rūpa rādhāra hṛdaya mandire**
gaurāṅga bhajile suṣṭhu sphūrṭti pāya tāre
My most cherished Form lives in the Temple of Her heart dear,
When you serve Gaurāṅga I shine forth in that Form so clear.”
- (10) **nadīyā prakāśe mahāprabhu gaura-nidhi**
patita pāvana deve milāila vidhi
Blessed Gaura Mahāprabhu came down in Nadia,
Sent me by His Mercy to my Lord, Master, Saviour.
- (11) **e-rūpa āratī brahmā śambhu agocara**
gaura bhakta kṛpā pātra mātra siddhi sāra
Such an Āratī—Lord Brahmā, Lord Śambhu cannot see,
Such perfection's only for those blessed by Gaur's devotee.
- (12) **śrī svarūpa, rāmānanda, rūpa, sanātana**
śrī raghu, jīvādi kṛpāya dekhe bhakta-jana
Śrī Svarūpa, Rāmānanda, Rūpa, Sanātana,
Śrī Raghu, Jīva and others, bless devotees' vision.
- (13) **jaya guru-gaura-rādhā-govinda-sundara**
jaya dāo bhakta vṛnda nitya nirantara
Glory! Guru, Gaura, Rādhā, Beautiful Govinda,
Sing Their Glories, O devotees! ever and forever.

[English rendered by Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu Śrī B.A. Sāgar]

Dainya Prārthanā Gīti
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
(evening parikramā)

(1)

**kabe śrī caitanya more-koribena doyā
kabe āmi pāiba vaiṣṇava-pada-chāyā**

When will that day be mine?
When will Śrī Chaitanya be merciful
upon me? When will I get the shade of
the holy feet of the Vaiṣṇavas?

(2)

**kabe āmi chādibo e viṣoyābhimān
kabe viṣṇu-jane āmi koribo sammān**

When will I give up the ego of
enjoyment? And when will I offer my
respects to the devotees of Viṣṇu with
folded hands in great humility?

(3)

**galabastra kṛtāñjali vaiṣṇava-nikaṭe
dante tṛṇa kori dāṇḍāibo niṣkaṭe**

When will I fall on the ground
with the cloth of surrender around my
neck and the straw of the street
between my teeth?

(4)

**kāndiyā kāndiyā jānāibo duḥkhagrāma
saṁsāra-anala hoite māgibo viśrām**

With tears in my eyes I confess to
that Vaiṣṇava my tale of worldly woe. I
will seek deliverance from the fire of
material life and I will pray to him for
shelter and rest.

(5)

**śuniyā āmāra duḥkha vaiṣṇava ṭhākura
āmā' lāgi' kṛṣṇe āvediben pracur**

And hearing of my suffering, the
Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura will offer prayers and
supplication to Kṛṣṇa on my behalf.

(6)

**vaiṣṇavera āvedane kṛṣṇa doyāmoy
e heno pāmara prati hoben sadoy**

And satisfied by the prayer of the
devotee, Kṛṣṇa will be kind upon this
wicked soul.

(7)

**vinodera nivedan vaiṣṇava-carāṇe
kṛpā kori saṅge loho ei akiñcane**

Vinoda submits at the holy feet of
the Vaiṣṇavas: “Be merciful upon me
and accept this poor soul into your
company.”

Śrī Tulasī-parikramā-gīti

by Śrī Candrasekhara Kavi

(1)

**namo namaḥ tulasī mahārāṇi,
vṛnde mahārāṇi namo namaḥ
namo re namo re māiyā namo nārāyaṇi**

O Tulasī Mahārāṇī! O Vṛndā! O mother of devotion! O Nārāyaṇī, I offer my obeisances to you again and again.

(2)

**jāko daraśe, paraśe agha-nāśa-i
mahimā beda-purāṇe bākhāni**

By seeing you or even by touching you, all sins are destroyed. Your glories are described in the Vedas and Puraṇas.

(3)

**jāko patra, mañjarī komala
śrī-pati-caraṇa-kamale lapaṭāni
dhanya tulasī, pūraṇa tapa kiye,
śrī-śālagrāma-mahā-pāṭarāṇi**

Your leaves and soft *mañjarīs* are entwined at the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Lakṣmī. O blessed mother Tulasī, you performed successful austerities and have thus become the chief consort and queen of Śrī Śālagrāma-śilā.

(4)

**dhūpa, dipa, naivedya, āratī,
phulanā kiye varakhā varakhāni
chāppāṇna bhoga, chatrīśa byaṇjana,
binā tulasī prabhu eka nāhi māni**

You engadden and shower your rain of mercy upon one who offers you some incense, a ghee lamp, *naivedya*, and *āratī*. The Lord does not care for even one of fifty-six varieties of cooked food or thirty-six different curries offered without *tulasī* leaves.

(5)

**śiva-śuka-nārada, āur brahmādiko,
ḍhūrata phirata mahā-muni jñāni
candraśekhara māiyā, terā jaśa gāoye
bhakati-dāna dījiye mahārāṇi**

Lord Śiva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Devarṣi Nārada, and all the jñānīs and great munis, headed by Lord Brahmā, are circumambulating you. O mother! O Mahārāṇī, Chandraśekhara thus sings your glories. Please bestow upon him the gift of pure devotion.

Śrī Śrī Gurvāṣṭaka

by Śrīla Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura
(morning bhajan)

(1)

**saṁsāra-dāvānala-liḍha-loka-
trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam
prāptasya kalyāṇa-guṇārṇavasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

1) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master, who is the ocean of auspicious qualities. Just to deliver all planes of life that are suffering in the forest fire of the material world, he, as the rain-cloud of mercy, melts to shower down the waters of compassion.

(2)

**mahāprabhoḥ kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta-
vāditra-mādyan-manaso rasena
romāñca-kampāśru-taraṅga-bhājo
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

2) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master, whose heart is maddened in nectarine love for Śrīman Mahāprabhu by the grand congregational chanting of the Holy Name. Dancing, singing, and playing the *khol* and *karatāls*, etc.; his body thrills with joy, trembles, and waves of tears flow from his eyes.

(3)

**śrī-vigrahārādhana-nitya-nānā-
śrṅgāra-tan-mandira-mārjjanādaḥ
yuktasya bhaktāṁś ca niyuñjato 'pi
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

3) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master, who personally engages in many types of worshipful services such as dressing the deity and cleansing the Lord's holy temple, and similarly engages the devotees (in his retinue).

(4)

**catur-vvidha-śrī-bhagavat-prasāda
svādv-anna-ṭṛptān hari-bhakta-saṅghān
kṛtvaiḥ ṭṛptim bhajataḥ sadaiva
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

4) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master, who fully satisfies the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with four types of nectarine *prasādam* foodstuffs that are chewed, sucked, licked, and drunk (that is, he brings about the dispellation of mundanity and the awakening of the joy of love that develops from respecting *prasādam*), and he is thereby himself satisfied.

(5)

**śrī-rādhikā-mādhavayor apāra
mādhurya-lilā-guṇa-rūpa-nāmnām
prati-kṣaṇāsvādana-lolupasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

5) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master, whose heart is unsatiably desirous of tasting the infinite Holy Names, Forms, Qualities and Pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava that are full of the sweetness of love divine.

(6)

**nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyair
yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇīyā
tatrāti-dākṣyād ati-vallabhasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

6) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master, who is extremely dear to the Supreme Divine Couple who sport in the groves of Vraja, because he is greatly expert in those appropriate engagements that are performed by the *sakhīs* in order to serve the amorous Pastimes of the Divine Couple.

(7)

**sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

(8)

**yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādāt na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
dhyāyaṁ stuvāṁs tasya yaśas tri-
sandhyaṁ**

7) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master (who is the simultaneously inconceivably distinct and non-distinct manifest embodiment of the Supreme Personality of Godhead): all the Scriptures sing the glories of his being the direct non-different form of the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari, and the pure saints also concede this; yet, he is the most beloved of the Lord.

8) I worship the lotus feet of the Divine Master, ever singing his glories and meditating upon him at the three junctions of the day. By his grace alone does one gain grace of the Lord, and if he is displeased the soul has no shelter anywhere.

(9)

**śrīmad guroraṣṭakam etad ucchhair
brāhme muhūrte paṭhati prayātnāt
yas tena vṛndāvana-nātha-sākṣāt-
sevaiva labhyā januṣo 'nta eva**

9) One who, during the *Brāhma-muhūrta* (four dandas or ninety-six minutes before sunrise) with meticulous regularity wholeheartedly sings these eight prayers to the Divine Master, attains, upon leaving the body in his spiritual perfection, the qualification to engage in the direct service of the Lord of Vṛndāvana.

Auspicious Invocation

to Śaraṇāgati
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
(morning bhajan)

(1)
**śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu jīve dayā kari’
svapārśada sviya dhāma saha avatari**

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya,
Being gracious upon the *jīvas*,
Along with Your associates and abode
You descended to this world

(2)
**antyanta durllabha prema karibāre dāna
śikhāya saraṇāgati bhakatera prāṇa**

To distribute freely
The love divine most rare;
By teaching exclusive surrender,
The life and soul of the devotee

(3)
**dainya, ātmanivedana, goptṛtve varaṇa
‘avaśya rakṣibe kṛṣṇa’—viśvāsa pālana**

Humility, self-giving,
Embracing His guardianship,
‘Kṛṣṇa will certainly protect me’—
Maintaining this faith.

(4)
**bhakti-anukūla mātṛa kārjjera svikāra
bhakti-pratikūla bhāva—varjjanāṅgikāra**

Acceptance of all activities
Favourable to devotion;
Embracing rejection
Of adversity to devotion.

(5)
**ṣaḍ-aṅga śaraṇāgati haibe yānhāra
tānhāra prārthanā śune śrī-nandakumāra**

Those who surrender
In this sixfold way—
Their prayer will be heard
By the divine son of Nanda.

(6)
**rūpa-sanātana-pade dante tṛṇa kari’
bhakativinoda paḍe dui pada dhari’**

Taking in his mouth a straw,
Falling at the lotus feet of Śrī
Rūpa-Sanātana;
Śrī Bhaktivinoda clasps
Their holy lotus feet.

(7)
kāṇḍiyā kāṇḍiyā bale, āmi ta' adhama
śikhāye śaraṇāgati karahe uttama

Weeping, weeping, I implore thee,
'O I am afallen!
Please teach me to surrender,
Teach me pure devotion.'

Bhajana-gīti

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
(morning bhajan)

(1)

bhaja re bhaja re āmār mana ati manda
(bhajan binā gati nāi re)
(braja-bane rādhā-kṛṣṇa bhajan binā gati nāi re)
(bhaja) braja-bane rādhā-kṛṣṇa-caraṇāravinda
(jñāna-karmma parihari' re)
(śuddha rāga patha dhari jñāna-karmma parihari)

O my mind, how foolish you are. Just worship the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Vraja. Without such worship there is no means of spiritual advancement. Give up all speculative knowledge and materialistic activities and just worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the forests of Vraja.

(2)

(bhaja) gaura-gadādharaḍvaita-guru-nityānanda
(gaura-kṛṣṇe abhede jene)
(guru kṛṣṇa-priya jene gaura-kṛṣṇe abheda jene re)
śrīnīvāsa, haridāsa, murāri, mukunda
(gaura-preme smara smara re)
(śrīnīvāsa, haridāse, gaura-preme smara re)

You should worship and serve Lord Gaura, Advaita, and the original spiritual master, Lord Nityānanda. Knowing Lord Gaura and Lord Kṛṣṇa to be the same, and knowing the spiritual master to be very dear to Kṛṣṇa, you should remember the dear associates of Lord Chaitanya, such as Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Murāri Gupta, and Mukunda Datta. In deep love for Lord Gaura, you should remember the two great personalities Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura and Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

(3)

rūpa-sanātana-jīva-raghunātha-dvandva
(jadi bhajan korbe re)
(rūpa-sanātane smaran jadi bhajan korbe re)
rāghava-gopāla-bhaṭṭa-svarūpa-rāmānanda
(kṛṣṇa preme jadi cāo re)
(svarūpa-rāmānande smara kṛṣṇa-prema jadi cāo re)

You should remember the Goswāmīs of Vṛndāvana: Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātana Goswāmī, Jīva Goswāmī, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, and Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī. If you worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, then you should remember the two great souls Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī and Sanātana Goswāmī. You should also remember Rāghava Paṇḍita, Gopāl Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī, and Rāmānanda Rāya. If you really seek love of Kṛṣṇa, then you must remember Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya.

(4)

goṣṭhī-saha karṇapura-sen-śivānanda
(ajasra smara smara re)
(goṣṭhī-saha-sen śivānande ajasra smara re)
rūpānuga sādhu-jana bhajana-ānanda
(braje bās jadi cāo re)
(rūpānuga sādhu-jane smara braje bās jadi cāo re)
rūpānuga sādhu-jana bhajana-ānanda
bhaja re bhaja re āmār mana ati manda

You should remember Śrīla Kavi Karṇapura and all his family members, who are all sincere servants of Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. You should also remember the father of Kavi Karṇapura, Śivānanda Sena. Always remember, always remember Śrī Karṇapura and his family. You should remember all those Vaiṣṇavas who strictly follow the path of Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī and who are absorbed in the ecstasy of *bhajana*. If you actually want residence in the land of Vraja, then you must remember all the Vaiṣṇavas, who are followers of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī.



Viraha-gīti

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura
(morning and evening bhajan sung on disappearance days)

(1)

**ye ānilo prema-dhana koruṇā pracura
heno prabhu kothā gelā ācāryya-ṭhākura**

That personality who delivered the treasure of *prema-bhakti*, who was so intense with compassion—where is such a personality to be found as Śrī Āchāryya Ṭhākura (Śrīnivāsa Āchāryya)?

(2)

**kāñhā mora swarūp rūpa kāñhā sanātana
kāñhā dāsa raghunātha patita-pāvana**

Where are the saviours of the fallen souls? Where is my Svarūpa Dāmodara, and where are Rūpa Goswāmī and Sanātana Goswāmī? Where is Raghunātha dāsa to be found?

(3)

**kāñhā mora bhaṭṭa-juga kāñhā kavirāja
eka-kāle kothā gelā gaurā naṭa-rāja**

Where are my Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa and Gopāl Bhaṭṭa Goswāmīs? Where am I to find Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja now? All at once they have gone to join Lord Gaurāṅga, the great dancer.

(4)

**pāṣaṇe kuṭibo māthā anale paśibo
gaurāṅga guṇera nidhi kothā gele pābo**

To reach such a perfect personality as Lord Chaitanya, I can only break my head against the stone in the anguish of separation.

(5)

**se-saba saṅgīra saṅge ye koilo bilāsa
se-saṅga nā pāñā kānde narottama dāsa**

They have all gone off together in their own *līlā* (Pastimes). Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says: “Unable to obtain their association, I must simply weep.”

Nāma-Saṅkīrtana

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura
(sung after morning and evening class)

(1)

**hari haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ
yādavāya mādhavāya keśavāya namaḥ**

O Lord Hari, O Lord Kṛṣṇa, I offer my obeisances to You, who are known as Yādava, Hari, Mādhava, and Keśava.

(2)

**gopāla govinda rām śrī madhusūdana
gīridhārī gopīnātha madana-mohana**

O Gopāla, Govinda, Rāma, Śrī Madhusūdana, Gīridhārī, Gopīnātha, Madana-mohana!

(3)

**śrī-caitanya nityānanda śrī advaita-candra
gadādhara śrīvāsādi gaura-bhakta-vṛnda**

All glories to Śrī Chaitanya and Nityānanda. All glories to Śrī Advaita Āchāryya and His consort, Śrī Sītā Ṭhākuraṇī. All glories to Lord Hari, the Spiritual Master, the Vaiṣṇavas, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

(4)

**jaya rūpa sanātana bhaṭṭa raghunātha
śrī-jīva-gopāla-bhaṭṭa dāsa raghunātha**

All glories to Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātana Goswāmī, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, and Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī.

(5)

**ei chay gosāñir kori caraṇa vandana
jāhā hoite bighna-nāś abhiṣṭa pūraṇa**

I offer my obeisances to the Six Goswāmīs. By offering them my obeisances all obstacles to devotion are destroyed and all spiritual desires are fulfilled.

(6)

**ei chay gosāñir yāñra muñi tāñra dāsa
tāñ-sabāra pada-reṇu mora pañca-grāsa**

I am a servant of that person who is a servant of these Six Goswāmīs. The dust of their holy feet is my five kinds of foodstuffs.

(7)

**tañdera caraṇa sebi bhakta sane bāsa
janame janame mora ei abhilāṣa**

This is my desire, that birth after birth I may live with those devotees who serve the lotus feet of these six Goswāmīs.

(8)

**ei chay gosāñi yabe braje koilā bāsa
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-nitya-lilā korilā prakāśa**

When these six Goswāmīs lived in Vraja they revealed and explained the eternal Pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

(9)

**ānande bolo hari bhaja vṛndāvana
śrī-guru-vaiṣṇava-pade majāiyā mana**

Absorbing your mind in meditation upon the divine feet of the spiritual master and the holy Vaiṣṇavas, chant the names of Lord Hari in ecstasy, and worship the transcendental realm of Vṛndāvana.

(10)

**śrī-guru-vaiṣṇava-pāda-padma kori āśa
(hari) nāma-saṅkīrttana kohe narottama dāsa**

Desiring the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, Narottama dāsa sings the *saṅkīrttana* of the Holy Name.



Śrī Guru-vaiṣṇava Māhātmya-gīti

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura
(1st evening bhajan)

(1)

**śrī guru caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando muñi sāvadhāna mate
yānhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava toriyā yāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti haya jānhā haite**

The lotus feet of the spiritual master are the abode of pure devotional service. I bow down to those lotus feet with great care and attention. My dear brother (my dear mind)! It is through the grace of the spiritual master that we cross over this material existence and obtain Kṛṣṇa.

(2)

**guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya,
āra nā koriha mane āśā
śrī guru-caraṇe rati, ei se uttama-gati,
ye prasāde pūre sarvva āśā**

Make the teachings from the lotus mouth of the spiritual master one with your heart, and do not desire anything else. Attachment to the lotus feet of the spiritual master is the best means of spiritual advancement. By his mercy all desires for spiritual perfection are fulfilled.

(3)

**cakṣu-dāna dila yei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya-jñāna hṛde prokāśito
prema-bhakti yāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa yāte,
vede gāya yānhāra carito**

He who has given me the gift of transcendental vision is my lord, birth after birth. By his mercy divine knowledge is revealed within the heart, bestowing *prema-bhakti* and destroying ignorance. The Vedic Scriptures sing of his character.

(4)

śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
lokanātha lokera jīvana
hā hā prabhu koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana

(e adhama laila śaraṇa)
(tuyā pade loinu saraṇa)
(āmi) (śaranilam)
(abhaya śrī pada padme śaranilam)
(āmay) (doyā koro he)
(patit-pāvana śrī gurudev doyā koro he)
(adhama patita jene doyā koro he)
(jay gurudev)

O spiritual master, ocean of mercy, and friend of the fallen souls, you are the teacher of everyone and the life of all people. O master! Be merciful unto me, and give me the shade of your lotus feet. May your glories now be proclaimed throughout the three worlds.



Sāvaraṇa-śrī-gaura-pāda-padme Prārthanā

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura
(2nd evening bhajan)

(1)

**śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya prabhu doyā koro more
tomā binā ke doyālu jagata majhāre**

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya
Kindly give Your Grace to me;
In the whole creation
There's none as merciful as You.

(2)

**patita-pāvana-hetu tava avatāra
mo samo patita prabhu nā pāibe āra**

You descended
Just to save the fallen souls;
O Lord, a soul as fallen as me
Is nowhere to be found.

(3)

**hā hā prabhu nityānanda premānanda sukhī
kṛpā-bolokana koro āmi boro duḥkhī**

O Lord, O Lord Nityānanda
Ever in the Joy of Your love;
Kindly give Your Gracious Glance
I am very sad.

(4)

**doyā koro sītā-pati advaita gosāñi
tava kṛpā-bole pāi caitanya-nitāi**

Kindly give Your Grace, Śrī Advaita Goswāmī
The Lord of Śrīmatī Sītā Ṭhākurañi;
By the power of Your Grace
We may gain the service of Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅga.

(5)

**gaura premamaya tanu paṇḍita gadādhara
śrīnivāsa haridāsa doyāra sāgara**

The embodiment of Śrī Gaura's love
Paṇḍit Gadādhara;
Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit, Haridās Ṭhākura
You are the ocean of Grace personified.

(6)

**hā hā svarūpa sanātana rūpa raghunātha
bhaṭṭa-yuga śrī jīva hā prabhu lokanātha**

O my Lords, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Sanātana,
Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunāth;
Śrī Raghunāth Bhaṭṭa and Śrī Gopāl Bhaṭṭa
O my Lord Śrī Lokanāth Goswāmī.

(7)

**doyā koro śrī-ācāryya prabhu śrīnivāsa
rāmacandra-saṅga māge narottama dāsa**

Please grant Your blessings
O Lord Śrī Śrīnivās Āchāryya;
For the company of Śrī Rāmcandra Chakravartī
Narottama dāsa does pray.

**(doyā koro prabhupāda śrī gaura prakāśa)
(tava jāna kṛpā māge ei adhama dāsa)**

Śrī Vaiṣṇava-mahimā-gīti
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
(3rd evening bhajan)

(1)

**(ohe) vaiṣṇava ṭhākura, doyāra sāgara,
e dāse koruṇā kori’
diyā pada-chāyā, śodho he āmāre,
tomāra caraṇa dhori**

O my Lord, O Vaiṣṇava, Ocean of grace,
Kindly be gracious to this servitor;
Bestow the shade of your holy feet, Purify me,
I clasp your holy lotus feet.

(2)

**chaya bega domi’, chaya doṣa śodhi’,
chaya guṇa deho’ dāse
chaya sat-saṅga, deho’ he āmāre,
bosechi saṅgera āśe**

Subjugate the six urges, Rectify the six defects,
Bestow the six qualities upon this servitor;
Please grant me, The six kinds of saintly association;
I sit at your feet aspiring for that association.

-
1. The six urges are those of speech, the mind, anger, the tongue, the belly, and the genitals.
 2. The six faults are overeating or collecting more monetary funds than required, overendeavouring for material objectives, unnecessary talking about mundane affairs, being too attached to or too neglectful of Scriptural rules and regulations, associating with worldly-minded persons, and lusting after mundane achievements.
 3. The six good qualities are enthusiasm, patience, confidence, the determination to perform activities favourable to devotional service, the resolution to abandon the association of non-devotees, and the discipline required to always follow in the footsteps of the predecessor *āchāryas*.
-

(3)

**ekākī āmāra, nāhi pāya bolo,
hari-nāma-saṅkīrttane
tumi kṛpā kori, śraddhā-bindu diyā,
deho' kṛṣṇa-nāma-dhane**

On my own I have no strength
To perform *Harināma-saṅkīrttana*;
Kindly be pleased To bestow a drop of faith in my heart,
Giving me the treasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Name.

(4)

**kṛṣṇa se tomāra, kṛṣṇa dite pāro,
tomāra śakati āche
āmi to kāṅgāla, 'kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa' boli,
dhāi tava pāche pāche**

**(āmi) (dhāi tava pāche pāche)
(kṛṣṇa dhana pābarāse dhāi tava pāche pāche)
(tumi dileou dite pāro)
(kṛṣṇa tomār hṛdoyer dhan tumi dileou dite pāro)
(kṛṣṇa devār śakti dhara tumi dileou dite pāro)
(āmi to kāṅgāl kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa boli)
(dhāi tavo pāche pāche)**

**(ohe) vaiṣṇava ṭhākura doyāra sāgara
e dāse koruṇā kori**

Kṛṣṇa is yours, You can give Him,
You have the power to do so;
I who am bereft, Calling 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa,'
Am running desperately behind you.



Ātma-nivedana

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**ātma-nivedana, tuyā pade kori,
hoinu parama sukhi
duḥkha dūre gelo, cintā nā rohilo,
caudike ānanda dekhi**

I have become supremely joyful by surrendering myself at Your holy feet. Unhappiness has gone away, and there are no more anxieties. I see joy in all directions.

(2)

**aśoka-abhaya, amṛta-ādhāra,
tomāra caraṇa-dwaya
tāhāte ekhana, biśrāma labhiyā
chāḍinu bhavera bhaya**

Your two lotus feet are reservoirs of immortal nectar where one may live free from sorrow and fear. I have found peace there now and have given up the fear of worldly existence.

(3)

**tomāra saṁsāre, koribo sevana,
nahibo phalera bhāgi
taba sukha jāhe, koribo jatana,
ho'ye pade anurāgi**

I shall render service in Your household and not endeavour to enjoy the fruits of that service, but rather I shall strive for whatever pleases You, fully devoted to Your lotus feet.

(4)

**tomāra sevāya, duḥkha hoya jato,
seo to' parama sukha
sebā-sukha-duḥkha, parama sampada
nāśaye avidyā-duḥkha**

Troubles encountered in Your service shall be the cause of great happiness, for in Your devotional service joy and sorrow are equally great riches. Both destroy the misery of ignorance.

(5)

**pūrvva itihāsa, bhulinu sakala,
sevā-sukha peye mane
āmi to' tomāra, tumi to' āmāra,
ki kāja apara dhane**

I have completely forgotten all past history by feeling great joy in my mind. I am most certainly Yours, and You are indeed mine. What need is there of any other treasure?

(6)

**bhaktivinoda, ānande dubiyā,
tomāra sevāra tare
saba ceṣṭā kare, tava icchā-mata,
thākiyā tomāra ghare**

Bhaktivinoda, diving into the ocean of bliss, devotes all his efforts for Your service and dwells in Your house according to Your wishes.

Dainya

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
(Humility, first song)

(1)

**bhuliyā tomāre, saṁsāre āsiyā,
peye nānābidha byathā
tomāra caraṇe āsiyāchi āmi,
bolibo duḥkhera kathā**

I forsook You, O Lord, and came to this world of pain and sorrow. Now I submit my tale of woe at Your lotus feet.

(2)

**jananī-jaṭhare, chilāma jakhana,
viṣama vandhana-pāṣe
ekabāra prabhu! dekhā diyā more,
bañcile e dīna dāse**

While still in the unbearable fetters of my mother's womb, I saw You before me. You revealed Yourself, but briefly, and then abandoned this poor servant of Yours.

(3)

**takhana bhāvinu, janama pāiyā,
karibo bhajana tava
janama hoilo, paḍi māyājāle
nā hoilo jñāna-laba**

At that moment I swore to worship
You after taking birth; but birth came,
and with it the network of worldly
illusions which robbed me of all good
sense.

(4)

**ādarer chele. swajanera kole,
hāsiyā kātānu kāla
janaka-janani- snehete bhuliyā
saṁsara lāgilo bhālo**

As a fondled son in the lap of
relatives, I passed my time smiling and
laughing. My parents' affection helped
me to forget the pangs of birth, and I
thought the world very nice.

(5)

**krame dina dina, bālaka haiyā,
khelinu bālaka saha
āra kicchū dine, jñāna upajila,
pāṭha paṛi ahar-aharahaḥ**

Day by day I grew and soon began
playing with other boys. Shortly my
powers of understanding emerged. I
read and studied my lessons
incessantly.

(6)

**vidyāra gaurave, bhrami deśe deśe,
dhana upārjjana kari
svajana-pālana, kari ekamane,
bhulinu tomāre, hari!**

Travelling from place to place,
proud of my education, I grew wealthy
and maintained my family with
undivided attention. O Lord Hari, I
forgot You!

(7)

**vārdhakey ekhana, bhakativinoda,
kāṇḍiyā kātara ati
nā bhajiyā tore, dina vṛthā gela,
ekhano ki ha'be gati!**

Now in old age, Bhaktivinoda is
sad. He weeps. I failed to worship
You, O Lord, and instead passed my
life in vain. What will be my fate now?



Dayāl Nitāi Chaitanya
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**‘dayāl nitāi caitanya bo’le nāc re āmār man
nāc re āmār man, nāc re āmār man**

O my mind, just dance! O my mind, just dance! O my mind, please dance,
chanting, “*dayāl nitāi caitanya!*”

(2)

**(emon dayāl to nāi he, mār kheye prema dey)
(tābe) aparādha dūre jābe, pābe prem-dhan
(aparādhera-bicāra to nāi he)
takhon kṛṣṇa-nāme ruci ha’be, ghucibe bandhan**

Such a merciful personality as Nityānanda Prabhu is not to be found anywhere. He suffers a beating from Jagāi and Mādhāi and still gives them love of God. When you become offenceless, you will obtain love of God; but in these names of Chaitanya and Nitāi there is no consideration of offences. Once you have a taste for the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, bondage to this world will come to an end.

(3)

**(anurāg to habe he)
takhon anāyāse saphal habe jībera jīban
(kṛṣṇa-rati binā jīban to miche he)
śeṣe vṛndāvane rādhā-śyāmer pā be darśan
(gaura-kṛpā hale he)**

When there is attachment to the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, then, very easily, the life of a living being becomes successful. Without attachment to Kṛṣṇa, life is simply false. If the mercy of Lord Gaura is there, then at the end of life you will obtain the beautiful vision of Rādhā and Śyāma in Vṛndāvana.



Dainyātmikā

by Srīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura

(1)

(*prabhu he!*)

**emona durmmati, saṁsāra bhitare,
poḍiyā āchinu āmi
taba nija-jana, kono mahājane,
pāṭhāiyā dile tumi**

A wicked mind brought me into this world, O Lord, but one of Your pure and elevated devotees has come to bring me out.

(2)

**doyā kori' more, patita dekhiyā,
kohilo āmāre giyā
ohe dina-jana, śuno bhālo kathā
ullasita ha'be hiyā**

He saw me so fallen and wretched, took pity, and came to me saying, “O humbled soul, please listen to this good tiding, for it will gladden your heart.”

(3)

**tomāre tārīte, śrī-kṛṣṇā-caitanya,
nabadwīpe avatār
tomā heno kata, dina hīna jane,
korilena bhava-pār**

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya has appeared in the land of Nabadwīp to deliver you. He has safely conducted many miserable souls such as you across the sea of worldly existence.”

(4)

**bedera pratijñā, rākhibāra tare,
rukma-barṇa vipra-suta
mahāprabhu nāme, nadiyā mātāya,
saṅge bhāi avadhūta**

“To fulfil the promise of the Vedas, the son of a *brāhmaṇa*, bearing the Name Mahāprabhu of golden complexion, has descended with His brother, the *avadhūta* Nityānanda. Together They have overwhelmed all of Nadia with divine ecstasy.

(5)

**nanda suta jini, caitanya gosāñi,
nija-nāma kori' dāna
tārilo jagat, tumi-o jāiyā,
loho nija-paritrāṇa**

“Śrī Chaitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the son of Nanda, has saved the world by freely distributing His own Holy Name. Go also and receive your deliverance.”

(6)

se kathā śuniyā, āsiyāchi, nātha!
tomāra caraṇa-tale
bhakativinoda, kāndiyā kāndiyā,
āpana-kāhini bale

O Lord, hearing those words,
Bhaktivinoda has come weeping to the
soles of Your lotus feet and tells the story
of his life.

Śrī Nāma

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

gāy gorā madhur sware
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma, rāma rāma hare hare

Lord Gaurasundara sings in a very sweet voice, “*Hare kṛṣṇa, hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa, hare hare/ hare rāma, hare rāma, rāma rāma, hare hare.*”

(2)

gr̥he thāko, vane thāko, sadā ‘hari’ bole’ dāko,
sukhe duḥkhe bhulo nāko, vadane hari-nām koro re

Whether you live at home or as a forest saint; in happiness or sadness, don’t forget—chant the Holy Name and fill your lips with *harināma*.

(3)

māyā-jāle baddha ho’ye, ācho miche kāja lo’ye,
ekhona o cetana peye, rādhā-mādhav-nām bolo re

Bound in *māyā*’s net you’ve slaved and toiled in vain. But now that you have a human life and consciousness, chant, “*Rādhā-Mādhava.*”

(4)

jīvana hoilo śeṣa, nā bhajile hr̥ṣīkeśa
bhaktivinod-upadeśa, ekbār nām-rase mātō re

This life must surely end soon, and you have not worshiped Hṛṣīkeśa, the master of the senses. Bhaktivinoda advises: at least once, taste the *nāma-rasa*, the nectar of the Holy Name.

Nivedana

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

part one

(1)

**gopīnāth, mama nivedana śuno
viṣayī durjjana, sadā kāma-rata,
kichu nāhi mora guṇa**

O Gopīnātha, Lord of the *gopīs*, please hear my request. I am a wicked materialist, always addicted to worldly desires, and no good qualities do I possess.

(2)

**gopīnāth, āmāra bharasā tumi
tomāra caraṇe, loinu śaraṇa,
tomāra kiṅkoro āmi**

O Gopīnātha, You are my only hope, and therefore I have taken shelter at Your lotus feet. I am now Your eternal servant.

(3)

**gopīnāth, kemone śodhive more
nā jāni bhakati, karmme jaḍamati,
paḍechi saṁsāra ghore**

O Gopīnātha, how will You purify me? I do not know what devotion is, and my materialistic mind is absorbed in fruitive work. I have fallen into this dark and perilous worldly existence.

(4)

**gopīnāth, sakali tomāra māyā
nāhi mama bala, jñāna sunirmala,
swādhīna nahe e kāyā**

O Gopīnātha, everything here is Your illusory energy. I have no strength or transcendental knowledge, and this body of mine is not independent and free from the control of material nature.

(5)

**gopīnāth, niyata caraṇe sthāna
māge e pāmara, kāndiyā kāndiyā,
korohe karuṇā dāna**

O Gopīnātha, this sinner, who is weeping and weeping, begs for an eternal place at Your divine feet. Please give him Your mercy.

(6)

**gopīnāth, tumi to sakali pāro
durjjane tārite, tomāra śakati,
ke āche pāpīra āro**

O Gopīnātha, You are able to do anything, and therefore You have the power to deliver all sinners. Who is there that is more of a sinner than myself?

(7)

**gopīnāth, tumi kṛpā-pārābāra
jīvera kāraṇe, āsiyā prapañce,
līlā koile subistāra**

O Gopīnātha, You are the ocean of mercy. Having come into this phenomenal world, You expand Your divine Pastimes for the sake of the fallen souls.

(8)

**gopīnāth, āmi ki doṣera doṣī
asura sakala, pāilo caraṇa,
vinoda thākilo bosī'**

O Gopīnātha, I am so sinful that although all the demons attained Your lotus feet, Bhaktivinoda has remained in worldly existence.

part two

(1)

**gopīnāth, ghucāo saṁsāra-jwālā
avidyā-jātanā, āro nāhi sahe,
janama-maraṇa-mālā**

O Gopīnātha, please remove the torment of worldly existence. I can no longer tolerate the pain of ignorance and the repeated succession of births and deaths.

(2)

**gopīnāth, āmi to' kāmera dāsa
viṣaya-bāsanā, jāgiche hṛdoye,
phāndiche karama phāṁsa**

O Gopīnātha, indeed I am a servant of lust. Worldly desires are awakening in my heart, and thus the noose of fruitive work is beginning to tighten.

(3)

**gopīnāth, kabe vā jāgibo āmi
kāma-rūpa ari, dūre teyāgibo,
hṛdoye sphuribe tumi**

O Gopīnātha, when will I wake up and abandon afar this enemy of lust, and when will You manifest Yourself in my heart?

(4)

**gopīnāth, āmi to' tomāra jana
tomāre chāḍiyā, saṁsāra bhajinu,
bhuliyā āpana-dhana**

O Gopīnātha, I am Your devotee, but having abandoned You and thus having forgotten my real treasure, I have worshiped this mundane world.

(5)

**gopīnāth, tumi to' sakali jāno
āpanāra jane, daṇḍiyā ekhano,
śrī-caraṇe deho sthāno**

O Gopīnātha, You know everything. Now, having punished Your servant, please give him a place at Your lotus feet.

(6)

**gopīnāth, ei ki vicāra tabo
vimukha dekhiyā, chāḍa nija-jane,
na koro karuṇā-laba**

O Gopīnātha, is this Your judgement, that seeing me averse to You, You abandon Your servant and don't bestow even a particle of mercy upon him?

(7)

**gopīnāth, āmi to mūrakha ati
kise bhālo hoyā, kabhu nā bujhinu,
tāi heno mama gati**

O Gopīnātha, I am certainly very foolish, and I have never known what is good for me. Therefore such is my condition.

(8)

**gopīnāth, tumi to' paṇḍita-bara
mūḍhera maṅgala, sadā anveṣibe,
e dāse nā bhāvo' para**

O Gopīnātha, You are indeed the wisest person. Please look for a way to bring about auspiciousness for this fool, and please do not consider this servant as an outsider.

part three

(1)

**gopīnāth, āmāra upāya nāi
tumi krpā kori', āmāre loile,
saṁsāre uddhāra pāi**

O Gopīnātha, I have no means of success, but if You take me, having bestowed Your mercy upon me, then I will obtain deliverance from this world.

(2)

**gopīnāth, paḍechi māyāra phere
dhana, dārā, suta, ghireche āmāre,
kāmete rekheche jere**

O Gopīnātha, I have fallen into the perils of material illusion. Wealth, wife, and sons have surrounded me, and lust has wasted me away.

(3)

**gopīnāth, mana ye pāgala mora
nā māne śāsana, sadā acetana,
viṣaye rayeche bhora**

O Gopīnātha, my mind is crazy and does not care for any authority. It is always senseless and has remained in the dark pit of worldly affairs.

(4)

**gopīnāth, hāra ye menechi āmi
aneka yatana, hoilo biphala,
ekhano bharasā tumi**

O Gopīnātha, I have accepted my defeat. All of my various endeavours were useless. Now You are the only hope.

(5)

**gopīnāth, kemone hoibe gati
prabala indriya, boṣī-bhūta mana,
nā chāḍe viṣaya-rati**

O Gopīnātha, how shall I make any advancement when my mind has come under the control of the powerful senses and does not abandon its attachment to materialism?

(6)

**gopīnāth, hr̥doye bosiyā mora
manake śamiyā, laho nija pāne,
ghucibe vipada ghora**

O Gopīnātha, after siting down in the core of my heart and subduing my mind, please take me to You. In this way the horrible dangers of this world will disappear.

(7)

**gopīnāth, anātha dekhiyā more
tumi hr̥ṣīkeśa, hr̥ṣika damiyā,
tāro 'he saṁsṛti-ghore**

O Gopīnātha, You are Hr̥ṣīkeśa, the Lord of the senses. Seeing me so helpless, please control these senses of mine and deliver me from this dark and perilous worldly existence.

(8)

**gopīnāth, galāya legeche phāṁsa
kṛpā-asi dhorī', bandhana chediā,
vinode koroho dāsa**

O Gopīnātha, the noose of materialism has become fixed around my neck. Taking up the sword of Your mercy and cutting this bondage, make this Bhaktivinoda Your humble servant.

Siddhi-lālasā

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**kabe gaura-vane, suradhuni-taṭe,
'hā rādhe hā kṛṣṇa' bo'le
kāṇḍiyā beḍābo, deho-sukha chāḍi',
nānā latā-taru-tale**

O when, O when will this soul chant in Gaura-forest on the Gange's banks the Holy Names "Rādhā," and "Kṛṣṇa" renouncing all the body's joys and drenched with all the tears I've wept amidst the herbs, beneath a tree.

(2)

śwa-paca-grhete, māgiyā khāibo,
pibo saraswatī-jala
puline puline gaḍā-gaḍi dibo,
kori' kṛṣṇa-kolāhala

When, at some outcaste's home shall I give up all thoughts of caste and beg to share with him humble *prasādam* and drink the water of the Saraswatī? Along the banks, my voice choked with my ecstasy I'll chant "Kṛṣṇa" in great delight.

(3)

dhāma-bāsi jane, praṇati koriyā,
māgibo kṛpāra leśa
vaiṣṇava-caraṇa- reṇu gāya mākhi,
dhorī' avadhūta-beśa

And when will I bow down before a *dhām-bāsi* and beg from him a drop of mercy; when O when will I smear my body with dust from a Vaiṣṇava's holy feet and wear the *avadhuta*'s cloth?

(4)

gauḍa-braja-bane, bheda nā heribo,
hoibo baraja-bāsi
dhāmera swarūpa, sphuribe nayane,
hoibo rādhāra dāsi

Then I shall see no difference in the forest of Gauḍa and Vraja, and I will be transformed into a resident of the *dhām*. The true nature of the Lord's abode will manifest itself to my eyes, and I will become a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.



Kabe Ha'be Bolo

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**kabe ha'be bolo se-dina āmār
(āmār) aparādha ghuci', śuddha nāme ruci,
krpā-bale ha'be hṛdoye sañcār**

Please tell me, when will that day be mine—when my offences will end and a taste for the pure Holy Name will be infused within my heart by the power of divine grace?

(2)

**trṇādhika hīna, kabe nije māni',
sahiṣṇutā-guṇa hṛdoyete āni'
sakale mānada, āpani amāni,
ho'ye āswādibo nāma-rasa-sār**

Considering myself lower than a blade of grass, bringing the quality of forbearance into my heart, showing respect to all, myself being freed from all false pride—when will I taste the essence of the liquid nectar of the Holy Name?

(3)

**dhana jana āra, kobitā-sundarī,
bolibo nā cāhi deho-sukha-karī
janme-janme dāo, ohe gaurahari!
ahaitukī bhakti caraṇe tomār**

Wealth, following, beautiful women, as described in worldly poetry—I do not want any such bodily pleasures. O Lord Gaurahari, please give me unmotivated devotion to Your lotus feet, birth after birth.

(4)

**(kabe) korite śrī-krṣṇa- nāma uccāraṇa,
pulakita deho gadgada bacana
baibarnya-bepathu ha'be saṅghaṭana,
nirantara netre ba'be āsru-dhār**

When, while articulating the divine Name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, will my body be thrilled in ecstatic rapture and my words be choked with emotion? When will pallor and ecstatic trembling occur, and when will streams of tears flow constantly from my eyes?

(5)

**kabe navadwīpe, suradhunī-taṭe,
gaura-nityānanda boli' niṣkaṭe
nāciyā gāiyā, beḍāibo chuṭe,
bātulera prāya chāḍiyā bicār**

When, in the land of Nabadwīp, on the banks of the Ganges, will I run about, guilelessly calling, “O Gaura! O Nityānanda!” dancing and singing like a madman, giving up all considerations?

(6)

**kabe nityānanda, more kori' doyā,
chāḍāibe mora viṣayera māyā
diyā more nija- caraṇera chāyā,
nāmera hāṭete dibe adhikār**

When will Lord Nityānanda be merciful to me and release me from the illusion of worldliness? Giving me the shade of His lotus feet, when will He allow me to enter the marketplace of the Holy Name?

(7)

**kinibo, luṭibo, hari-nāma-rasa,
nāma-rase mātī' hoibo bibaśa
rasera rasika- caraṇa paraśa,
koriyā mojibo rase anibār**

I shall buy and plunder the mellow of the Name Hari, and becoming thoroughly intoxicated by those liquid mellows of the Holy Name, I shall become stunned. By touching the feet of those great souls who are able to relish those mellows, I will be constantly immersed in the sweet nectar of the Holy Name.

(8)

**kabe jibe doyā, hoibe udoya,
nija-sukha bhuli' sudīna-hrdoya
bhakativinoda, koriyā binoya,
śrī-ājñā-ṭahala koribe pracār**

When will there be an awakening of compassion for all fallen souls, and when will this Bhaktivinoda, forgetting his own happiness, with a meek heart set out to propagate by humble entreaty the sacred order of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu?

Goptrtve Varāṇa

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**ki jāni ki bole, tomāra dhāmete,
hoinu śaraṇagata
tumi doyāmoy, patita-pāvana,
patita-tāraṇe rata**

How has one such as I come to Your shelter? Surely it is by Your mercy alone, for You are ever seeking the purification and deliverance of the fallen souls.

(2)

**bharasā āmāra, ei mātra nātha!
tumi to' karuṇāmoya
tava doyā pātra, nāhi mora sama,
abaśya ghucāre bhaya**

You are my only hope, for You are full of compassion and mercy. There is no one who needs Your mercy more than I. You will surely drive away all fear.

(3)

**āmāre tārīte, kāhāro śakati,
abani-bhitore nāhi
dayāla ṭhākura! ghoṣaṇā tomāra,
adhama pāmāre trāhi**

No one else has the power to deliver me. O merciful Lord, by Your declaration, kindly deliver this vile and lowly sinner.

(4)

**sakala chāḍiyā, āsiyāchi āmi,
tomāra caraṇe nātha!
āmi nitya-dāsa, tumi pālayitā,
tumi goptā, jagannātha!**

I have given up everything and come to Your lotus feet. I am Your eternal servant, and You are my protector and maintainer, O Lord of the universe.

(5)

**tomāra sakala, āmi mātra dāsa,
āmāra tāribe tumi
tomāra caraṇa, karinu baraṇa,
āmāra nahi to' āmi**

Everything is Yours. I am merely a servant, certain that You will deliver me. I have chosen Your lotus feet as my only shelter. I no longer belong to myself.

(6)

**bhaktivinoda, kāṇḍiya śaraṇa,
lo'yeche tomāra pāya
khomi' aparādha, nāme ruci diyā,
pālana korohe tāya**

Weeping, Bhaktivinoda takes shelter at Your feet. Forgive his offences, afford him a taste for the Holy Name, and kindly maintain him.

Mānasa Deha Geḥa

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**mānasa, deho, geha, yo kichū mor
arpiluṇ tuwā pade, nanda-kīśor!**

Mind, body, and family, whatever may be mine, I have surrendered at Your lotus feet, O youthful son of Nanda!

(2)

**sampade bipade, jīvane-maraṇe
dāy mama gelā, tuwā o-pada baraṇe**

In good fortune or in bad, in life or at death, all my difficulties have disappeared by choosing those feet of Yours as my only shelter.

(3)

**mārobi rākhobi—yo icchā tohārā
nitya-dāsa prati tuwā adhikārā**

Slay me or protect me as You wish, for You are the master of Your eternal servant.

(4)

**janmāobi moye icchā yadi tor
bhakta-gr̥he jani janma hau mor**

If it is Your will that I be born again, then may it be in the home of Your devotee.

(5)

kīṭa-janma hau yathā tuwā dās
bahir-mukha brahma-janme nāhi āś

May I be born again even as a worm,
as long as I may remain Your devotee. I
have no desire to be born as a Brahmā
averse to You.

(6)

bhukti-mukti-sprhā bihina ye bhakta
labhaite tñ'ka saṅga anurakta

I yearn for the company of that
devotee who is completely devoid of all
desire for worldly enjoyment or liberation.

(7)

janaka, janani, doyita, tanoy
prabhu, guru, pati—tuhū sarvva-moy

Father, mother, lover, son, Lord,
preceptor, and husband—You are every-
thing to me.

(8)

bhakativinoda kahe, śuno kāna!
rādhā-nātha! tuñhu hāmāra parāṇa

Bhaktivinoda says, “O Kāna, please
hear me! O Lord of Rādhā, You are my
life and soul!”

Śrī Namāstaka

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

nārada muni, bājāya biṇā,
‘rādhikā-ramaṇa’ nāme
nāma amani, udita hoyā,
bhakata-gīta-sāme

When the great soul Nārada Muni
plays his *vinā*, the Holy Name, Rādhikā-
Ramaṇa, descends and immediately
appears amidst the *kīrttan* of the Lord’s
devotees.

(2)

amiya-dhārā, bariṣe ghana,
śravaṇa-yugale giyā
bhakata-jana, saghane nāce
bhariyā āpana hiyā

Like a monsoon cloud, the Holy
Name showers nectar in their ears. All the
devotees, due to great ecstasy, repeatedly
dance to their hearts’ content.

(3)

mādhuri-pūra, āsabo paśi’,
mātāya jagata-jane
keho vā kāñde, keho vā nāce,
keho māte mane mane

(4)

pañca-vadana, nārade dhori’,
premera saghana rol
kamalāsana, nāciyā bole,
‘bolo, bolo, hari bolo’

(5)

sahasrānana, parama-sukhe,
‘hari hari’ boli’ gāya
nāma-prabhāve, mātīlo viśva,
nāma-rasa sabe pāya

(6)

śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma, rasane sphuri’,
pūrāo āmāra āśa
śrī-rūpa-pade, jācaye ihā,
bhaktivinoda-dāsa

All the people of the universe become maddened upon entering this intoxicating shower of nectar. Some people cry, some dance and others become fully intoxicated within their minds.

Lord Śiva, embracing Nārada Muni, repeatedly makes loud screams of ecstatic joy, and Lord Brahmā, dancing very ecstatically, says, “All of you kindly chant, ‘Haribol! Haribol!’”

In great happiness the thousand-faced Ananta Śeṣa chants, “Hari! Hari!” By the influence of the transcendental vibration of the Holy Name, the whole universe becomes ecstatically maddened and everyone tastes the mellows of the Holy Name.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, the humble servant of the Lord, says, “The Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa has fulfilled all my desires by vibrating on everyone’s tongue.” Bhaktivinoda therefore prays at the feet of Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī that the chanting of *Harinām* may continue like this always.



Śuddha-bhakata

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**śuddha-bhakata- caraṇa-reṇu,
bhajana-anukūla
bhakata-sevā, parama-siddhi,
prema-latikāra mūla**

Dust from the lotus feet of pure devotees is conducive to devotional service, while service to the Vaiṣṇavas is itself the supreme perfection and the root of the tender creeper of divine love.

(2)

**mādhava-tithi, bhakti-jananī,
yatane pālana kori
kṛṣṇa-basati, basati boli',
parama ādare bori**

I observe with great care the holy days like Ekādāśī and Janmāṣṭamī, for they are the mother of devotion. As my dwelling place I choose with the greatest reverence and love the transcendental abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(3)

**gaura āmāra, ye-saba sthāne,
koralo bhramaṇa raṅge
se-saba sthāna, heribo āmi,
praṇayi-bhakata-saṅge**

All those places where my Lord Gaurasundara travelled for pastimes I will visit in the company of loving devotees.

(4)

**mṛdaṅga-bādyā, śūnite mana,
abasara sadā jāce
gaura-bihita, kīrttana śuni',
ānande hṛdoya nāce**

My mind always begs for the opportunity to hear the music of the *mṛdaṅga*. Upon hearing the kind of *kīrttana* ordained by Lord Gauracandra, my heart dances in ecstasy.

(5)

**yugala-mūrtti, dekhiyā mora,
parama-ānanda hoya
prasāda-sevā korite hoya,
sakala prapañca jaya**

By beholding the Deity forms of the divine couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, I feel the greatest joy. By honouring the Lord's *prasādam* I conquer over all worldly illusions.

(6)

**ye-dina gr̥he, bhajana dekhi,
gr̥hete goloka bhāya
caraṇa-sīdhu, dekhiyā gaṅgā,
sukha nā sīmā pāya**

Goloka Vṛndāvana appears in my home whenever I see the worship and service of Lord Hari going on there. Upon seeing the Ganges, which is a river of nectar emanating from the lotus feet of the Lord, my happiness knows no bounds.

(7)

**tulasī dekhi', juḍāya prāṇa,
mādhava-toṣanī jāni'
gaura-priya, śāka-sevane,
jivana sārthaka māni**

The sight of the holy *tulasī* tree soothes my soul, for I know she gives pleasure to Lord Kṛṣṇa. By honouring *śak* [a green leafy vegetable preparation], a dear favourite of Lord Chaitanya, I consider life worthwhile.

(8)

**bhaktivinoda, kṛṣṇa-bhajane,
anukūla pāya yāhā
prati-dibase, parama-sukhe,
swikāra koroye tāhā**

Whatever Bhaktivinoda obtains that is conducive for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he accepts every day with the greatest of joy.

Vibhāvarī Śeṣa

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(1)

**vibhāvarī śeṣa, āloka-praveśa,
nidrā chāḍi’ uṭho jīva
bolo hari hari, mukunda murāri,
rāma kṛṣṇa hayagrīva**

The night has come to an end and the light of dawn is entering. O *jīva* soul, arise and give up your sleep. Chant the Holy Names of Lord Hari, who is the giver of liberation; the enemy of the Mura demon; the Supreme Enjoyer; the all-attractive one; and the horse-headed incarnation, Hayagrīva.

(2)

**nṛsiṃha vāmana, śrī-madhusūdana,
brajendra-nandana śyāma
pūtanā-ghātana, kaiṭabha-śātana,
jaya dāśarathi-rāma**

Lord Hari [Kṛṣṇa] incarnated as the half-man, half-lion, Nṛsiṃha. He appeared as a dwarf-*brāhmaṇa* named Upendra and is the killer of the Madhu demon. He is the beloved son of the King of Vraja, Nanda Mahārāj, and is blackish in complexion. He is the slayer of the Pūtanā witch and the destroyer of the demon Kaiṭabha. All glories to Lord Hari, who appeared as Lord Rāma, the son of King Daśaratha.

(3)

**yaśodā dulāla, govinda-gopāla,
vṛndāvana purandara
gopī-priya-jana, rādhikā-ramaṇa,
bhuvana-sundara-bara**

He is the darling of Mother Yaśodā; the giver of pleasure to the cows, land, and spiritual senses; and the protector of the cows. He is the Lord of the Vṛndāvana forest; the *gopīs*’ beloved; the lover of Rādhikā; and the most beautiful personality in all the worlds.

(4)

**rāvāṇāntakara, mākḥana-taskara,
gopī-jana-vastra-hārī
vrajera rākhāla, gopa-vṛnda-pāla,
citta-hārī baṁśī-dhārī**

As Rāmachandra He brought about the end of the demoniac King Rāvaṇa; as Kṛṣṇa He stole the older *gopīs*' butter; He stole the younger *gopīs*' clothes while they were bathing in the Yamunā. He is a cowherd boy of Vraja and the protector of the cowherd boys. He steals the hearts of all and always holds a flute.

(5)

**yogīndra-bandana, śrī-nanda-nandana,
braja-jana-bhaya-hārī
navīna nīrada, rūpa manohara,
mohana-baṁśī-bihārī**

Lord Kṛṣṇa is worshiped by the best of *yogīs* and is the son of Nanda. He removes all the fears of the inhabitants of Vraja. He is the colour of a fresh rain cloud, and His form is enchanting. When He wanders about, playing His flute, He looks very charming.

(6)

**yaśodā-nandana, kaṁsa-nisūdana,
nikuñja-rāsa-vilāsi
kadamba-kānana, rāsa-parāyaṇa,
vṛnda-vipīna-nivāsi**

He is the son of Yaśodā and the killer of king Kaṁsa, and He sports in the *rāsa* dance among the groves of Vraja. Kṛṣṇa engages in this *rāsa* dance underneath the *kadamba* trees, and he resides in the forest of Vṛndāvana.

(7)

**ānanda-vardhana, prema-niketana,
phula-śara-jojaka kāma
gopāṅgaṇāgaṇa, citta-vinodana,
samasta-guṇa-gaṇa-dhāma**

He increases the ecstasy of His devotees. He is the reservoir of all love and is the transcendental Cupid who uses His flowered arrows to increase the loving desires of the *gopīs*. He is the pleasure of the *gopīs*' hearts and the abode of all wonderful qualities.

(8)

**yāmuna-jīvana, keli-parāyaṇa,
mānasa-candra-cakora
nāma-sudhā-rasa, gāo kṛṣṇa-yaśa,
rākho vacana mana mora**

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the life of the River Yamunā. He is always absorbed in amorous pastimes, and He is the moon of the *gopīs*' minds, which are like the *cakora* birds that subsist only upon moonlight. O mind, obey these words of mine and sing the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the form of these Holy Names, which are full of nectarine mellows.

Vaiṣṇava Vijñāpti

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

**ei-bāro koruṇā koro vaiṣṇava-gosañi
patita-pāvana tomā vine keho nāi**

O Vaiṣṇava Goswāmī, please be merciful to me this one time. You are the saviour of the fallen; without you there is no one.

(2)

**yāhāra nikaṭe gele pāpo dūre yāya
emona doyāla prabhu kebā kothā pāya**

Just by being in your presence, sins go far away. Where can anyone find such kindness?

(3)

**gaṅgāra-paraśa hoile paścāte pāvana
darśane pavitra koro-ei tomāra guṇa**

Merely by the touch of the waters of the sacred Ganges one becomes liberated, even if he is the lowest of mankind; but just by seeing you, the same effect is achieved. Such is your quality.

(4)

**hari-sthāne aparādhe tāre harināma
tomā-sthāne aparādhe nāhika eḍāna**

If one commits an offence at the feet of Lord Hari, he can be forgiven if he chants the Holy Name. But if one offends you, there is no salvation for him.

(5)

**tomāra hṛdoye sadā govinda-viśrāmā
govinda kohena—mama vaiṣṇava parāna**

In your heart Govinda is always resting. Śrī Govinda Himself says, “I am the living force of My devotees.”

(6)

**prati janme kori āśā caraṇera dhūli
narottame koro doyā āpnāra boli’**

I hope that in every birth I will obtain the dust of your lotus feet. Śrī Narottama prays, “Please, O Vaiṣṇava Goswāmī, be kind unto me.”

Lālasāmayī Prārthanā

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

**‘gaurāṅga’ bolite habe pulaka-śarīra
‘hari hari’ bolite nayane ba’be nira**

(4)

**rūpa-raghunātha-pade hoibe ākuti
kabe hāma bujhabo se yugala-pīriti**

(2)

**āra kabe nitāi-cānda koruṇā koribe
saṁsāra-bāsanā mora kabe tuccha ha’be**

(5)

**rūpa-raghunātha-pade rahu mora āśa
prārthanā koroye sadā narottama-dāsa**

(3)

**viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha ha’be mana
kabe hāma herabo śrī-bṛndābana**

Sāvarana-śrī-gaura-mahimā

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

gaurāṅgera duṭi pada, yār dhana sampada,
se jāne bhakati-rasa-sār
gaurāṅgera madhura-lilā, yār karṇe praveśilā,
hṛdoya nirmmala bhelo tār

(2)

ye gaurāṅgera nāma loy, tāra hoy premodoy,
tāre muṇi yāṅga bolihāri
gaurāṅga-guṇete jhure, nitya-lilā tāre sphure,
se jana bhakati-adhikārī

(3)

gaurāṅgera saṅgi-gaṇe, nitya-siddha kori' māne,
se jāy brajendra-suta-pās
śrī-gauḍa-maṇḍala-bhūmi, jebā jāne cintāmaṇi,
tāra hoy braja-bhūme bās

(4)

gaura-prema-rasārṇave, se taraṅge yebā ḍube,
se rādhā-mādhava-antaraṅga
grhe vā vanete thāke, hā gaurāṅga bo'le ḍāke,
narottama māge tāra saṅga

Gaura Pañhu

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

gaurā pañhu nā bhajiyā mainu
prema ratana-dhana helāya hārāinu

(2)

adhane jatana kari dhana teyā-ginu
āpana karama doṣe āpani ḍubinu

(3)

satsaṅga chāḍi kainu asate vilāsa
te-kāraṇe lāgila ye karmma-bandha-phāṇsa

(4)

viṣaya-biṣama-biṣa satata khainu
gaura-kīrttana rase magana nā hainu

(5)

kena bā āchaye praṇa ki sukha lāgiyā
narottama dāsa kena nā gela mariyā

Nitāi guṇamaṇi āmāra nitāi guṇamaṇi

by Śrī Locana dāsa Ṭhākura

nitāi guṇamaṇi āmāra nitāi guṇamaṇi āniyā premera banyā bhāsāla abani premabanyā laye nitāi āila gāuḍa deṣe ḍubila bhakata-gaṇa dīnahina bhāse dīnahina patita pāmara nāhi bāche brahmāra durllabha prema sabākāre jāce	ābaddha karuṇā-sindhu kāṭiyā muhāna ghare ghare bule prema-amiyāra bāna locana bale hena nitāi jebā nā bhajila jāniyā śuniyā sei ātmaghātī haila

Ista-deve Vijñapti

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

hari hari! biphale janama goṅgāinu
manuṣya-janama pāiyā, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nā bhajiyā,
jāniyā śuniyā biṣa khāinu

O Lord Hari, I have spent my life uselessly. Having obtained a human birth and having not worshipped Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, I have knowingly drunk poison.

(2)

golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana,
rati nā janmilo kene tāy
saṁsāra-biṣānale, dibā-niśi hiyā jwale,
juḍāite nā koinu upāy

The treasure of divine love in Goloka Vṛndāvana has descended as the congregational chanting of Lord Hari's Holy Names. Why did my attraction for that chanting never come about? Day and night my heart burns from the fire of the poison of worldliness, and I have not taken the means to relieve it.

(3)

**brajendra-nandana yei, śacī-suta hoilo sei,
balarāma hoilo nitāi
dīna-hīna yata chilo, hari-nāme uddhārilo,
tāra śākṣi jagāi mādhai**

Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the son of the King of Vraja, became the son of Śacī (Lord Chaitanya), and Balarāma became Nitāi. The Holy Name delivered all those souls who were lowly and wretched. The two sinners Jagāi and Mādhai are evidence of this

(4)

**hā hā prabhu nanda-suta, vṛṣabhānu-sutā-yuta,
koruṇā karoho ei-bāro
narottama-dāsa koy, nā ṭheliho rāṅgā pāy,
tomā bine ke āche āmāra**

O Lord Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda, accompanied by the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, please be merciful to me now. Narottama dāsa says, “O Lord, please do not push me away from Your reddish lotus feet, for who is my beloved except for You?”

Manah-śikṣā

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

**nitāi-pada-kamala, koṭi-candra-suśītala,
ye chāyāya jagata juḍāy
heno nitāi bine bhāi, rādhā-kṛṣṇa pāite nāi,
dṛḍha kori’ dharo nitāira pāya**

The holy lotus feet of Nitāi, Cooling like ten million moons—
In the shade of which the world gains soothing relief;
Without that Nitāi, O brother, No one can reach Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa—
Clasp His lotus feet with full conviction.

(2)

**se sambandha nāhi yāra, bṛthā janma gelo tāra,
sei paśu boḍo durācāra
nitāi nā bolilo mukhe, majilo saṁsāra-sukhe,
vidyā-kule ki koribe tāra**

One who never got His connection, Passed his life in vain—
Such an animal is so very wicked;
He whose mouth never uttered ‘Nitai,’ Merged in mundane pleasures—
How can his aristocratic lineage save him?

(3)

**ahaṅkāre matta haiñā, nitāi-pada pāsariyā,
asatyere satya kori māni
nitāiyer koruṇā habe, braje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pābe,
dharo nitāiyera caraṇa du’khāni**

Maddened with pride, Forgetting the lotus feet of Nitāi—
I embrace untruth as truth;
But when Nitāi gives His Grace You’ll reach Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja—
O embrace the lotus feet of Nitāi!

(4)

**nitāiyer caraṇa satya, taṁhāra sevaka nitya,
nitāi-pada sadā koro āśa
narottama boḍo duḥkhī, nitāi more koro sukhi
rākho rāṅgā-caraṇera pāśa**

The lotus feet of Nitāi are truth, His servitors are eternal—
Ever aspire for the shelter of His feet;
Narottama is very sad— O Nitāi make me happy—
Please keep me at Your lovely lotus feet!



Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada

by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada,
sei mor bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharaṇa,
sei mor jīvanera jīvana

(2)

sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mor vāñchā-siddhi,
sei mor vedera dharama
sei brata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa,
sei mor dharama-karama

(3)

anukūla habe viddhi, se-pade hoibe siddhi,
nirakhibo e dui nayane
se rūpa-mādhuri-rāśi, prāṇa-kuvalaya-śaśi,
praphullita habe niśi-dīne

(4)

tuyā adarśana-ahi, garale jārālo dehi,
ciro-dina tāpita jīvana
hā hā rūpa koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
narottama loilo śaraṇa

Commentary by Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī:

Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada, sei mor bhajana-pūjana—my everything is Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī’s holy feet. We are to discuss so many classifications and positions of *rasa*: *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, *madhura*. And in *madhura-rasa* Rādhārāṇī’s camp is special. Then again there are so many gradations of *sakhīs*. Then there is the class of the *mañjarīs*, the younger girls, and they have more freedom to approach: when Rādhā and Govinda are in union in a private environment, the *mañjarīs* can still approach. They have such freedom to visit Them. If any materials of service are necessary, the *sakhīs* send the *mañjarīs* to that place. The *sakhīs* do not approach there. In that way the *mañjarīs* enjoy the best confidence.

The most secret service of both can be supplied through the *mañjarīs*. In the highest position they have free entrance, and their leader is Rūpa Mañjarī. She is understood to be the leader of the whole group of younger girls, the *mañjarīs*, therefore in *madhura-bhajan* she is all-in-all. This has been taught to us by Narottama Ṭhākura. For us—and the younger batch—she is our highest resort.

Sei mora sampada—my wealth is there in her feet. *Sei mor bhajana-pūjana*—my worship and service is also in her. *Sei mora prāṇa-dhana*, *sei mora ābharaṇa*—the very wealth and gist of my life is there; and the ornaments of my life, if any there may be, that is within her grace. *Sei mor jīvanera jīvana*—indeed, the very life of my life, if there is anything, that is also her. I am for her pleasure.

Sei mora rasa-nidhi—if there is anything, the source of any and all desirable ecstasy is only to be found there. The mine, source, and fountainhead of all *rasa* is there in her feet. *Sei mora vāñchā-siddhi*—and if I am to expect any other fulfilment in life, that is also there in her feet. *Sei mor vedera dharama*—if any duty is recommended by the Vedas for me, I would like that such duty be at her feet.

Sei brata, *sei tapa*—if at all there is any desired accumulation from any penance or observance of vows, that is also to be found there—*sei mora mantra-japa*—and the continuous repetition of a mantra in *japa* all ends there: all things have only one end in my case, and that is that they all meet in different phases in the feet of Rūpa Mañjarī. If she is satisfied then the variegated nature of all sorts of my devotional practices are satisfied. *Sei mor dharama-karama*—and any of my conceptions of duty or activity of any phases or form all have one end and meet in one point: the holy feet of Rūpa Mañjarī.

Anukūla habe viddhi, *se-pade hoibe siddhi*—I only pray to the controller who is at the root of all these arrangements of affairs in this world, “Please connect me there. Oh Absolute Manager, may you grant my prayer that all my tendencies may go to attain her favour. *Nirakhibo e dui nayane*—and it will be so very intense and concrete as if I can see it with these eyes. It will not be vague, abstract, or imagination, but I want the most concrete realisation by the grace of the Absolute Manager.”

Se rūpa-mādhurī-rāśi, *prāṇa-kuvalaya-śāśi*—what sort of high class beauty is there in her holy feet! I want to jump. Let my heart be a lotus.

There are two classes of lotus: the white lotus came from the sun and the red from the moon. The *kuvalaya* is a mixture of the two. The lustre of her body will feed me day and night as the life of my life which is compared to a *kuvalaya*. The *kuvalaya* is fed and nourished by the lustre of the moon, and her holy feet are the

moon, and my very vitality is likened to the lotus. May the lustre of her beauty maintain and nourish my heart of hearts. *Praphullita habe niśi-dine*—and the lotus of my heart will grow by that ray, and dance.

Tuyā adarśana-ahi—this is my prayer, but what is my present condition? My present condition is in the negative side, my Mistress. My present position is such that without having a sight of you, Your Grace, my heart will burn into ashes. That is my present position. *Garale jārālo dehī*—this is just like the poison of a cobra which produces pain within my heart. I have been bitten by a snake, and what is that snake? It is that I am not getting any direct contact with you, Your Grace. The serpent’s poison has captured my heart and I am going to die. *Ciro-dina tāpita jīvana*—and this is not a sudden thing, but from the beginning I have been suffering this sort of pain of separation from such a beautiful and hopeful life of fulfilment.

Hā hā rūpa koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā, narottama loilo śaraṇa—but I have now reached the extreme position and for the last time I am begging for your favour; otherwise I am going to be finished.

This was composed by Narottama Ṭhākura in praise of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. In this way he has given us light of the higher quarter of *bhajan* life. This *sampradāya* is named as the *Rūpānuga-sampradāya*, and our *Guru-paramparā* and all these things are adjusted according to that. He wrote many songs and they are of very substantive firmament, very ecstatic, and of deep faith.

Bhajahū Re Mana Śrī Nanda-nandana

by Śrī Govinda dāsa Kavirāja

(1)

**bhajahū re mana śrī-nanda-nandana-
abhaya-caraṇāravinda re
dūrlabha mānava-janama sat-saṅge
taroho e bhava-sindhu re**

(2)

**śīta ātapa bāta bariṣaṇa
e dina jāminī jāgi re
biphale sevinu kṛpaṇa durajana
capala sukha-laba lāgi’ re**

O mind, just worship the lotus feet of the son of Nanda, which make one fearless. Having obtained this rare human birth, cross over this ocean of worldly existence through the association of saintly persons.

Both in the day and at night I remain sleepless, suffering the pains of the heat and cold, the wind and the rain. For a fraction of flickering happiness I have uselessly served wicked and miserly men.

(3)

e dhana, yaubana, putra, parijana
ithe ki āche paratīti re
kamala-dala-jala, jīvana ṭalamala
bhajahuṁ hari-pada niti re

(4)

śravaṇa, kīrttana, smaraṇa, vandana,
pāda-sevana, dāsyā re
pūjana, sakhi-jana, ātma-nivedana
govinda-dāsa-abhilāṣa re

What assurance of real happiness is there in all of one's wealth, youthfulness, sons, and family members? This life is tottering like a drop of water on a lotus petal; therefore you should always serve and worship the divine feet of Lord Hari.

It is the desire and great longing of Govinda dāsa to engage himself in the nine processes of *bhakti*, namely hearing the glories of Lord Hari and chanting those glories, constantly remembering Him and offering prayers to Him, serving the Lord's lotus feet, serving the Supreme Lord as a servant, worshipping Him with flowers and incense and so forth, serving Him as a friend, and completely offering the Lord one's very self.

Śrī Śrī Gaura-nityānander Dayā

by Śrī Locana dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

parama koruṇa, pahuṁ dūi jana,
nitāi gauracandra
saba avatāra- sāra śiromaṇi,
kevala ānanda-kanda

(2)

bhajo bhajo bhāi, caitanya nitāi,
sudṛḍha biśvāsa kori'
viṣaya chāḍiyā, se rase majiyā
mukhe bolo hari hari

(3)

dekho ore bhāi, tri-bhuvane nāi
emona doyāla dātā
paśu pākhī jhure, pāṣāṇa vidare,
śuni jāra guṇa-gāthā

(4)

saṁsāre majiyā, rohili poḍiyā,
se pade nahilo āśa
āpana karama, bhuñjaye śamana,
kahoye locana-dāsa

Jaya Rādhā-Mādhava

(jaya) rādhā-mādhava (jaya) kuñja-bihārī
(jaya) gopī-jana-vallabha (jaya) giri-vara-dhārī
(jaya) jaśodā-nandana, (jaya) braja-jana-rañjana,
(jaya) jāmuna-tīra-vana-cārī



Śrī Śrī Rādhikā Stutih

by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī

(chorus):

rādhe jaya jaya mādhava-dayite
gokula-taruṇī-maṇḍala-mahite

(1)

dāmodara-rati-varddhana-veśe
hari-niṣkuṭa-vṛndā-vipineśe

(2)

vṛṣabhānūdadhī-nava-śaśi-lekhe
lalitā-sakhi guṇa-ramita-viśākhe

(3)

karuṇām kuru mayi karuṇā-bharite
sanaka-sanātana-varṇita-carite



Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vandanā

(he) deva bhavantaṁ vande

manmānasa-madhukara marpayā nijapada-paṅkaja-makarande
yadapi samādhiṣu vidhirapi paśyati na tava nakhāgramaricim
idamicchāmi niśamya tabācyuta tadapi kṛpādbhuta vicim

bhakti rudañcati yadyapi mādhava na tvayi mama tilamātrī
parameśvaratā tadapi tavādhika-durghaṭaghaṭana-vidhātrī

ayamavilola-tayādyā sanātana kalitādbhuta-rasabhāram
nivasatu nitya-mihāmṛta nindini vindanma dhurima-sāram



Śrī Guru-paramparā

Verses 1 to 9 by Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura

(1)

**kṛṣṇa hoite catur-mukha, hoy kṛṣṇa-sevonmukha,
brahmā hoite nāradera mati
nārada hoite vyāsa, madhva kohe vyāsa-dāsa,
pūrṇaprajña padmanābha gati**

In the beginning of creation the science of devotional service was received by the four-headed Brahmā from the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Devarṣi Nārada's understanding of this divine science was obtained from Brahmā. The great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, who was empowered to compile the Vedic literatures, became a disciple of Devarṣi Nārada. Śrīpāda Madhvāchāryya, the founder of the *śuddha-dvaita* school of Vedānta philosophy, who visited Vyāsadeva at Badarīkāśram in the thirteenth century to learn from him Vedānta philosophy, calls himself a servant of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Pūrṇaprajña Tīrtha [Madhva] is the *guru* and sole refuge of Padmanābha Tīrtha.

(2)

**nṛhari mādharma-baṁse, akṣobhya paramahaṁse,
śiṣya boli' aṅgikāra kore
akṣobhyera śiṣya jaya- tīrtha nāme paricaya,
tānra dāsyē jñānasindhu tore**

The two other principal disciples of Madhva are Nṛhari Tīrtha and Mādhava Tīrtha. Mādhava Tīrtha accepted the great *paramahaṁsa* Akṣobhya Tīrtha as a disciple. The principal disciple of Akṣobhya Tīrtha was known as Jayatīrtha. Jayatīrtha's service was for his disciple Jñānasindhu.

(3)

**tānhāra hoite dayānidhi, tānra dāsa vidyānidhi,
rājendra hoilo tānhā hoite
tānhāra kiṅkora jaya- dharmma nāme paricaya,
paramparā jāno bhālo mate**

Dayānidhi received the science of devotional service from Jñānasindhu, and the servant of Dayānidhi was Vidyānidhi [Vidyādhirāja Tīrtha]. Rājendra Tīrtha became a disciple of Vidyādhirāja Tīrtha. Rājendra Tīrtha's servant was known as Jayadharma or Vijayadhvaṇya Tīrtha. In this way you should properly understand this disciplic succession.

(4)

**jayadharmma-dāsyē khyāti, śrī puruṣottama-yati
tān' ha'te brahmaṇya-tīrtha sūri
vyāsatīrtha tānra dāsa, lakṣmīpati vyāsa-dāsa,
tānha hoite mādhavendra purī**

The great *sannyāsī* Śrī Puruṣottama Tīrtha received his knowledge in the service of his *guru*, Vijayadhvaṇya Tīrtha [Jayadharmma]. The principal disciple of Puruṣottama Tīrtha was Subrahmaṇya Tīrtha. His servant was the great Vyāsatīrtha [Vyāsa Rāya]. Vyāsatīrtha's servant was Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, whose disciple was Mādhavendra Purī Goswāmī.

(5)

**mādhavendra purī-bara, śiṣya-bara śrī-īśvara,
nityānanda, śrī-advaita vibhu
īśvara-purīke dhanya, korilena śrī-caitanya,
jagad-guru gaura mahāprabhu**

The chief disciple of Mādhavendra Purī was Īśvara Purī, and two of his other disciples were the renowned incarnations of Godhead Śrī Nityānanda and Advaita Āchāryya. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the spiritual preceptor of all the worlds, made Īśvara Purī greatly fortunate by accepting him as His spiritual master.

(6)

**mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya,
rūpānuga janera jivana
viśvambhara priyaṅkara, śrī svarūpa-dāmodara,
srī goswāmī rūpa-sanātana**

Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanya is nondifferent from Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and is the very life of those Vaiṣṇavas who follow Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī.

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī, Rūpa Goswāmī, and Sanātana Goswāmī were the givers of great happiness to Viśvambhara [Śrī Chaitanya].

(7)

**rūpapriya mahājana, jīva-raghunātha hana,
tānra priya kavi kṛṣṇadāsa
kṛṣṇadāsa-priyabara, narottama sevāpara,
yānra pada viśvanātha-āśa**

The great souls Jīva Goswāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī became very dear to Rūpa Goswāmī. Jīva Goswāmī was a disciple of Rūpa Goswāmī. Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, a disciple of Advaita Āchāryya's disciple Yadunandana Āchāryya, was accepted by Rūpa and Sanātana as their third brother. Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī's beloved student was Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja was an intimate friend of Lokanātha Goswāmī. They lived together in Vṛndāvana and always discussed the topics of Kṛṣṇa with one another. Lokanātha Goswāmī, a disciple of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, had only one disciple, whose name was Narottama dāsa. Narottama dāsa was always engaged in the service of his *guru*, and he also engaged himself in the service of his *guru's* intimate friend. Thus he became very dear to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī. To serve the feet of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura was the only desire of Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura, who was the fourth *āchāryya* in disciplic succession from Narottama dāsa.

(8)

**viśvanātha-bhakta-sātha, baladeva jagannātha,
tānra priya śrī-bhaktivinoda
mahā-bhāgavata-bara, śrī-gaurakiśora-bara,
hari-bhajanete jānra moda**

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura was the *śikṣā-guru* [instructing spiritual master] of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, to whom he taught the precepts of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī was a very prominent *āchāryya* after Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and was the beloved *śikṣā-guru* of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's intimate friend and associate was the eminent *mahā-bhāgavata* Śrī Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, whose sole joy was found in *hari-bhajana*.

over...

(9)

tadanuga-mahājana śrī-kṛṣṇa-kīrttana-dhara
jebā dila purī jaga kāma
śrī vārṣabhānavībarā sadā sevyā sevāparā
tānhāra dayitadāsa nāma

The followers of Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī fill up the world with the wealth of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan*.

He who is always serving Kṛṣṇa the dearmost lover of Rādhārāṇī, is Śrī Vārṣabhānavī Dayita Dāsa.

(10)

tadabhinna deha-divya svarūpa-rūpa-raghu-jivya
sadā sevyā jaṅra pādapadma
susiddhānta mūrtti-dhara śrī śrīdhara guruvara
rupānuga-sādhu śreya sadma

The nondifferent personality and embodiment of *bhakti-siddhānta* as well as Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura; and who is living within the conception of Śrīla Swarūp Dāmodar, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and Śrīla Raghunāth dāsa Goswāmī; and whose lotus feet are always the worshipable, and the happy shelter of the followers of Rūpa Goswāmī, he is Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī.

(11)

tānra priya mano' bhiṣṭa sthāpane sadāsaceṣṭa
bhakti sundara śrī govinda nāma
ei paramparā dhana sabe gaura-nijajana
tāndera ucchiṣṭe mora kāma

He who is a very dear disciple of that Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, and who is establishing his divine conception, and who is fulfilling his desire continuously, he is Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī.

This is our grand preceptorial line and all of them are very dear to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. My sustenance is their remnants alone.



Śrī Hari-vāsara-gīti

by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura

(1) śrī hari-vāsare hari-kīrttana-vidhāna nṛtya ārambhilā prabhu jagatera prāṇa	(8) bhāvāveśe mālā nāhi rahaye galāya chiṇḍiyā paḍaye giyā bhakatera gāya
(2) puṇyavanta śrīvāsa-aṅgane śubhāranbha uṭhila kīrttana-dhvani gopāla govinda	(9) yāñra nāmānande śiva vasana nā jāne yāñra rase nāce śiva se nāce āpane
(3) mṛdaṅga mandirā bāje śaṅkha karatāla saṅkīrttana saṅge saba haila miśāla	(10) yāñra nāme vālmiki haila tapodhana yāñra nāme ajāmila pāila mocana
(4) brahmāṇḍe uṭhila dhvani pūriyā ākāśa caudikera amaṅgala yāya saba nāśa	(11) yāñra nāme śravane saṁsāra-bandha ghuce hena prabhu avatari kali-yuge nāce
(5) caturdike śrī hari-maṅgala saṅkīrttana madhye nāce jagannātha miśrera nandana	(12) yāñra nāma lai śuka nārada beḍāya sahasra-vadana-prabhu yāra guṇa gāya
(6) sabāra aṅgete śobhe śrī candana mālā ānande nācaye sabe haiye vibholā	(13) sarvva-mahā-prāyaścitta ye prabhura nāma se prabhu nācaye dekhe yata bhāgyavān
(7) ni jānande nāce mahāprabhu viśvambhara caraṇera tāli śuni ati manohara	(14) śrī kṛṣṇa-caitanya nityānanda-cānda jāna vṛndāvana dāsa tuchu pada-yuge gāna

Avatāra Sāra

(1)
avatāra sāra gorā avatāra
 kena nā bhajili tāñre
kari nīre bāsa gela nā piyāsa
 āpana karama phere

(2)
kaṇṭa-kerā taru sadāi sebili (mana)
 amṛta pā' bāra āśe
prema-kalpataru śrī gaurāṅga āmāra
 tāhāre bhabili biṣe

(3)
saura-bhera āśe palāśa śuñkili (mana)
 nāsāte paśila kīṭa
'ikṣu-daṇḍa' bhāvi' kāṭha cuṣili (mana)
 kemane pāibi miṭha

(4)
'hāra' baliyā galāya parili (mana)
 śamana kiṅkara sāpa
'sītala' baliyā āguna pohāli (mana)
 pāili bajara-tāpa

(5)
saṁsāra bhajili śrī-gaurāṅga bhulili
 nā śunili sād'hura kathā
iha-parakāla dukāla khoyāli (mana)
 khāili āpana māthā

Dainya O Prapatti

Humility and Devotional Surrender

(1)
hari he doyāla mora jaya rādhā-nāth
bāro bāro ei-bāro loho nija sāth

O Hari! O my merciful Lord! All glories to You, the Lord of Rādhā! Many times I have avoided You, but this time please take me as Your own.

(2)
bahu yoni bhrami nātha! loinu śaraṇ
nija-guṇe kṛpā koro adhama-tāraṇ

O Lord, after wandering through many wombs, I have taken refuge in You. Be merciful and deliver this wretched soul by Your divine power.

(3)

**jagata-kāraṇa tumi jagata-jīvan
tomā chāḍā kāro na'hi he rādhā-ramaṇ**

O lover of Rādhā, You are the cause of the universe and the life of the universe. Without You no one has anything.

(4)

**bhuvana-maṅgala tumi bhuvanera pati
tumi upekṣile nātha, ki hoibe gati**

You bring about auspiciousness for the world, and You are the master of all the worlds as well. O Lord, what will be my refuge if You neglect me?

(5)

**bhāviyā dekhinu ei jagata-mājhāre
tomā binā keho nāhi e dāse uddhāre**

I have considered that in this world there is no one except You who can deliver this fallen servant.

Kali-ghora-timire

(1)

**kali-ghora-timire garasala jagajana
dharama karama rahu dūra
asādhane cintāmaṇi vidhi milāola āni
gorā boṛo dayāla ṭhākura**

(2)

**bhāi re bhāi! gorā guṇa kahana nā jāya
koto śata ānanana kata caturānana
varaṇiyā ora nāhi pāya**

(3)

**cāriveda śada-daraśana kari adhyayana
se jadi gaurāṅga nāhi bhaje
vṛthā tāra adhyayana locana vihina jana
darapaṇe andhe kibā kāje**

(4)

**veda vidyā dui kichūi nā jānata
se jadi gaurāṅga jāne sāra
nayanānande bhane sei ta sakali jāne
sarvva siddhi karatale tāra**



Thākura Vaiṣṇava Gaṇa
by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

(1)

ṭhākura vaiṣṇava gaṇa kari ei nivedana
mo vaḍa adhama durācāra
dāruṇa-saṁsāra-nidhi tahe dubāila vidhī
keśe dhari more kara pāra

(2)

vidhi vaḍa valavāna nā śune dharama jñāna
sadāi karama-paśe vāndhe
na dekhi tāraṇa leśa yata dekhi saba kleśa
anātha kātare teṇi kānde

(3)

kāma, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, abhimāna saha
āpana āpana sthāne ṭhāne
aichana āmāra mana phire yena andha jana
supatha vipatha nāhi jāne

(4)

na lainu sat mata asate majila cita
tuyā pāye nā karinu āśa
narottama dāse kaya dekhi śuni lāge bhaya
tarāiyā laha nija pāsa



Śrīla Prabhupāda-padma Stavakāḥ

by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Prayer unto the Lotus Feet of my Lord and Master,
Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda

(1)

**sujanārvvuda-rādhita-pāda-yugaṁ
yuga-dharmma-dhurandhara-pātra-varam
varadābhaya-dāyaka-pūjya-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

His lotus feet are served in devotion by multitudes of high, virtuous souls; he is the establisher of the religion of the age (as *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*); he is the presiding monarch (of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-Rāja-Sabhā—the universal society of the pure devotees that are the true ‘kings’ or guides of all); and he is the fulfiller of the most cherished desires of those who dispel fear (for all souls). I make my obeisance unto the lotus feet of that illustrious great soul, worshipable by one and all—perpetually do I make my obeisance unto the radiance emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Lord.

(2)

**bhajanorjjita sajjana-saṅgha-patim
patitādhika-kāruṇikaika-gatim
gati-vañcita-vañcakācintya-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

He is the leader of the fortunate souls blessed with the treasure of internal pure devotion; he is greatly merciful upon the fallen souls, being their only shelter; and his inconceivable holy feet are the shelter for the deceivers, by deceiving them. I make my obeisance unto his lotus feet—perpetually do I make my obeisances unto the radiance emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Lord.

(3)

**atikomala-kāñcana-dīrgha-tanuṁ
tanu-nindita-hema-mṛṇāla-madam
madanārīvuda-vandita-candra-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

I make my obeisance unto his divine, charming yet commanding lofty form of golden hue. That beautiful figure shames the mad ecstasy of golden lotus stems. Venerated by tens of millions of Cupids, the moons of the toenails of my Worshipful Divine Master reveal the beauty of his lotus feet. Perpetually do I make my obeisance unto that effulgence emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Lord.

(4)

**nija-sevaka-tāraka-rañji-vidhum
vidhutāhita-huṅkṛta-simha-varam
varaṇāgata-bālīśa-śanda-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

Like the moon that delights the stars, he is surrounded by his circle of personal servitors, making their hearts bloom in divine ecstasy. The malicious non-devotees are made to flee in panic by the sound of his thunderous roar, and the simple, inoffensive souls attain the ultimate fortune by accepting his lotus feet. I make my obeisance unto him; perpetually do I make my obeisance unto the brilliance emanating from the toenails of the holy lotus feet of my Lord.

(5)

**vipulikṛta-vaibhava-gaura-bhuvanṁ
bhuvaneṣu vikīrtita gaura-dayam
dayanīya-gaṇārpita-gaura-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

He has revealed the vast, magnificent beauty of Śrī Gaura Dhāma; he has broadcast the tidings of the supreme magnanimity of Śrī Gaurāṅga throughout the whole universe; and in the hearts of the fit recipients of his grace, he has firmly established the lotus feet of Śrī Gaura. I make my obeisance unto him; perpetually do I make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Lord.

(6)

**cira-gaura-janāśraya-viśva-gurum
guru-gaura-kiśoraka-dāsyā-param
paramādrta-bhaktivinoda-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

He is the eternal shelter and the Universal Guru for the souls surrendered unto Śrī Gaurāṅga. Absorbed in the service of his Gurudeva, Śrī Gaura Kiśora, he wholeheartedly adores Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. I make my obeisance unto him; perpetually do I make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Lord.

(7)

**raghu-rūpa-sanātana-kīrtti-dharam
dharaṇi-tala-kīrttita-jīva-kavim
kavirāja-narottama-sakhya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

He is the illustrious personality to raise the flag that sings the glory of Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, and Śrī Raghunātha. His glory is sung throughout the world as nondifferent from the powerful personality of brilliant erudition, Śrī Jīva. And he has won the renown of being one with the hearts of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and Ṭhākura Narottama. I make my obeisance unto him; perpetually do I bow down to the brilliance emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Divine Master.

(8)

**kṛpayā hari-kīrttana-mūrtti-dharam
dharaṇi-bhara-hāraka-gaura janam
janakādhika-vatsala-snigdha-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

Bestowing his grace upon all souls, he is *Hari-kīrttana* incarnate. As the associate of Śrī Gaura, he relieves Mother Earth of the burden of offences committed upon her. And he is so gracious that his endearance of all beings excels that of even a father. I make my obeisance unto him—the mine of all these qualities; perpetually do I bow down to the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Divine Master.

(9)

**śaraṇāgata-kīṅkara kalpa-tarum
taru-dhik-kṛta-dhīra-vadānya-varam
varadendra-gaṇārccita-divya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

Like a wish-fulfilling tree for his surrendered servitors (he fulfills their heart's aspiration), even a tree is shamed by his magnanimity and forbearance. And great personalities who are competent to confer boons—they, too, worship his lotus feet. I make my obeisance unto him; perpetually do I bow down to the radiance emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Divine Master.

(10)

**paraḥaṁsa-varam-paramārtha-patim
patitoddharaṇe kṛta-veśa-yatim
yati-rāja-gaṇaiḥ-parisevya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

The crown-jewel of the *paramahंसas*, the Prince of the treasure of the supreme perfection of life, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-prema*, he accepted the robes of a mendicant *sannyāsī* just to deliver the fallen souls. The topmost *tridaṇḍī sannyāsīs* attend his lotus feet. I make my obeisance unto him; perpetually do I bow down to the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Divine Master.

(11)

**vṛṣabhānu-sutā-dayitānucaram
caraṇāśrita-reṇu-dharas-tam-aham
mahad-adbhuta-pāvana-śakti-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam**

He is the dearest intimate follower of the Divine Daughter of Śrī Vṛṣabhānu, and I know myself as the most fortunate by taking the dust of his holy feet upon my head. I make my obeisance unto his invincible, wondrously purifying lotus feet—perpetually do I bow down to the brilliance emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Divine Master.



Śrī Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

(bhajan sung in the morning during the month of Kārtika)

(1)

**namāmiśvaram sac-cid-ānanda rūpaṁ
lasat-kunḍalaṁ gokule bhrājamānam
yaśodā-bhiyolūkhalād dhāvamānam
parāmrṣṭam atyantato drutya gopyā**

To the Supreme Lord, whose form is the embodiment of eternal existence, knowledge, and bliss, whose shark-shaped earrings are swinging to and fro, who is beautifully shining in the divine realm of Gokula, who [due to the offence of breaking the pot of yogurt that his mother was churning into butter and then stealing the butter that was kept hanging from a swing] is quickly running from the wooden grinding mortar in fear of Mother Yaśodā, but who has been caught from behind by her who ran after Him with greater speed—to that Supreme Lord, Śrī Dāmodara, I offer my humble obeisances.

(2)

**rudantaṁ muhur netra-yugmaṁ mṛjantaṁ
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātaṅka-netram
muhuḥ śvāsa-kampa-tirekhāṅka-kaṇṭha-
sthita-graivaṁ dāmodaraṁ bhakti-baddham**

[Seeing the whipping stick in His mother's hand,] He is crying and rubbing His eyes again and again with His two lotus hands. His eyes are filled with fear, and the necklace of pearls around His neck, which is marked with three lines like a conchshell, is shaking because of His quick breathing due to crying. To this Supreme Lord, Śrī Dāmodara, whose belly is bound not with ropes but with His mother's pure love, I offer my humble obeisances.

(3)

**itīdr̥k sva-lilābhir ānanda-kunḍe
sva-ghoṣaṁ nimajjantam ākhyāpayantaṁ
tadiyeṣita-jñeṣu bhaktair jītatvaṁ
punaḥ prematas taṁ śatāvṛtti vande**

By such childhood pastimes as this He is drowning the inhabitants of Gokula in pools of ecstasy, and is revealing to those devotees who are absorbed in knowledge of His supreme majesty and opulence that He is only conquered by devotees whose pure love is imbued with intimacy and is free from all conceptions of awe and reverence. With great love I again offer my obeisances to Lord Dāmodara hundreds and hundreds of times.

(4)

**varam deva mokṣaṁ na mokṣāvadhiṁ vā
na cānyaṁ vṛne 'haṁ vareśād apīha
idan te vapur nātha gopāla-bālaṁ
sadā me manasy āvirāstāṁ kim anyaiḥ**

O Lord, although You are able to give all kinds of benedictions, I do not pray to you for the boon of impersonal liberation, nor the highest liberation of eternal life in Vaikuṇṭha, nor any other boon [which may be obtained by executing the nine processes of *bhakti*]. O Lord, I simply wish that this form of Yours as Bālā Gopāla in Vṛndāvana may ever be manifest in my heart, for what is the use to me of any other boon besides this?

(5)

**idan te mukhāmbhojam avyakta-nīlair
vṛtaṁ kuntalaiḥ snigdha-raktaiś ca gopyā
muḥś cumbitaṁ bimba-raktādharaṁ me
manasy āvirāstāṁ alaṁ lakṣa-lābhaiḥ**

O Lord, Your lotus face, which is encircled by locks of soft black hair tinged with red, is kissed again and again by Mother Yaśoda, and Your lips are reddish like the *bimba* fruit. May this beautiful vision of Your lotus face be ever manifest in my heart. Thousands and thousands of other benedictions are of no use to me.

(6)

**namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo
prasida prabho duḥkha-jālābdhi-magnaṁ
kṛpā-drṣṭi-vṛṣṭyāti-dīnaṁ batānu-
grhāṇeśa mām ajñam edhy akṣi-drśyaḥ**

O Supreme Godhead, I offer my obeisances unto You. O Dāmodara! O Ananta! O Viṣṇu! O Master! O my Lord, be pleased upon me. By showering Your glance of mercy upon me, deliver this poor ignorant fool who is immersed in an ocean of worldly sorrows, and become visible to my eyes.

(7)

**kuverātmajau baddha-mūrttyaiva yadvat
tvayā mocitau bhakti-bhājau kṛtau ca
tathā prema-bhaktiṁ svakāṁ me prayaccha
na mokṣe graho me 'sti dāmodareha**

O Lord Dāmodara, just as the two sons of Kuvera—Maṇigrīva and Nalakūvara—were delivered from the curse of Nārada and made into great devotees by You in Your form as a baby tied with rope to a wooden grinding mortar, in the same way, please give to me Your own *prema-bhakti*. I only long for this and have no desire for any kind of liberation.

(8)

**namas te 'stu dāmne sphurad-dipti-dhāmne
tvadiyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmne
namo rādhikāyai tvadiya-priyāyai
namo 'nanta-lilāya devāya tubhyam**

O Lord Dāmodara, I first of all offer my obeisances to the brilliantly effulgent rope which binds Your belly. I then offer my obeisances to Your belly, which is the abode of the entire universe. I humbly bow down to Your most beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and I offer all obeisances to You, the Supreme Lord, who displays unlimited pastimes.



Śrī Śrīman Mahāprabhu Śata-Nām

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(sung in the morning during the month of Kārtika)

nadiyā-nagare nitāi nece nece gāy re

(Refrain:) In the towns and villages of Nadia, Lord Nityānanda ecstatically dances and sings these names of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

(1)

**jagannātha-suta mahāprabhu viśvambhara
māyāpura-śaśi navadvīpa-sudhākara**

Lord Chaitanya is the beloved son of Jagannāth Miśra; He is Mahāprabhu, the great master, protector, and maintainer of the whole world. He is the shining moon of Māyāpur, dissipating the dark ignorance of the world, and the source of all nectar for the Land of Nabadwip.

(2)

**śacī-suta gauraharī nimāi-sundara
rādhā-bhāva-kānti-ācchādita naṭabara**

He is the beloved son of Śacī Mātā and is Lord Hari with a golden complexion. As He was born under a nīm tree He was called Nimāi-sundar (beautiful Nimāi), a name also meant to protect Him from the god of death who had taken all His brothers and sisters before Him. He is covered by the sentiment and lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and He is the best of all dancers.

(3)

**nāmānanda capala bālaka mātṛ-bhakta
brahmāṇḍa-badana tarkī kautukānurakta**

Lord Chaitanya becomes ecstatic upon hearing the Holy Name of Hari. As a boy He was swift and agile, devoted to His mother, a great logician, and fond of joking. Millions of worlds are contained in His mouth.

(4)

**vidyārthi-uḍupa caura-dvayera mohana
tairthika-sarvasva grāmya-bālikā-kriḍana**

He bewildered two thieves who tried to steal His jewels when He was a small child, and He teased and joked with the village girls of Nadia. He is the moon among scholars and the cynosure of all philosophers.

(5)

**lakṣmī-prati bora-dātā addhata bālaka
śrī-śacira pati-putra-śoka-nibāraka**

Lord Chaitanya is the giver of blessings to Lakṣmī-prīya (His first wife). He was a mischievous child and is the Lord, son and preventer of all kinds of grief of Śacī-mātā.

(6)

**lakṣmī-pati pūrba-deśa-sarva-kleśa-hara
digvijayī-darpa-hārī viṣṇu-priyeśvara**

He is the Lord and husband of Lakṣmī-prīya. By His *saṅkīrttan* movement He removed the distresses of East Bengal. He removed the pride of the conquering paṇḍita Keśava Kasmiri. He is the Lord of Viṣṇu-prīya (His second wife).

(7)

**ārja-dharma-pāla piṭṛ-gayā piṇḍa-dātā
purī-śiṣya madhvācārya-sampradāya-pātā**

He was the protector and preserver of *sanātana-dharma* and the giver of *piṇḍa* at Gayā after the disappearance of His father, Jagannāth Miśra. He became the disciple of Īśvara Purī and is the protector of the Madhvācārya Sampradāya.

(8)

**kṛṣṇa-nāmonmatta kṛṣṇa-tattva-adhyāpaka
nāma-saṅkīrttana-yuga-dharma-pravarṭtaka**

Lord Chaitanya became intoxicated by and mad for the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, and began to profess the science of Kṛṣṇa. Thus He inaugurated the religion of the age, Harināma-Saṅkīrttana.

(9)

**advaita-bāndhava śrīnivāsa-gr̥ha-dhana
nityānanda-prāṇa gadādhara jīvana**

He was the friend of Advaita Āchāryya, the treasure of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's home, the life and soul of Nityānanda Prabhu, and the very source of life to Gadādhara Paṇḍit.

(10)

**antadvīpa-śaśadhara sīmanta-bijaya
godruma-bihārī madhyadvīpa-līlāśraya**

Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu is the moon of Antardwīp and the triumph of Sīmantadvīp. He is wandering on the island of Godruma and is the shelter of pastimes in Madhyadvīp.

(11)

**koladvīpa-pati ṛtudvīpa-maheśvara
jahnudvīpa-modadruma-rudradvīpera īśvara**

Śrī Chaitanya is the Lord of Koladvīp, Ṛtudwīp, Jahnudwīp, Modadrumadvīp, and Rudradwīp.

(12)

**navakhaṇḍa-raṅganātha jāhnavī-jīvana
jagāi-mādhāi-ādi durbṛtta tāraṇa**

He is thus the Lord of Nabadwīp which serves as the stage for His wonderful pastimes. He is the life of the River Ganges and He delivers all sorts of rogues and rascals beginning with Jagāi and Mādhāi.

(13)

**nagara-kīrttana-sim̐hakāji-uddhāraṇa
śuddha-nāma-pracāraka bhaktārti-haraṇa**

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is the lion of the village *kīrttans*. he delivered the Chānd Kazi. He is the preacher of the pure Holy Name, and the remover of the distresses of His devotees.

(14)

**nārāyaṇī-kṛpā-sindhu jīvero niyantā
adhama-paḍūyā-daṇḍī bhakta-doṣa-hantā**

He is the ocean of mercy for Nārāyaṇī; the controller of all souls; the chastiser of the fallen student who criticised His chanting of “*Gopī, gopī!*”, and the destroyer of the sins of His devotees.

(15)

**śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-candra bhārati-tāraṇa
paribrāja-śiromani utkala-pāvana**

He was initiated into *sannyāsa* with the Name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya, and He is beautiful like the moon. He delivered Keśava Bhārati; is the crest-jewel of all wandering sannyāsīs, and the saviour of Orissa.

(16)

**ambu-liṅga-bhuvaneśa-kapoteśa-pati
kṣīr-cora-gopāla-darśana-sukhī yaṭi**

Lord Chaitanya is the master of Lord Śiva, who is known as Ambu-liṅga, Bhuvaneśvara, and Kapoteśvara at three different Śaiva *tīrthas* visited by Śrī Chaitanya on His way to Jagannātha Purī. As a *sannyāsī* He rejoiced at the sight of Kṣīra-cora Gopīnātha and Sākṣī Gopāla.

(17)

**nirdaṇḍi-sannyāsī sārva-bhauma-kṛpāmoya
svānanda-āsvādānānandī sarva-sukhāśraya**

He became a *sannyāsī* without a *daṇḍa* due to Lord Nityānanda’s breaking it and throwing it in the Bhargi River. He is full of mercy for Sārva-bhauma Bhaṭṭāchāryya. He is ecstatic by tasting the bliss of Himself in the form of Kṛṣṇa, and He is the resting place of all happiness.

(18)

**puraṭa-sundar vāsudeva-trāṇa-karttā
rāmānanda-sakhā bhatta-kula-kleśa-harttā**

Lord Gaurāṅga is beautiful like molten gold and He delivered the leper Vāsudeva. He is the friend of Rāmānanda Rāy, and the remover of all miseries from the family of Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa.

(19)

**bauddha-jaina-māyāvādi-kutarka-khaṇḍana
dakṣina-pāvana bhakti-grantha-uddhāraṇa**

He refuted the atheistic arguments of the Buddhists, Jains, and Māyāvādīs, He is the saviour of South India, and He has brought to light the two devotional literatures, *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* and *Brahma-saṁhitā*.

(20)

**ālāla-darśanānandī rathāgra-narttaka
gajapati-trāṇa devānanda-uddhāraka**

Śrī Chaitanya became ecstatic at the sight of Ālānātha. He danced in front of the Jagannātha cart during Rathayātrā, and He delivered Gajapati Prataparudra, and He was the saviour of Devānanda Paṇḍita.

(21)

**kuliyā-prakāśe duṣṭa paḍuyāra trāṇa
rūpa-sanātana-bandhu sarva-jīva-prāṇa**

By His appearance at Kuliyā He delivered the ill-behaved student community. He is the friend of Rūpa and Śanātana, and the life of all souls.

(22)

**vṛndāvanānanda-mūrti balabhadra-saṅgī
yavana-uddhārī bhaṭṭa-ballabhera raṅgī**

Śrī Gaurāṅga is the personification of bliss in the transcendental realm of Vṛndāvana. He is the companion and friend of Balabhadra Bhaṭṭāchāryya. On His return from Vṛndāvana He delivered many Mohammedans. He is very fond of Vallabhāchāryya.

(23)

**kāśībāsi-sannyāsī-uddhārī prema-dātā
markaṭa-vairāgi-daṇḍī ā-caṇḍāla-trātā**

He delivered the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* of Kāśī, and He is the bestower of love of God. To set a strict example for *sannyāsīs* He chastised the great devotee Choto Haridāsa's begging rice from Mādhavī Devī. Śrī Chaitanya is the saviour of everyone down to the lowest class of men.

(24)

**bhaktera-gaurava-kārī bhakta-prāṇa-dhana
haridāsa-raghunātha-svarūpa-jīvana**

Śrī Chaitanya is the glorifier of His devotees and is the wealth of their lives. He is the life of such devotees as Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, and Svarūpa Dāmodara.

(25)

**nadiyā-nagare nitāi nece nece gāy re
bhaktivinoda tān'ra paḍe rāṅgā-pāy re**

In the towns and villages of Nadia, Lord Nityānanda dances ecstatically, singing these divine names, and Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda falls down at His reddish lotus feet.

Śrī Kṛṣṇer Viṁsottara-Śata-Nām-Saṅkīrtana

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(sung in the morning during the month of Kārtika)

nagare nagare gorā gāy

(Refrain:) From village to village Lord Gaura sings these names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(1)

**yaśomati-stanya-pāyī śrī-nanda nandana
indra-nīla-maṇi braja-janera jīvana**

Kṛṣṇa is the baby who feeds on the breast of Mother Yaśodā. He is the son of Mahārāj Nanda, dark blue like and *indra-nīla* gem, and the life of the residents of Vraja.

(2)

**śrī gokula niśācarī-pūtanā ghātana
duṣṭa-tṛṇāvartta-hantā śakaṭa-bhañjana**

Kṛṣṇa destroyed the witch of Gokula, Pūtanā; He broke the cart in which the demon Śakaṭāsura was hiding; and He destroyed the wicked demon, Tṛṇāvarta.

(3)

**navanīta-cora dadhi-haraṇa-kuśala
yamala-arjuna-bhañjī govinda gopāla**

He is an expert thief of butter and yogurt, He broke the two Yamala Arjuna trees, and He is a cowherd boy who is always giving pleasure to the cows, land and senses.

(4)

**dāmodara vṛndāvana-go-vatsa-rākhāla
batsāsurāntaka hari nija-jana-pāla**

He is so naughty that His mother bound Him around the waist with ropes. Thus He is known as Dāmodar. He is the keeper of Vṛndāvana's cows and calves, the destroyer of the demon Vatsāsura, He is the remover of all evils and is the protector of His devotees.

(5)

**baka-śatru agha-hantā brahma-vimohana
dhenuka-nāśana kṛṣṇa kālīya-damona**

Kṛṣṇa is the enemy of the demon Bhakāsura, the slayer of Aghāsura, the bewilderer of Lord Brahmā, the destroyer of Dhenukāsura and the subduer of the Kālīya serpent. He is all-attractive and is the colour of a fresh rain cloud.

(6)

**pītāmbara śikhipuccha-dhārī veṇu-dhara
bhāṇḍīra-kānana-līla dābānala-hara**

Lord Kṛṣṇa dresses in yellow silk cloth and wears peacock feathers on His head. He holds a flute, performs pastimes in the Bhāṇḍīra forest, and He once swallowed a forest fire to save the inhabitants of Vraja.

(7)

**naṭabara-guhācara śarata-bihārī
ballabī-ballabha deva gopī-bastra-hārī**

Kṛṣṇa, best of dancers, sometimes wanders in the caves of Govardhāna Hill. He enjoys various amorous pastimes in the autumn season, He is the lover of the young cowherd maidens, the stealer of their garments, and the Supreme Lord of all.

(8)

**yajña-patnī-gaṇa-prati karuṇāra sindhu
govardhana-dhṛk mādhab braja-bāsi-bandhu**

Kṛṣṇa is the ocean of mercy of the wives of the sacrificial brāhmaṇas, He is the holder of Govardhāna Hill, the husband of the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, and the dearest friend of the inhabitants of Vraja.

(9)

**indra-darpa-hārī nanda-rakṣitā mukunda
śrī-gopī-ballabha rāsa-kriḍa pūrṇānanda**

He broke Indra's pride and protected His father, Nanda Mahārāja. He is the giver of liberation, the lover of the cowherd maidens of Vraja, the enjoyer of the Rāsa Dance and the reservoir of pleasure.

(10)

**śrī-rādhā-ballabha rādhā-mādhava sundara
lalitā-viśākhā-ādi sakhi-prāṇeśvara**

He is the lover of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the very springtime of Her life. He is the Lord of the lives of all the *gopikās* of Vṛndāvana, headed by Lalitā and Viśākhā.

(11)

**naba-jaladhara-kānti madana-mohana
vana-mālī smeramukha gopī-prāṇadhana**

Kṛṣṇa possesses the loveliness of a fresh rain cloud in the autumn sky. He is the bewilderer of Cupid, always garlanded with fresh forest flowers. His face is like a full-blown lotus flower of sweet smiles and laughter. He is the wealth of the lives of all the young maidens in Vraja.

(12)

**tri-bhaṅgī muralī-dhara yāmuna-nāgara
rādhā-kuṇḍa-raṅga-netā rasera sāgara**

He possesses a beautiful three-fold bending form and holds a flute known as Muralī. He is the lover of the Yamunā River, the director of all the amorous love sports at Rādhā Kuṇḍa, and He is the ocean of devotional mellows.

(13)

**candrāvalī-prāṇanātha kautukābhilāṣī
rādhā-māna-sulampaṭa milana-prayāṣī**

Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the life of Candrāvalī, and He is always desirous of joking and sporting. He is very anxious to taste the *rāsa* of his beloved Rādhikā's feigned sulking and always endeavours for Their meeting.

(14)

**mānasa-gaṅgāra dānī prasūna-taskara
gopī-saha haṭha-kāri braja-baneśvara**

He is the giver of the Mānasa Gaṅgā Lake to the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana. This thief of flower blossoms acts very outrageously with the maidens of Vṛndāvana, not caring for social restrictions, for He is the Lord of the Vraja-maṇḍala forests.

(15)

**gokula-sampada gopa-duḥkha-nibāraṇa
durmada-damana bhakta-santāpa-haraṇa**

He is the wealth of Gokula and protects the cowherd men and boys from all miseries. He curbs all foolish pride and removes all distress from His devotees.

(16)

**sudarśana-mocana śrī-saṅkhacūḍāntaka
rāmānuja śyāma-cānda muralī-bādaka**

Kṛṣṇa gives the *gopīs* side-long glances and is the destroyer of Śaṅkhacūḍa. He is the younger brother of Lord Baladeva, He is the beautiful dark moon of Vṛndāvana and the player of the flute.

(17)

**gopī-gīta-śrotā madhusūdana murāri
ariṣṭa-ghāta-ka rādhā-kuṇḍādi-bihāri**

He hears the songs of the *gopīs* and is the slayer of the Madhu demon. This enemy of the demon Mura and killer of Ariṣṭāsura enjoys amorous sports and pastimes at Rādhā Kuṇḍa and other places in Vraja.

(18)

**vyomāntaka padma-netra keśi-nisūdana
raṅga-kriḍa kaṁsa-hantā mallu-praharaṇa**

Kṛṣṇa is the destroyer of the demon Vyomāsura. He is lotus-eyed, the killer of the Keśi demon, frolicsome, the slayer of King Kaṁsa and the conquerer of Kaṁsa's wrestlers, Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika.

(19)

**vasudeva-suta vṛṣṇi-baṁśa-kīrti-dhvaja
dīnanātha mathureśa devakī-garbha-ja**

He is the beloved son of Vasudeva and the emblem of fame for the Vṛṣṇi dynasty. The Lord of the fallen souls, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the Lord of Mathurā and He appears to have taken birth from the womb of Devakī.

(20)

**kubjā-kṛpāmoya viṣṇu śauri nārāyaṇa
dvārakeśa naraka-ghna śrī-yadunandana**

Kṛṣṇa is full of mercy for the hunchbacked Kubjā. He is the maintainer of the entire creation, the son of Vasudeva, the refuge of all souls, the Lord of Dwārakā, the slayer of Narakāsura and the beloved descendent of the Yadu dynasty.

(21)

**śrī-rukmiṇī-kānta satyā-pati sura-pāla
pāṇḍava-bāndhava śiśupālādīra kāla**

He is the lover of Rukmiṇī, the husband of Satyā, the protector of the godly, the beloved friend and relative of the five Pāṇḍava brothers and the cause of death for Śiśupāla and other demoniac kings.

(22)

**jagadīśa janārdana keśavārtta-trāṇa
sarva-avatāra-bīja viśvera nidāna**

Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the universe, the maintainer of all living beings and He possesses beautiful hair. He is the deliverer from all misery and the origin of the universe and all incarnations.

(23)

**māyeśvara yogeśvara brāhma-tejā-dhāra
sarvātmāra ātmā prabhu prakṛtira pāra**

He is the Lord of *Māyā*; the master of mysticism; the proprietor of the spiritual powers of the *brāhmanas*; the Lord, master and soul of all souls, and He is the opposite shore of the ocean of material nature.

(24)

**patita-pāvana jagannātha sarveśvara
vṛndāvana-candra sarva-rasera ākara**

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the purifier of the fallen souls, the Lord of the universe, the Lord of all beings, the moon of Vṛndāvana and the origin of all *rasas*.

(25)

**nagare nagare gorā gāy re
bhaktivinoda tachu pāy re**

Lord Chaitanya sings these names of Kṛṣṇa from village to village, and Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda falls at His lotus feet.



Śikṣāṣṭakam

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(bhajan sung in the evening during the month of Kārtika)

These songs are based on the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, the eight verses of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

The first verse of the *Śikṣāṣṭakam* is as follows:

**ceto-darpaṇa-mārjjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam vidyā-vadhū-jivanam
ānandāmbudhi-varddhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam**

The Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa cleanses the mirror of the heart and extinguishes the fire of misery in the forest of birth and death.

As the evening lotus blooms in the moon's cooling rays, the heart begins to blossom in the nectar of the Name.

And at last the soul awakens to its real inner treasure—a life of love with Kṛṣṇa.

Again and again tasting nectar, the soul dives and surfaces in the ever-increasing ocean of ecstatic joy.

All phases of the self of which we may conceive are fully satisfied and purified, and at last conquered by the all-auspicious influence of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa.

Song 1

(Relates to the above verse)

(1)

**pīta-baraṇa kali-pāvana gorā
gāyāi aichana bhāva-bibhorā**

Lord Gaurāṅga, the golden saviour of *kali-yuga* sings these words, overwhelmed by divine emotion (*bhāva*).

(2)

**citta-darpaṇa-parimārjjana-kārī
kṛṣṇa-kīrttana jaya citta-bihārī**

All glories to *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrttan*, it is the cleanser of all dirty things from the mirror of the mind and the delight of the soul.

(3)

**helā-bhava-dāva-nirvvāpaṇa-vṛtti
kṛṣṇa-kīrttana jaya kleśa-nivṛtti**

All glories to *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrttan*, it extinguishes the forest fire of material existence and removes all trials and troubles.

(4)

**śreyah-kumuda-bidhu-jyotsnā-prakāśa
kṛṣṇa-kīrttana jaya bhakti-vilāsa**

All glories to *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrttan*, it illuminates the heart like the full moon and makes the white lotus of the soul's good fortune blossom and bloom. *Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan* is the *bhakti-vilāsa*, the beautiful pastime of devotion.

(5)

**viśuddha-vidyā-bādhū jīvana-rūpa
kṛṣṇa-kīrttana jaya siddha-swarūpa**

All glories to *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrttan*. *Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan* awakens pure transcendental knowledge, which is compared to a young bride and is the real perfection of life.

(6)

**ānanda-paya-nidhi-varddhana-kīrtti
kṛṣṇa-kīrttana jaya plābana-mūrti**

All glories to *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrttan*. *Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan* awakens one's *siddha-svarūpa*, one's true inner form. *Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan* is a flood-storm of divine nectar; it expands the glories of the ocean of transcendental ecstasy.

(7)

**pade pade pīyuṣa-swāda-pradātā
kṛṣṇa-kīrttana jaya prema-bidhātā**

All glories to *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrttan*. *Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan* gives one a taste of nectarine *rasa* at every step; ultimately it bestows *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

(8)

**bhaktivinoda-swatma-snapana bidhāna
kṛṣṇa-kīrttana jaya prema-nidāna**

Bhaktivinoda's soul is bathed in the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-kīrttan*. His soul is ruled by *kṛṣṇa-kīrttan*. All glories to *kṛṣṇa-kīrttan*, the giver of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

The second verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam:

**nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarvva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālāḥ
etādrśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durddaivam idrśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ**

O my Lord, Your Holy Name bestows auspiciousness upon all. And You have unlimited names such as Kṛṣṇa and Govinda by which You reveal Yourself.

In Your many Holy Names You have kindly invested all Your transcendental potency. And in chanting these names, there are no strict rules concerning time or place.

Out of Your causless mercy, You have descended in the form of divine sound, but my great misfortune is that I have no love for Your Holy Name.

Song 2

(1)

**tuñhu doyā-sāgara tārāyite prāṇi
nāma aneka tuwā śikhāoli āni'**

O Lord! You are an ocean of mercy, and so you have brought the teachings of the glories of your unlimited Holy Names to deliver all souls.

(2)

**sakala śakati dei nāme tohārā
grahaṇe rākholi nāhi kāla-bicārā**

You have conferred all Your power upon Your Name. And there are no rules governing the appropriate time or place for chanting the Holy Name.

(3)

**śrī-nāma-cintāmaṇi tohāri samānā
biśwe bilāoili karuṇā-nidānā**

The Holy Name is a *cintāmaṇi* gem, a divine touchstone, and is nondifferent from You. Out of Your kindness for all souls, You have distributed Your Holy Name throughout the universe.

(4)

**tuwā doyā aichana parama udārā
atiśoya manda nātha! bhāga hāmārā**

This is Your mercy, O Lord. You are supremely kind. But, O Lord, I am most wicked and unfortunate.

(5)

**nāhi janamalo nāme anurāga mora
bhaktivinoda-citta duḥkhe bibhora**

I have never known any attraction for the Holy Names. And so, the heart of Bhaktivinoda is filled with sadness.

The third verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam:

**tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrttanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ**

One who is humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree who gives due honour to others without desiring it for himself is qualified to always chant the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa.

Song 3

(1)

**śrī-kṛṣṇa-kīrttane yadi mānasa tohāra
parama jatane tāñhi labho adhikāra**

If your mind is always carefully absorbed in the chanting of the Holy Name, then you will become qualified for chanting the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa.

(2)

**ṭṛṇādhika hīna, dīna, akiñcana chāra
āpane mānobi sadā chāḍi' ahañkāra**

Humbler than a blade of grass considering yourself low, poor, and mean, give up your false ego.

(3)

**vṛkṣa-sama kṣamā-guṇa korobi sādhana
pratihinsā tyaji' anye korobi pālana**

Tolerant as a tree, you should forgive and forbear, giving up violence. Practice nurturing and protecting others.

(4)

**jīvana-nirvvāhe āne udvega nā dibe
para-upakāre nija-sukha pāsaribe**

Live without causing anxiety to others; do good unto others without considering your own happiness.

(5)

**hoile-o sarvva-guṇe guṇi mahāśoya
pratiṣṭhāśā chāḍi koro amāni hṛdoya**

A great soul who has all these qualities should not become proud of his saintly qualities, but, giving up position and prestige he should always remain prideless within his heart.

(6)

**kṛṣṇa-adhiṣṭhān sarvva-jībe jāni' sadā
korobi sammāna sabe ādare sarvvadā**

Always knowing that Kṛṣṇa dwells within the hearts of all living beings, you should always properly respect and honour others.

(7)

**doinya, doyā anye māna, pratiṣṭhā-barjjana
cāri guṇe guṇi hoi koroho kīrttana**

Humility, mercy, consideration of others, and giving up position are the four qualities needed to perform *kīrttan*.

(8)

**bhaktivinoda kaṇḍi bole prabhu-pāya
heno adhikāra kabe dibe he āmāya**

Bhaktivinoda, crying at the Lord's holy feet says, "O my Lord, when will You bestow upon me the qualifications for *kṛṣṇa-kīrttan*?"

The fourth verse of *Śikṣāṣṭakam*:

**na dhanam na janam na sundarīm
kavitām vā jagad-īśa kāmāye
mama janmani janmaniśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi**

O Lord, I have no desires to accumulate wealth, followers, beautiful women, or salvation. My only prayer is for Your causeless devotional service, birth after birth.

Song 4

(1)

**prabhu tava pada-yuge mora nibedana
nāhi māgi deho-sukha, vidyā dhana, jana**

My Lord: I submit the following prayer at Your holy feet: I do not pray to You for physical pleasure, for learning, wealth, or followers.

(2)

**nāhi māgi swarga, āra mokṣa nāhi māgi
nā kori prārthanā kono vibhūtira lāgi'**

I do not pray for heaven or salvation. I do not pray for any of these opulences.

(3)

**nija-karma-guṇa-doṣe ye ye janma pāi
janme janme yeno taba nāma-guṇa gāi**

In whatever birth I take, wherever my *karma* leads me, let me sing the glories of Your Holy Name birth after birth.

(4)

**ei mātra āśā mama tomāra caraṇe
ahaitukī bhakti hṛde jāge anukṣaṇe**

This alone is my cherished hope, my aspiration, my prayer at your lotus feet:
Let causeless and uninterrupted devotion awaken within my heart and flow
towards You.

(5)

**biṣoye ye prīti ebe āchaye āmār
sei-mata prīti hauk caraṇe tomār**

Let me love Your lotus feet as much as I now love sense gratification; transfer
my affection from the objects of the senses to Your lotus feet.

(6)

**bipade sampade tāhā thākuka samabhāve
dīne dīne bṛddhi hauk nāmera prabhāve**

In danger or success, good fortune or disaster, let me remain equipoised. And let
my affection for You increase day by day by the influence of the Holy Name.

(7)

**paśu-pakṣi hoye thāki swarge bā niroye
taba bhakti rahu bhaktivinoda-hṛdoye**

Whether I live as bird or beast, in heaven or in hell, let the humble Bhaktivinoda
always cherish *bhakti* in his heart of hearts.

The fifth verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam:

**ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
krpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūli-sadṛśaṁ vicintaya**

O son of Nanda Mahārāja, I am Your eternal servant, yet because of my own
karmma, I have fallen into this terrible ocean of birth and death. Please accept this
fallen soul and consider me a particle of dust at Your holy lotus feet.

Song 5

(1)

**anādi' karama-fale, poḍi' bhavārṇava-jale,
toribāre nā dekhi upāy,
e-viṣaya-holāhole, dibā-niśi hiyā jwale,
mana kabhu sukha nāhi pāy**

Into this beginningless world of *karmma*, into this vast ocean of material existence where no means of salvation can be seen, I have fallen, because of my own misconception, because of my own karmic deeds, whose origins cannot be traced in time. And in this sea of poison, day and night I burn. Never knowing peace or happiness.

(2)

**āsā-pāśa-śata, śata kleśa deya abirata,
pravṛtti-ūrmira tāhe khelā
kāma-krodha-ādi choy, bāṭapāḍe dey bhoy,
abasāna hoilo āśi'belā**

My hundreds of cares are hundreds of snares: they tangle me in troubles while the waves of materialism crash over me. Lust, anger, greed, pride, illusion and envy are the six plunderers and dacoits who rob and terrorise my soul. I've been tossed and turned, snared and troubled, cheated and plundered. And now my time has come: the end is near.

(3)

**jñāna-karmma—ṭhāga dui, more pratāriyā loi,
abaśeṣe phele sindhu-jale
e heno samaye, bandhu, tumi kṛṣṇa kṛpā-sindhu
kṛpā kori' tolo more bale**

Two thugs have cheated me with their promises: calculation and exploitation duped me and used me. And now that I am used up, at last they are throwing me back, back into the ocean of mundane misery. Now, You are my only friend O Kṛṣṇa; You are an ocean of mercy. Be kind upon me and by divine strength deliver me.

(4)

**patita-kiṅkore dhorī’, pāda-padma-dhūli kori’,
deho bhaktivinode āśraya
āmi taba nitya-dās bhuliyā māyār pās,
baddha ho’ye āchi doyāmoy**

I am Your eternal servant, O merciful Lord. But, having forgotten this since time immemorial, I have become bound up in this network of illusion. Take this fallen servant of Yours, give him a place in the dust of Your lotus feet; give your shelter to this humble Bhaktivinoda.

The sixth verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam:

**nayanam galad-aśru-dhārayā
vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulakair nicitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati**

O Lord, when will tears flow from my eyes like waves, And my voice tremble in ecstasy? When will the hairs of my body stand on end while chanting Your Holy Name?

Song 6

(1)

**aparādha-phale mama citta bhela vajra sama
tuwā nāme nā labhe bikāra
hatās hoīya hari tava nāma ucca kori’
boḍo duḥkhe ḍāki bāra bāra**

As a result of my *aparādhās*, O Lord, my heart has become as hard as a thunderbolt. I feel no transformations of ecstasy while chanting Your Name, O Lord. Disappointed, hopeless, and troubled, I call Your Name again and again.

(2)

**dīna doyāmoy karuṇā-nidān
bhāva-bindu dei rākhaho parāṇ**

O Origin of mercy, You are kind to the fallen. Please give me a drop of *bhāva-bhakti* and save my life.

(3)

**kabe tuwā nāma-uccāraṇe mor
nayane jharabo dara dara lor**

When will I chant Your Name in ecstasy with a storm of tears pouring from my eyes?

(4)

**gada-gada-swara kaṇṭhe upajabo
mukhe bola ādha ādha bāhirābo**

When will my words of devotion catch in my throat as I become choked with ecstasy while trying to utter Your Name?

(5)

**pulake bharabo śarīra hāmāra
sweda-kampa-stambha habe bāra bāra**

When will the hairs of my body stand up in ecstasy? When will I become stunned with ecstasy, shiver and perspire out of the ecstasy of divine love? When will these symptoms of ecstasy overwhelm me again and again?

(6)

**bibarṇa-śarīre hārāobuñ jñān
nāma-samāśraye dharobu parāṇ**

When will my body turn colours and become pale out of ecstasy? When will I lose consciousness? And when will my very life be under the shelter of the Holy Name?

(7)

**milabo hāmār kiye aiche din
roye bhaktivinoda matī hīna**

Bhaktivinoda, who is devoid of good intelligence cries, “When will I meet with such a day?”

The seventh verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam:

**yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa
cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṁ
śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvvaṁ
govinda-virahēṇa me**

“O Govinda! Without You, the world is empty. Tears are flooding my eyes like rain, and a moment seems like forever.”

Song 7(a)

(1)

**gāite gāite nāma ki daśā hoilo
‘kṛṣṇa-niya-dāsa muṇi’ hr̥doye sphurilo**

Chanting the Name again and again, what was my realisation? Within my heart I knew, “I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.”

(2)

**jānilām māyā-pāṣe e jaḍa-jagate
govinda-virahe duḥkha pāi nānā-mate**

I knew that, bound by *māyā*’s ropes, in this dull mundane universe, I only get various miseries because of separation from Govinda.

(3)

**āra ye saṁsāra mor nāhi lāge bhālo
kāñhā yāi’ kṛṣṇa heri e cintā biśālo**

And I don’t much like this world of birth and death. Where shall I go to see Kṛṣṇa? This was my biggest worry.

(4)

**kāṇdite kāṇdite mora āñkhi-bariṣoya
barṣā-dhārā heno cakṣe hoilo udoya**

I began weeping and weeping; my tears fell. Torrents of rain poured from my eyes.

(5)

**nimeṣa hoilo mora śata-yuga-sam
govinda-viraha āra sahite akṣam**

A moment for me is like a hundred *yugas* now. I cannot bear this separation from Govinda.

(6)

**śūnya dharā-tala, caudike dekhiye,
parāṇa udāsa hoyā
ki kori, ki kori, sthira nāhi hoyā,
jibana nāhiko roya**

The world is empty; as I survey the four directions, the entire surface of the world is void. My life is empty, my mind is listless; I am indifferent and apathetic towards everything. Depressed, melancholy and forlorn, my life has no meaning now. What do I do now? I cannot remain steady. I can no longer maintain my life.

(7)

**braja-bāsi-gaṇ mora prāṇa rākho
dekhāo śrī-rādhā-nāthe
bhaktivinoda- minati māniyā,
laohe tāhāre sāthe**

O residents of Vṛndāvana; save my life and show me Rādhānātha, the Lord of Śrī Rādhā. Considering this humble prayer of Bhaktivinoda, please give him Your association and take him with You.

(8)

**śrī kṛṣṇa-viraha āra sahite nā pāri
parāṇa chāḍite āra dina dui cāri**

I am unable to further tolerate this separation from my Lord Kṛṣṇa and am ready to give up my life in two days or four.

Song 7(b)

(1)

**gāite ‘govinda’-nām, upajilo bhāva-grām,
dekhilām yamunāra kūle
vṛṣabhānu-sutā-saṅge, śyāma-naṭa-bara-raṅge,
vāñsarī bājāya nīpo-mūle**

And while I sang Govinda-Nāma a host of ecstasies arose, within me. I saw Sundar-śyāma the dance-king, on Yamunā’s shores, with Rādhā, Vṛṣabhānu’s daughter, sporting in pastimes of love playing His flute beside the water while a *kadamba* tree above cast shade upon the holy pair.

(2)

**dekhiyā yugala-dhana, asthira hoilo mana,
jñāna hārā hoiluṇa takhona
kata-kṣane nāhi jāni, jñāna-labha hoilo māni,
āra nāhi bhelo daraśan**

On seeing this, my mind was stunned. I lost my senses. Unaware of time, I fainted—dead and numbed. The treasured pair, when I awoke, had gone; my Vraja vision broke.

Song 7(c)

(1)

**sakhi go kemate dharibo parāṇ
nimeṣa hoilo yugera samān**

O gopīs! My friends! How can I maintain my life? A moment is like a millenium.

(2)

**śrāvaṇera dhārā, āñkhi-bariṣoy,
śūnya bhelo dharā-tala
govinda-vīrahe, prāṇa nāhi rohe,
kemone bāñcibo bolo**

Showers of tears pour from my eyes like the monsoon rains of August. The whole world is empty. In separation from Govinda I cannot maintain my life. Tell me, how can I go on?

(3)

**bhakativinoda, asthira hoiyā,
punaḥ nāmāśraya kori’
ḍāke rādhānātha, diyā daraśana,
prāṇa rākho, nahe mari**

How will I survive this separation?
Bhaktivinoda, in this unsteady state of
mind, again takes shelter of the Holy
Name and calls out, “O Rādhā-nātha!”
Save my life by giving me Your *darśan*
and so deliver me from death.

The eighth verse of Śiṣāṣṭakam:

**āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marmma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ**

“Kṛṣṇa may embrace me in love or trample me under His feet. He may break my heart by hiding Himself from me. Let that debauchee do whatever He likes, but He will always be the only Lord of my life.”

Song 8(a)

(1)

**bandhu-gan! śunoho bacana mora
bhāvēte bibhora, thākiye jakhona,
dekhā deya citta-cora**

O my friends! Listen to my words. I am filled to overflowing with devotional ecstasy when I have a divine vision of that thief who has stolen my heart.

(2)

**bicakṣaṇa kori’ dekhite cāhile,
hoya āṅkhi-agocara
punaḥ nāhi dekhi’, kāṇdaye parāṇa,
duhkhera nāhi thāke ora**

And when I want to see him more clearly, He disappears from sight and becomes invisible. Again, not seeing Him, my life-air weeps and my grief knows no bounds.

(3)

**jagatera bandhu sei kabhu more loya sātha
yathā tathā rākhu more āmāra se prāṇanātha**

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa, the friend of the universe, takes me as one of His own, and sometimes He ignores me, but however He keeps me, He is the Lord of my life.

(4)

**darśan-ānanda-dāne, sukha dey mora prāṇe,
bole more praṇoya-bacan
punaḥ adarśan diyā, dagdha kore mora hiyā,
prāṇe more māre prāṇa-dhan**

When He gives His blissful *darśan* to me, He gives happiness to my soul. He gives me great ecstasy by allowing me to see Him and by speaking affectionately to me. Again He goes away, removing Himself from my sight. And by not letting me see Him, He burns my heart with the fire of separation.

(5)

**yāhe tā'ra sukha hoya, sei sukha mama
nija sukhe-duḥkhe mora sarvvadāi sama**

But even though He pains my soul in this way, He is still the Lord of my life. Whatever is His happiness is also my happiness. And so, for me, happiness and distress is all the same.

(6)

**bhakativinoda, saṁyoge biyoge,
tāhe jāne prāṇeśwara
tā'ra sukhe sukhi, sei prāṇa-nātha,
se kabhu nā hoya para**

In this way, Bhaktivinoda, in both union and separation, knows that Kṛṣṇa is the only Lord of his soul. Kṛṣṇa's happiness is my happiness. He is the Lord of my life; there is no other Lord for me than Him.

Song 8(b)

(1)

**yoga-pīthopari-sthita, aṣṭa-sakhī-subeṣṭita,
vṛndāraṇye kadamba-kānane
rādhā-saha baṁśī-dhārī, biśwa-jana-citta-hārī,
prāṇa mora tañhāra caraṇe**

At the *yoga-pītha*, surrounded by the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, in Vṛndāvan Forest, in a grove of *kadamba* trees, by the side of Śrī Rādhā, holding His flute, Śrī Kṛṣṇa enchants all souls within the universe. I fall at His feet and surrender my life to Him.

(2)

**sakhī-ājñāmata kori donhāra sebana
pālya-dāsī sadā bhāvi donhāra caraṇa**

Following the orders of a *sakhī*, I engage in service to the holy pair, Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, always considering myself a *pālyadāsī* maidservant at Their lotus feet.

(3)

**kabhu kṛpā kori, mama hasta dhorī',
madhura bacana bole
tāmbula loiyā, khāya dui jane,
mālā loya kutūhale**

Sometimes being kind, They take me by the hand and speak sweet words to me out of affection. Taking *tambula*, the two of Them eat and accept a garland from me with great delight.

(4)

**adarśana hoyā kakhona ki chale
nā dekhiyā donhe hiyā mora jwale**

Again, They disappear from my vision by some trick. Not seeing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, my heart burns in agony.

(5)

yekhāne sekhāne, thākuka du' jane,
āmi to' caraṇa-dāśī
milane ānanda, virahe yātanā,
sakala samāna bāśī

Here or there, wherever They stay, I am the maidservant of Their lotus feet.
Through the happiness of union and the agony of separation, I am Their maidservant.

(6)

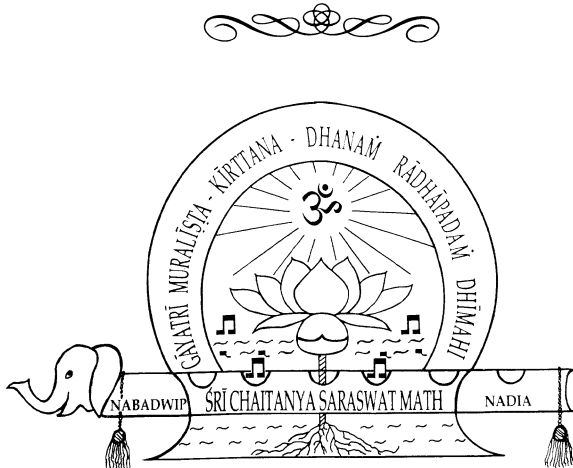
rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa mor jībane maraṇe
more rākhi' mārī' sukhe thākuka du jane

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are my life and soul in life and in death; whether They protect
me or take my life—may they always be happy.

(7)

bhaktivinoda, āna nāhi jāne,
poḍi' nija-sakhī-pāy
rādhikāra gaṇe thākiyā satata,
yugala-caraṇa cāy

Bhaktivinoda knows nothing else. Falling at the feet of a *sakhī*, Bhaktivinoda
stays among the intimate confidants of Śrī Rādhā. The lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā and
Kṛṣṇa is Bhaktivinoda's eternal desire.



Śrī Daśavatāra-stotra

(from Gīta-Govinda)

by Jayadeva Goswāmī

(1)

**pralaya-payodhi-jale dhṛtavān asi vedam
vihita-vahitra-caritram akhedam
keśava dhṛta-mīna-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a fish! All glories to You! You easily acted as a boat in the form of a giant fish just to give protection to the Vedas, which had become immersed in the turbulent sea of devastation.

(2)

**kṣītir iha vipulatare tiṣṭhati tava pṛṣṭhe
dharaṇi-dhāraṇa-kīṇa-cakra-gariṣṭhe
keśava dhṛta-kūrma-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a tortoise! All glories to You! In this incarnation as a divine tortoise the great Mandara Mountain rests upon Your gigantic back as a pivot for churning the ocean of milk. From holding up the huge mountain a large scarlike depression is put in Your back, which has become most glorious.

(3)

**vasati daśana-śikhare dharaṇi tava lagnā
śaśini kalaṅka-kaleva nimagnā
keśava dhṛta-śūkara-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a boar! All glories to You! The earth, which had become immersed in the Garbhodaka Ocean at the bottom of the universe, sits fixed upon the tip of Your tusk like a spot upon the moon.

(4)

**tava kara-kamala-vare nakham adbhuta-śṛṅgaṁ
dalita-hiraṇyakaśipu-tanu-bhṛṅgam
keśava dhṛta-narahari-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of half-man, half-lion! All glories to You! Just as one can easily crush a wasp between one's fingernails, so in the same way the body of the wasplike demon Hiraṇyakaśipu has been ripped apart by the wonderful pointed nails on Your beautiful lotus hands.

(5)

**chalayasi vikramaṇe balim adbhuta-vāmana
pada-nakha-nīra-janita-jana-pāvana
keśava dhṛta-vāmana-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a dwarf-brāhmaṇa! All glories to You! O wonderful dwarf, by Your massive steps You deceive King Bali, and by the Ganges water that has emanated from the nails of Your lotus feet, You deliver all living beings within this world.

(6)

**kṣatriya-rudhira-maye jagad-apagata-pāpaṁ
snapayasi payasi śamita-bhava-tāpam
keśava dhṛta-bhṛgupati-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of Bhṛgupati [Paraśurāma]! All glories to You! At Kurukṣetra You bathe the earth in the rivers of blood from the bodies of the demoniac kṣatriyas that You have slain. The sins of the world are washed away by You, and because of You people are relieved from the blazing fire of material existence.

(7)

**vitārasi dikṣu raṇe dik-pati-kamanīyaṁ
daśa-mukha-mauli-baliṁ ramaṇīyaṁ
keśava dhṛta-rāma-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of Rāmachandra! All glories to You! In the battle of Laṅkā You destroy the ten-headed demon Rāvaṇa and distribute his heads as a delightful offering to the presiding deities of the ten directions, headed by Indra. This action was long desired by all of them, who were much harassed by this monster.

(8)

**vahasi vapuṣi viśade vasanaṁ jaladābhaṁ
hala-hati-bhīti-milita yamunābhaṁ
keśava dhṛta-haladhara-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of Balarāma, the wielder of the plow! All glories to You! On Your brilliant white body You wear garments the colour of a fresh blue rain cloud. These garments are coloured like the beautiful dark hue of the River Yamunā, who feels great fear due to the striking of Your plowshare.

(9)

**nindasi yajña-vidher ahaha śruti-jātaṁ
sadaya-hṛdaya darśita-paśu-ghātaṁ
keśava dhṛta-buddha-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of Buddha! All glories to You! O Buddha of compassionate heart, you decry the slaughtering of poor animals performed according to the rules of Vedic sacrifice.

(10)

**mleccha nivaha-nidhane kalayasi karavālam
dhūmaketum iva kim api karālam
keśava dhṛta-kalki-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of Kalki! All glories to You! You appear like a comet and carry a terrifying sword for bringing about the annihilation of the wicked barbarian men at the end of the Kali-yuga.

(11)

**śrī-jayadeva-kaver idam uditam udāraṁ
śṛṇu sukha-daṁ śubha-daṁ bhava-sāram
keśava dhṛta-daśa-vidha-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed these ten different forms of incarnation! All glories to You! O readers, please hear this hymn of the poet Jayadeva, which is most excellent, an awarder of happiness, a bestower of auspiciousness, and is the best thing in this dark world.

(12)

**vedān uddharate jaganti vahate bhū-golam udbibhrate
daityaṁ dārayate balim chalayate kṣatra-kṣayaṁ kurvate
paulastyam jayate haram kalayate kārūṇyam ātanvate
mlecchān mūrchayate daśākṛti-kṛte kṛṣṇāya tubhyaṁ namaḥ**

O Lord Kṛṣṇa, I offer my obeisances unto You, who appear in the forms of these ten incarnations. In the form of Matsya You rescue the Vedas, and as Kūrma You bear the Mandara Mountain on Your back. As Varāha You lift the earth with Your tusk, and in the form of Narasiṁha You tear open the chest of the daitya Hiraṇyakaśipu. In the form of Vāmana You trick the daitya king Bali by asking him for only three steps of land, and then You take away the whole universe from him by expanding Your steps. As Paraśurāma You slay all of the wicked kṣatriyas, and as Rāmachandra You conquer the rākṣasa king Rāvaṇa. In the form of Balarāma You carry a plough with which You subdue the wicked and draw toward You the River Yamunā. As Lord Buddha You show compassion toward all the living beings suffering in this world, and at the end of the Kali-yuga You appear as Kalki to bewilder the mlecchas [degraded low-class men].

Śrī Vraja-dhāma-mahimāmṛta

The Nectarean Glories of Vraja-dhāma

(1)

**jaya rādhe, jaya kṛṣṇa, jaya vṛndāvan
śrī-govinda, gopīnātha, madana-mohan**

All glories to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and the divine forest of Vṛndāvana. All glories to the three presiding Deities of Vṛndāvana- Śrī Govinda, Gopīnātha, and Madana-Mohana.

(2)

**śyāma-kunḍa, rādhā-kunḍa, giri-govardhan
kāḷindī jamunā jaya, jaya mahāvan**

All glories to Śyāma-kunḍa, Rādhā-kunḍa, Govardhana Hill, and the Yamunā River (Kāḷindī). All glories to the great forest known as Mahāvana, where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma displayed all of Their childhood pastimes.

(3)

**keśī-ghāṭa, baṁśī-vaṭa, dwādaśa-kānan
jāhā saba līlā koilo śrī-nanda-nandan**

All glories to Keśī-ghāṭa, where Kṛṣṇa killed the Keśī demon. All glories to the Vamśī-vaṭa tree, where Kṛṣṇa attracted all the gopīs to come by playing His flute. Glories to all of the twelve forests of Vraja. At these places the son of Nanda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed all of His pastimes.

(4)

**śrī-nanda-jaśodā jaya, jaya gopa-gaṇ
śrīdāmādi jaya, jaya dhenu-vatsa-gaṇ**

All glories to Kṛṣṇa's divine father and mother, Nanda and Yaśodā. All glories to the cowherd boys, headed by Śrīdāmā, the older brother of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Anaṅga Mañjarī. All glories to the cows and calves of Vraja.

(5)

**jaya br̥ṣabhānu, jaya kīrtidā sundarī
jaya paurṇamāsī, jaya ābhira-nāgarī**

All glories to Rādhā's divine father and mother, Vṛṣabhānu and the beautiful Kīrtidā. All glories to Paurṇamāsī, the mother of Sāndīpani Muni, grandmother of Madhumaṅgala and Nāndīmukhī, and beloved disciple of Devarṣi Nārada. All glories to the young cowherd maidens of Vraja.

(6)

**jaya jaya gopīśwara vṛndāvana-mājha
jaya jaya kṛṣṇa-sakhā baṭu dwija-rāj**

All glories, all glories to Gopīśvara Śiva, who resides in Vṛndāvana in order to protect the holy dhāma. All glories, all glories to Kṛṣṇa's funny brāhmaṇa friend, Madhumaṅgala.

(7)

**jaya rāma-ghāṭa, jaya rohiṇi-nandan
jaya jaya vṛndāvana-bāsi jata jan**

All glories to Rāma-ghāṭa, where Lord Balarāma performed His rāsa dance. All glories to Lord Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī. All glories, all glories to all of the residents of Vṛndāvana.

(8)

**jaya dwija-patnī, jaya nāga-kanyā-gaṇ
bhaktite jāhārā pāilo govinda-caraṇ**

All glories to the wives of the proud Vedic brāhmaṇas. All glories to the wives of the Kāliya serpent. Through pure devotion they all obtained the lotus feet of Lord Govinda.

(9)

**śrī-rāsa-maṇḍala jaya, jaya rādhā-śyām
jaya jaya rāsa-līlā sarva-manoram**

All glories to the place where the rāsa dance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was performed. All glories to Rādhā and Śyāma. All glories, all glories to the divine rāsa dance, which is the most beautiful of all Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

(10)

**jaya jayojjwala-rasa sarva-rasa-sār
parakīyā-bhāve jāhā brajete pracār**

All glories, all glories to the mellow of conjugal love, which is the most excellent of all rasas and is propagated in Vraja by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the form of the divine parakīyā-bhāva [paramour love].

(11)

**śrī-jāhnavā-pāda-padma koriyā smaraṇ
dīna kṛṣṇa-dāsa kohe nāma-saṅkīrtan**

Remembering the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda's consort, Śrī Jāhnavā Devī, this very fallen and lowly servant of Kṛṣṇa sings the saṅkīrtana of the Holy Name.

Śrī Nṛsimha Praṇāma

**namas te narasimhāya
prahlādāhlāda-dāyine
hiraṇyakaśīpor vakṣaḥ-
śīlā-ṭaṅka-nakhālaye**

I offer my obeisances to Lord Narasimha, who gives joy to Prahlāda Mahārāja and whose nails are like chisels on the stonelike chest of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu.

**ito nṛsimhaḥ parato nṛsimho
yato yato yāmi tato nṛsimhaḥ
bahir nṛsimho hṛdaye nṛsimho
nṛsimham ādim śaraṇaṁ prapadye**

Lord Nṛsimha is here and also there. Wherever I go Lord Nṛsimha is there. He is in the heart and is outside as well. I surrender to Lord Nṛsimha, the origin of all things and the supreme refuge.

Prayer to Lord Nṛsimha

**tava kara-kamala-vare nakham adbhuta-śṛṅgaṁ
dalita-hiraṇyakaśipu-tanu-bhṛṅgaṁ
keśava dhr̥ta-narahari-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare**

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of half-man, half-lion! All glories to you! Just as one can easily crush a wasp between one's fingernails, so in the same way the body of the wasplike demon Hiraṇyakaśipu has been ripped apart by the wonderful pointed nails on Your beautiful lotus hands.

Rūpa-Kīrttan

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
in *Śrī Śrī Kalyāṇa Kalpataru*

janama saphala tā'ra, kṛṣṇa-daraśana yā'ra
bhāgye hoiyāche eka-bāra
bikaśiyā hrin-nayana kari' kṛṣṇa daraśana
chāḍe jīva citter bikāra [1]

vṛndavana-keli catur vanamālī
tribhaṅga-bhaṅgimārūpa vaṁśī-dhārī aparūpa
rasamaya nidhi, guṇa-śālī [2]

varṇa nava jaladhara śīre śikhi piccha vara
alakā tilaka śobhāpāya
paridhāne pīta-vāsa vadane madhūra hāsa
hena rūpa jagat mātāya [3]

indranīla jini kṛṣṇa-rūpakhāni
heriyā kadamba-mūle
mana ucāṭana na cale caraṇa
saṁsāra gelāma bhūle [4]

(sakhī he) sudhāmaya se rūpa-mādhurī
dekhile nayana, haya acetana,
jhare premamaya bāri [5]

kibā cūḍā śīre kibā vaṁśī kare
kibā se tribhaṅga-ṭhāma
caraṇa-kamale, amiyā uchale,
tāhāte nūpura dāma [6]

sadā āśā kari bhṛṅga-rūpa dhari
caraṇa kamale sthāna
anāyāse pāi kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāi
āra nā bhajiba āna [7]

Rūpa-Kīrttan

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
(Translation)

(1) His birth is successful whose good fortune dawns so as to have the vision of Lord Kṛṣṇa just once. When the *jīva* gives up all delusions of the mind, then only he will see the vision of Kṛṣṇa blooming within the eyes of his heart.

(2) One sees Kṛṣṇa there fully decorated with garlands of forest flowers as the most expert connoisseur of all the amorous love-sports in Vṛndāvana. His transcendental form bent in three places, playing wonderfully on His flute, He is the reservoir of all relishable mellows and is the abode of all virtuous qualities.

(3) By such a beautiful form He is maddening the entire universe. His complexion is like that of a fresh new rain cloud, His head is decorated with a big peacock feather, and the sandalwood *tilaka* on His forehead is most becoming. Wearing brilliant yellow-coloured garments, He stands with His face decorated by a wide, sweet smile.

(4) Beholding Him standing thusly at the base of a *kadamba* tree, I can see that Kṛṣṇa's beauty is conquering the luster of an entire mine of sapphires. Seeing this, my mind has become so restless that my feet will move no longer, and I've completely forgotten about my family and home life in this world.

(5) O sakhi! Oh dear girlfriend! Seeing that sweet form abounding in nectar, I have fallen unconscious as a fountain of tears gushing with ecstatic love cascades from my eyes.

(6) What a wonderful crown upon His head! What a wonderful flute He is holding in His hand! What a wonderfully beautiful form as He stands in His three-fold bending posture! The nectar of His lotus feet is overflowing with the tinkling sound coming from the clusters of ankle bells which are decorating them.

(7) Accepting the form of a honeybee, I always hope for a residence near His lotus feet. And I will get it very easily because I always sing the glories of this Kṛṣṇa, adoring no one else.

Guṇa-Kīrttan

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
in *Śrī Śrī Kalyāṇa Kalpataru*

(1)

śuna, he rasikajana kṛṣṇa guṇa agaṇana
 ananta kahite nāhi pāre
kṛṣṇa jagatera guru kṛṣṇa vāñcākalpataru
 nāvika se bhava-pārābāre

(2)

hṛdaya pīṛita jā'ra kṛṣṇa cikitsaka tā'ra
 bhava roga nāśite catura
kṛṣṇa bahirmukha jane premāmṛta vitarāṇe
 krame laya nija antaḥpura

(3)

karmma-bandha jñāna-bandha, āveśe mānava andha
 tā're kṛṣṇa karuṇā sāgara
pādapadma madhū diyā, andhabhāva ghucāiyā
 caraṇe karena anucara

(4)

vidhimārga rata jane svādhinatā ratna dāne
 rāgamārga karāna praveśa
rāga-baśavartti ha'ye pāraṁbhāva-bhāvāśraye
 labhe jīva kṛṣṇa-premāveśa

(5)

premāmṛta-vāri-dhāra sadā pānarata tā'ra
 kṛṣṇa tā'hādera bandhū pati
sei saba braja-jana sukalyāṇa-niketana
 dīnahīna vinodera gati

Guṇa-Kīrttan

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
(Translation)

(1) Listen to this, oh wisest relishers of mellows! The transcendental qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are innumerable; indeed it is not possible to describe such unlimited divine attributes. Kṛṣṇa is the spiritual master of the entire universe, He is like a wish-fulfilling desire-tree, and He is the helmsman of the boat on the ocean of material existence.

(2) Kṛṣṇa is just like a doctor for those whose hearts are ailing, as He is very expert at destroying the diseased condition of material existence. By distributing the nectar of ecstatic love to all the inimical souls, He gradually takes them back into His own confidential realm.

(3) Kṛṣṇa is an ocean of compassion for those who are bound up in fruitive reactions, as well as for those bound up in philosophical speculation, and for those blinded by other human perplexities. Giving the honey of His lotus feet, and thus relieving the darkness of such worldliness, He makes one an attendant of His own feet.

(4) Kṛṣṇa eventually bestows the jewel of independence unto those persons who are attached to the path of rules and regulations, thereby allowing them entrance into the path of spontaneous loving service. Becoming influenced by such spontaneity, remaining under the shelter of the mellows of unwedded love (*pāraṁbhāva*), the soul finally attains all the symptoms of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

(5) Kṛṣṇa is the dearest friend and husband of those who are always attached to drinking the fountain of ecstatic tears of love. Thus, the goal of this most fallen and lowly Bhaktivinoda is to be with all such residents of Vraja within the abode of Supreme auspiciousness.

Śrī Rādhāstaka (verse 1)

from *Gītāvalī* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

- (1) **rādhikā-caraṇa-padma, sokala śreyera sadma,
jatane je nāhi ārādhilo
rādhā-padmañkita dhāma, vṛndāvana jār nāma,
tāhā je nā āśroy korilo**

The lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā are the abode of all auspiciousness, the supreme goal of life. One who in his life has failed to take shelter of that holy *dhāma* named Vṛndāvan which is decorated by the lotus-like Rādhā,...

- (2) **rādhikā-bhāva-gambhīr, citta jebā mahādhīr
gaṇa-saṅga nā koilo jībane
kemone se śyāmānanda, rasa-sindhu-snānānanda,
labhibe bujhoho ek-mane**

...who in his life has failed to associate with the intimate of Śrī Rādhā who are deeply filled with Rādhā-*bhāva* and who are greatly intelligent — how will such a person bathe in the *rasa-sindhu*, the ocean of *rasa* which is Śyāma-Sundara? You must singlemindedly understand this point.

- (3) **rādhikā ujjwala-raser ācāryya
rādhā-mādhava-śudda-prem bicārya**

Śrī Rādhā is the *ācāryya* of *ujjwala-rasa*. *Śuddha-prema* for Rādhā-Mādhava is what is to be considered and discussed.

- (4) **je dharilo rādhā-pada parama jatane
se pailo kṛṣṇa-pada amūlya-ratane**

One who holds tightly to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā with great care will certainly attain the priceless jewels of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

- (5) **rādhā-pada binā kabhu kṛṣṇa nāhi mile**
rādhār dāsīr kṛṣṇa sarva-bede bole

Without the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā, one will never meet Kṛṣṇa. All the Vedas say that Kṛṣṇa belongs to the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā.

- (6) **choḍata dhana-jan, kalatra-suta-mita,**
choḍata karama geyān
rādhā-pada-paṅkaja, madhurata seban,
bhaktivinoda paramāṇ

Having given up wealth, followers, wife, children, family, and friends, *karma* and *jñāna*, one should become absorbed in the divine sweetness of service to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā as one of Her maidservants in *mādhura-rasa*. This is Bhaktivinoda's solemn declaration.

Śrī Rādhāṣṭaka (verse 8)

from *Gītāvalī* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

- (1) **rādhā-bhajane jadi mati nāhi bhelā**
kṛṣṇa-bhajana raba akārana gelā

If one does not develop within his heart the desire for *Rādhā-bhājan*, then his *Kṛṣṇa-bhajan* goes for nothing.

- (2) **ātapa-rohita sūray nāhi jāni**
rādhā-birahita mādhab nāhi māni

Without sunlight the sun cannot be seen, similarly I don't pay any mind to Kṛṣṇa without Rādhā.

- (3) **kevala mādhav pūjaye so ajñāni**
rādhā anādara koro-i abhimāni

One who worships Kṛṣṇa alone is ignorant. Who does not adore Śrī Rādhā is an egotist.

- (4) **kabāñhi nāhi korobi tāñkor saṅga
citte icchasi jadi braja-rasa-raṅga**

Never keep company with those who envy Rādhā if within your heart you at all wish for the loving pastimes of Vraja.

- (5) **rādhikā-dāsī jadi hoy abhimān
śīghra-i mila-i taba golula kān**

Those who consider themselves maidservants of Śrī Rādhā will quickly meet Gokul-Kṛṣṇa.

- (6) **brahmā, śiva, nārad, śruti, nārāyaṇī
rādhikā-pada-raja pūjaye māni'**

Brahmā, Śiva, Nārada, the Śrutis, and Nārāyaṇī (Lakṣmī) worship with regard the holy feet of Śrī Rādhā.

- (7) **umā, ramā, satyā, śācī, candrā, rukmiṇī
rādhā-avatār sabe, —āmnāya-bāṇī**

Umā, Ramā, Satyā, Śācī, Candravālī, and Rukminī are all Rādhā-“*avatāras*” — this is the self-evident verdict of the Vedas.

- (8) **heno rādhā-paricarjā jāñkara dhan
bhaktivinoda tāra māgaye caraṇ**

Bhaktivinoda, whose only wealth is the service of Śrī Rādhā, humbly prays to be a serving maid at Her lotus feet.

Rādhākunḍataṭa-Kuñjakuṭīra

from *Śaraṇāgati* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

- (1) **rādhākunḍataṭa-kuñjakuṭīra
govarddhanaparvvata yāmunatīra**

The grove-dwelling on the banks of Rādhakunḍa,
Govardhana mountain, the banks of river Yamunā;

- (2) **kusumasarovara, mānasagaṅgā**
kalindanandini vipula-taraṅgā
Kusuma-soravara lake, Mānasa-gaṅgā river,
The rolling waves of Yamunā, daughter of the sun;
- (3) **vaṁśīvaṭa, gokula, dhīrasamīra**
vr̥ndāvana-taru latikā-vānīra
Place of the Rāsa dance, and Gokula, the gentle breezes,
The trees, vines, and Vetasa palms of Vraja;
- (4) **khaga-mṛgakula, malaya-bātāsa**
mayura, bhramara, muralī-vilāsa
The birds and animals, the sweet air of spring,
The peacocks, bumblebees, the flute's sweet song;
- (5) **veṇu, śṛṅga, padacihna, meghamālā**
vasanta, śaśāṅka, śaṅkha karatālā
Flute, horn, His footsteps, range of clouds in the sky,
Season of spring, the moon, the conch, hand-cymbals;
- (6) **yugala vilāse anukūla jāni**
līlāvilāsa-uddīpaka māni
I know all these things are nourishing
the pastimes of the Divine Couple,
I can feel they arouse the holy pastimes of the Lord;
- (7) **esaba choḍata kāhā nāhi yāu**
esaba choḍata parāṇa hārāu
I can never leave all these things so dear to me,
Without them I know I'll surely die;
- (8) **bhaktivinoda kahe, śuna kāna**
tuyā uddīpaka hāmārā parāṇa
Hear me, O Kān, says Śrī Bhaktivinoda:
You are the only light of my life.
-

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THE DAILY PROGRAMME **at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp**

The 1st line of each *bhajan* is given along with its corresponding page in the *Kīrttan Guide*.

DAILY MORNING PROGRAMME

Begins with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *ārati* at his *Samādhi Mandir* (*Viraha-Milan Mandir* —The Temple of Union in Separation):

jaya 'guru-mahārāja' yati rājeśvara 17

Followed by *ārati* of Śrī-Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundarjīu (the Deities of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh):

kali-kukkura-kadana yadi cāo he 19

yaśomatī-nandana braja-baro nāgara 20

jay śacīnandana sura-muni-vandana 21

Then *parikramā* of both Temples:

gurudeva! kṛpā-bindu diyā 22

udilo aruṇa pūraba-bhāge 23

Then offering obeisances to Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī:

vrndāyai tulasī-devyai... v

Immediately followed by obeisances to the Vaiṣṇavas:

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas' ca... iii

The devotees offer obeisances to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj at his *Samādhi Mandir*; the Deities; Śrīmatī Gaṅgadevī and to Śrī Āchāryyadeva Śrīla Govinda Dev-Goswāmī. The mantra for paying obeisances to the Holy River Gaṅgadevī is:

sadya pātaka saṁhantri sadya duḥka vināśinī
sukhadā bhaktidā gaṅgā gaṅgeva paramāgati

Then the **MORNING BHAJANS**, beginning with:

Recitation of the *Vandana* Prayers i to v

Followed by the songs:

jaya jaya gurudever ārati ujjvala ix

saṁsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka 37

śrī-kṛṣṇa-chaitanya-prabhu jīve dayā kari' 39

bhaja re bhaja re āmār mana ati manda 40

After the *bhajans* is a reading from *Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata* in Bengali.

Closing with the song:

hari haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ 43

Daily after morning *Prasādam* is a class in English (or Spanish, etc.) held on Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Samādhi Mandir*.

THE MIDDAY PROGRAMME commences with the offering of *bhoga* while singing:

bhaja bhakata-vatsala śrī-gaurahari 26

Followed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *ārati* at his *Samādhi Mandir*:

jaya 'guru-mahārāja' yati rājeśvara 17

Then *ārati* of the Deities:

yaśomatī-nandana braja-baro nāgara 20

jay śacīnandana sura-muni-vandana 21

Before honouring (taking) *Prasādam* the devotees chant (except on *Ekādaśī* days and other days when no grains are taken):

mahāprasāde govinde 30

śarīra abidyā-jal 30

In the afternoon is a reading from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Bengali.

THE EVENING PROGRAMME begins with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *ārati* at his *Samādhi Mandir*:

jaya 'guru-mahārāja' yati rājeśvara 17

Then *Gaura-ārati* of the Deities:

(kiba) jaya jaya gourācānder ārotiko śobhā 31

Then (Formerly this was only sung on Fridays, the day Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura appeared):

jayare jayare jaya gaura-saraswatī 33

Followed by *parikramā* of the both Temples:

gurudeva! kṛpā-bindu diyā 22

and sometimes:

kabe śrī caitanya more-koriben doyā 35

Daily Programme

Obeisances to Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī:

vrndayai tulasī-devyai...

v

and her *parikramā*:

namo namaḥ tulasī mahārāṇī

36

After again offering obeisances to Tulasī Devī, the devotees offer their obeisances to the *Vaiṣṇavas*:

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas' ca...

iii

Again the devotees offer obeisances to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj at his Samādhi Mandir; the Deities; Śrīmatī Gaṅgadevī and to Śrī Āchāryyadeva Śrīla Govinda Dev-Goswāmī.

Before the **EVENING BHAJANS**:

Vandana Prayers are recited:

pages i to v

Then the *bhajans*:

jaya jaya gurudever ārati ujjala

ix

śrī guru caraṇa-padma

45

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu doyā koro more

47

(ohe) vaiṣṇava ṭhākura

49

Followed by a selection of songs, most of which are included in the *Kīrttan Guide*.

Near the end of the evening *bhajans* is sung:

sujanārvvuda-rādhita-pāda-yugam

91

Which is always followed by 10 verses from *Śrī Śrī Prema Dhāma Deva Stotram* beginning with verse 1 each Saturday. This is published as a separate book.

Followed by a reading from *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* in Bengali.

The evening programme ends with the *bhajan*:

hari haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ

43

Please see overleaf for guide to additional *bhajans* chanted on special occasions...

Over...

Please note:

DURING THE MONTH OF KĀRTIKA additional *bhajans* are chanted.

The following are **added to the morning bhajans:**

<i>nadiyā-nagare nitāi nece nece gāy re</i>	}	98
<i>jagannātha-suta mahāprabhu viśvambhara</i>		
<i>nagare nagare gorā gāy</i>	}	103
<i>yaśomatī-stanya-pāyī śrī-nanda nandana</i>		
<i>namāmiśvaram sac-cid-ānanda rūpam</i>		95
<i>rādhe jaya jaya mādhaba-dayite</i>		82

And added to the evening bhajans:

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's <i>Śikṣāṣṭakam</i> beginning with:	
<i>pīta-baraṇa kali-pāvana gorā</i>	109
['Song 1' to 'Song 8(b)']	pages 109 to 125]

ON THE APPEARANCE DAY of a senior *Vaiṣṇava* **the following song is also chanted** during the morning and/or evening seated *bhajans*:

<i>kṛṣṇa hoite catur-mukha...</i>	83

ON THE DISAPPEARANCE DAY of a senior *Vaiṣṇava* **the following song is also chanted** during the morning and evening seated *bhajans*:

<i>ei-bāro koruṇā koro vaiṣṇava-gosāṇi</i>	72
and for Mahāprabhu's <i>pārṣada</i> devotees:	
<i>ye ānilo prema-dhana koruṇā pracura</i>	42

And, because so many ask:

TILAK is applied in the following order while saying:

Forehead	—	<i>om keśavāya namaḥ</i>
Belly	—	<i>om nārāyaṇāya namaḥ</i>
Chest	—	<i>om mādhabāya namaḥ</i>
Throat	—	<i>om govindāya namaḥ</i>
Right side	—	<i>om viṣṇave namaḥ</i>
Right arm	—	<i>om madhusūdanāya namaḥ</i>
Right shoulder	—	<i>om trivikramāya namaḥ</i>
Left side	—	<i>om vāmanāya namaḥ</i>
Left arm	—	<i>om śrīdharāya namaḥ</i>
Left shoulder	—	<i>om hrīkeśāya namaḥ</i>
Upper back	—	<i>om padmanābhāya namaḥ</i>
Lower back	—	<i>om dāmodarāya namaḥ</i>
Śikhā	—	<i>om vāsudevāya namaḥ</i>

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga

Śrī Śrī Premadhāma-deva-stotram

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka
Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
Nabadwīp

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The Sevāite-President-Āchārya
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Introduction

We present this edition of the *Premadhāma-deva-stotram* by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj as an offering to the devotees throughout the world. It is especially for those who follow His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and look to these divine luminaries for guidance in their progressive development and practicing life.

I was drawn to the lotus feet of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj for the celebration of his divine appearance in December 2003. For this reason, I am here at our Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh in Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām. Many devotees find in Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's presence and *Hari-kathā* a continual flow of inspiration and realization which gives them a vision of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's ideals of beauty, love, charm, mercy, and ecstasy. Many of us would feel an intolerable void without his association and service in his mission.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Premadhāma-deva-stotram* is a substantial summary in seventy verses of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes and precepts. Given by a *paramahansa* Vaishnava, it is a beautiful rendering in Sanskrit poetry of Mahāprabhu's *līlā*, filled with the *siddhānta* and *rasa* of Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛita.

All aspiring and realized devotees will find its recital to be a vital part of their daily activities. As Śrīla Guru Mahārāj states in these prayers themselves: whoever faithfully recites this composition of seventy prayers known as the *Premadhāma-deva-stotram* will be granted the opportunity to serve that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, who is none other than Śyāmasundara Himself covered by the heart and halo (*bhāva* and *kānti*) of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The *Premadhāma-deva-stotram* has been greatly appreciated by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Godbrothers, disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, by scholars, poets, and by Gauḍīya Vaishnavas both in India and throughout the world.

The present translation was originally prepared by Śrīpad Bhakti Vijñāna Bhārati Mahārāj. Many have expressed the need for the republication of the *Premadhāma-deva-stotram*. Generally in our *ashrams*, it is sung daily, beginning with verses one through ten on Saturday (the appearance day of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj). The

devotees sing consecutively the next ten verses every night, until Friday, when verses sixty-one to the end are sung. I feel that this existing translation which I have edited to my best capacity, will help fill their need. Admittedly I am not so conversant in Sanskrit or Bengali, but with some understanding of the text and with the help of others I have tried to present a faithful rendition of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's composition. I hope that it will be accepted and appreciated by our devotional community.

Swāmī Bhakti Pāvan Janārdan
Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām
Ekādaśī, December 19, 2003

Śrī Śrī Premadhāma-deva-stotram

by

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Verse 1

deva-siddha-mukta-yukta-bhakta-vṛnda-vanditaṁ
pāpa-tāpa-dāva-dāha-dagdha duḥkha-khaṇḍitaṁ
kṛṣṇa-nāma-sīdhu-dhāma-dhanya-dāna-sāgarāṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

The universal gods, perfected beings, salvationists, mystic yogis, and exalted servitors of the Absolute Truth, Śrī Krishna, constantly chanted the glories of Śrī Gaurasundara.

In regard to Lord Chaitanya's pastimes, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has mentioned the following verse in his *Śrī Chaitanyāṣṭakaḥ*:

sadopāsyah śrīmān dhr̥ta-manuja-kāyair̥ praṇayitām
vahadbhir̥ gīr-vāṇair̥ giriśa-parameṣṭhi-prabhṛtibhiḥ

“The gods, headed by Lord Shiva and Lord Brahmā, accepted the garb of ordinary men in the pastimes of Śrī Chaitanyadeva in order to eternally worship Him with heartfelt affection.” Śrī Chaitanyadeva is the embodiment of that vast nectarine ocean found in Lord Krishna's Holy Name, which is none other than Śrī Gaurāṅga's own pure Name. Śrī Chaitanyadeva is compared to that grand milk ocean which, after being churned, produced nectar. The nectar Mahāprabhu distributes is Lord Krishna's Holy Names, which extinguish all the miseries of material existence, such as anxieties arising from sinful activities performed in direct opposition to the Lord, and the three-fold sufferings which fuel the grand forest fire that scorches those in search of sense gratification, salvation, and mystic yoga perfections. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 2

**svaṇṇa-koṭi-darpaṇābha-deha-varṇa-gauravaṁ
padma-pārijāta-gandha-vanditāṅga-saurabham
koṭi-kāma-mūrcchitāṅghri-rūpa-rāsa-raṅgaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The charming aura of Śrī Gaurasundara's divine figure resembles the reflection of millions of radiant golden mirrors. Furthermore, the personified sweet fragrance of the earthly and heavenly lotus flowers humbly offer their prayers before the aromatic scent which permeates the air from the beautiful form of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Millions and millions of Cupids fall unconscious before the feet of Śrī Chaitanyadeva's elegant figure. They are severely shocked because their sense of universal fame arising from their beautiful splendor is checked. While performing His joyful pastimes of dancing, the divine form of Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva playfully sways to and fro. The flowing pulsations of the Lord's limbs move in rhythm with the various charming moods of devotional sentiments, *bhāva*, overwhelming His graceful figure. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 3

**prema-nāma-dāna-janya-pañca-tattvakātmakaṁ
sāṅga-divya-pārṣadāstra-vaibhavāvatārakam
śyāma-gaura-nāma-gāna-nṛtya-matta-nāgaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

By manifesting His five-fold aspect of divinity, *Pañcha-tattva*, Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva was able to widely distribute the sweet Names of Lord Krishna, which is the means to the ultimate attainment in

human life: unalloyed love for the Absolute Truth, Śrī Krishna, the fifth end. (The ‘fifth end’ refers to that which is beyond the attainment of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation.) The Lord personally incarnated on the Earth planet with His expansions such as Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Āchārya, His intimate associates such as Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and His other general associates such as Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. When the Lord appears, He comes armed with the weapon of the Holy Name of Krishna. While dancing in the deepest ecstasies of pure love, Lord Gaurāṅgadeva, although none other than Śyāmasundara, chanted His own Names just like an ordinary citizen in the Nadiyā district. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 4

**śānti-puryadhīśa-kaly-adharmma-duḥkha-duḥsaham
jīva-duḥkha-hāna-bhakta-saukhyadāna-vigraham
kaly-agmaugha-nāśa-kṛṣṇa-nāma-sīdhu-saṅcaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Appearing in his Deity form, Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva removed the miserable condition of the living entities and increased the devotional pleasure of His devotees. The Lord incarnated because He was unable to tolerate the griefstricken condition of Śrī Advaita Āchārya, the master of that charming village of Śāntipura. Śrī Advaita Āchārya was lamenting about this era being overtaken by the ugly influence of irreligious practices. Thus, in order to arrest the immoral activities in *Kali-yuga*, the Lord profusely distributed the sweet nectar of Lord Krishna’s Holy Names. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 5

**dvīpa-navya-gāṅga-baṅga-janma-karma-darśitaṁ
śrīnivāsa-vāsa-dhanya-nāma-rāsa-harṣitaṁ
śrī-haripriyeśa-pūjyadhī-śacī-purandaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva appeared in West Bengal in the sacred place known as Navadvīpa on the banks of the Ganges River. Revealing His household pastimes in the holy abode of Navadvīpa, Śrī Gaura benedicted the beautiful courtyard surrounding Śrīnivāsa Paṇḍita's residence, and pleased His dearest associates when He manifested His nocturnal pastimes of congregational chanting in the deepest mellows of pure dedication. The controlling life-force of Lakṣmīpriyā-devī and Viṣṇupriyā-devī was Śrī Gaurasundara, whose intelligence was couched in deep parental adoration for His mother and father, Śachīdevī and Jagannātha Miśra. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 6

**śrī-śacī-dulāla-bālya-bāla-saṅga-cañcalaṁ
ākumāra-sarvva-śāstra-dakṣa-tarka-maṅgalam
chāṭtra-saṅga-raṅga-digjigīṣu-darpa-saṁharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, the son of Śachīdevī, always performed mischievous childhood pastimes in the association of the naughtiest boys. (Nimāi was like baby Krishna, the son of Mother Yaśodā.) Nimāi's pastimes, although naughty, were not only pleasing to Him, but also gladdened the hearts of His devotees.

During His adolescent years, the Lord acquired unrivaled mastery over the conclusions of the ancient Scriptures. With unexcelled logic at His command, Lord Viśvambhara artfully established the auspicious doctrine of *śuddha-bhakti*, unalloyed dedication unto the

Sweet Absolute Truth, Lord Krishna, thereby defeating the doctrine of dry logic studied at that period by the proud, expert logicians who were all nearly atheistic scholars. Later, in the course of His adolescent pastimes, the Lord vanquished the pride of the most famous Sanskrit scholar of all times, the Digvijayī Paṇḍita, in the company of His grammar students, on the banks of the Ganges River. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 7

**varjya-pātra-sārameya-sarpa-saṅga-khelanaṁ
skandha-vāhi-caura-tīrtha-vipra-citra-līlanam
kṛṣṇa-nāma-mātra-bālyā-kopa-śānti-saukaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

During His childhood pastimes, Nimāi sat amongst discarded clay pots which had been used to cook preparations for Lord Vishnu. He would also play with unclean animals such as puppies, and on one occasion He laid upon a cobra, treating it as if it were Ananta Śeṣa. Once, Nimāi was stolen away by two thieves who were intent on robbing the ornaments decorating His charming figure. Placing Nimāi on their shoulders, they enticed the small boy to come with them and then quickly fled away with Him. However, due to the Lord's Yogamāyā potency, they suddenly found they had arrived at Nimāi's house.

Later, a well-known mendicant brahman visited the residence of Jagannātha Miśra. When the brahman began to offer some preparations he had cooked to Lord Gopāla, Nimāi spoiled the offering by eating the foodstuffs while the mendicant was offering them in meditation. After having done this to the brahman three times, the Lord revealed His eight-armed form to him.

Whenever the child Nimāi angrily cried, He could only be pacified by the chanting of Lord Krishna's Holy Names. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 8

snāna-gāṅga-vāri-bāla-saṅga-raṅga-khelanam
bālikādi-pārihāsyā-bhaṅgi-bālyā-līlanam
kūṭa-tarka-chāṭtra-śikṣakādi-vāda-tatparam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

In His childhood pastimes Nimāi would sportively play in the waters of the Ganges River in different ways with His schoolmates. Sometimes Nimāi, with various laughing gestures, would also tease the young girls who came to swim in the Ganges. This same small boy, however, often presented shrewd arguments and counter-arguments before His classmates and professors. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 9

śrī nimāi-pañḍiteti-nāma-deśa-vanditam
navya-tarka-dakṣa-lakṣa-dambhi-dambha-khaṇḍitam
sthāpitārtha-khaṇḍa-khaṇḍa-khaṇḍitārtha-sambharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

During the Lord's adolescent pastimes, He became known and respected far and wide as the greatest scholar, Nimāi Pañḍita. The Lord would dismantle the false pride of millions of conceited scholarly logicians. Rendering them speechless by canceling and reversing their forestated conclusions, the Lord would then rebuke His own opinion and rejustify their foregone logic. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 10

śloka-gāṅga-vandanārtha-digjigīṣu-bhāṣitam
vyatyalaṅkṛtādi-doṣa-tarkitārtha-dūṣitam
dhvasta-yukti-ruddha-buddhi-datta-dhīmadādaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

After that grand Sanskrit scholar Keśava Kāśmīrī had intellectually conquered all ten directions, he came before Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu on the banks of the Ganges River. At the Lord's request, he spontaneously composed and recited many wonderful prayers in glorification of the sacred Ganges. Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva then amazed the scholar when He recollected and pointed out several rhetorical errors in his compositions. Keśava Kāśmīrī skillfully presented many logical arguments in his own favor, but was ultimately defeated. Finally, when Keśava Kāśmīrī's incompetence was exposed and his intelligence was totally perplexed, Lord Gaurāṅga compassionately respected him in a manner befitting a great scholar by preventing His students who were present from laughing at the *paṇḍita*. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 11

**sūtra-vṛtti-ṭippanīṣṭa-sūkṣma-vācanādbhutaṁ
dhātu-mātra-kṛṣṇa-śakti-sarvva-viśva-sambhṛtam
ruddha-buddhi-paṇḍitaugha-nānya-yukti-nirddharaṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Elaborately explaining the aphorisms taught in Sanskrit grammar and the science of logic, Śrī Gaurasundara would draw out their apparent and subtle meanings. The Lord's beautiful style of deriving the inner significance of the *sūtras* completely amazed all the learned circles. The Lord demonstrated that the seven thousand verbal root sounds contained in Sanskrit grammar reach the zenith of their expression when realized as potencies existing within the Krishna conception of reality. As the learned scholars sat in utter amazement, their powerful intellects were paralyzed by Lord Gaurāṅga's intriguing explanation. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 12

**kṛṣṇa-dr̥ṣṭi-pāta-hetu-śabdakārtha-yojanaṁ
sphoṭa-vāda-śṛṅkhalaika-bhitti-kṛṣṇa-vikṣaṇam
sthūla-sūkṣma-mūla-lakṣya-kṛṣṇa-saukhya-sambharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Gaurasundara proved that the Supreme Lord's sweet will and well-wishing glance is the background cause governing each sound's concomitant meaning. The Lord's sanction is the fundamental element deciding the orderly arrangement and harmony shared between sound and its meaning, and not the mundane endeavors of the prominent grammarians headed by the sages like Pāṇini, who try to affix sounds with word meanings. This is because the purpose of everything animate or inanimate in existence is ultimately to please the Supreme Lord by enhancing His charming pastimes. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 13

**prema-raṅga-pāṭha-bhaṅga-chāṭtra-kāku-kātaram
chāṭtra-saṅga-hasta-tāla-kīrttanādya-saṅcaram
kṛṣṇa-nāma-sīdhu-sindhu-magna-dik-carācaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The Lord began to teach Sanskrit to His students again after returning from Gayā. However, when emotions arising from pure love overwhelmed the Lord, He was unable to continue teaching them. Nīmāi's personal students, bereft of the opportunity to learn from the Lord, condemned themselves as unfortunate. Lamenting, they humbly praised the unparalleled genius of the Lord's teachings. Although the Lord experienced grief due to sympathetic feelings towards His students, He acted as their ever well-wisher when He inaugurated the happy glorification of Lord Krishna by chanting "*haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa*" as they clapped in unison. In the wake of the congregational chanting, the moving and nonmoving living entities in all ten directions were immersed in the surging waves of that grand ocean of sweet devotional mellows. I offer my obeisances to

that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 14

**āryya-dharmma-pāla-labdha-dīkṣa-kṛṣṇa-kīrttanam
lakṣa-lakṣa-bhakta-gīta-vādyā-divya-narttanam
dharmma-karmma-nāśa-dasyu-duṣṭa-duṣkṛtoddharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Gaurasundara respected the Vedic principles and inaugurated the congregational chanting of the Lord's Holy Names after taking full shelter of His spiritual master. The Lord would continuously chant and distribute Lord Krishna's Holy Names, dancing in the most joyful manner in the association of thousands of devotees. In this way He delivered the greatest of demons such as Jagāi and Madhāi, and other demoniac groups who destroy religious principles and the rules governing the social and spiritual orders of society. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 15

**mleccha-rāja-nāma-bādha-bhakta-bhīti-bhañjanam
lakṣa-lakṣa-dīpa-naiśa-koṭi-kaṇṭha-kīrttanam
śrī-mṛdaṅga-tāla-vādyā-nṛtya-kāji-nistaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Once, a great Mohammedan city magistrate named Chāṇḍ Kāzī obstructed the devotees from performing congregational chanting of the Lord's Holy Names. In retaliation, Lord Chaitanyadeva dispelled the devotees' fear by leading a nocturnal chanting procession ornamented with thousands of burning torches and lamps. Millions of persons simultaneously joined in the ecstatic wave created by Lord Gaurasundara's dancing to the sweet melody of the *mṛdaṅga* drums and cymbals, as musical instruments resounded in every direction. When the powerful Mohammedan witnessed this, his false sense of covetousness was cleansed, and the Lord embraced him as His very own. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 16

**lakṣa-locanāśru-varṣa-harṣa-keśa-karttanaṁ
koṭi-kaṇṭha-kṛṣṇa-kīrttanāḍhya-daṇḍa-dhāraṇam
nyāsi-veśa-sarvva-deśa-hā-hutāśa-kātaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

While showers of tears fell from the eyes of millions, He delighted in having His beautiful hair shaved away. Millions of voices sang the glories of Lord Krishna as Śrī Krishna Chaitanya accepted the staff of renunciation. From that time, wherever He went, whoever saw Him in the garment of a *sannyāsī* cried in grief. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 17

**śrī-yatīsa-bhakta-veśa-rāḍhadeśa-cāraṇam
kṛṣṇa-caitanyākhyā-kṛṣṇa-nāma-jīva-tāraṇam
bhāva-vibhramātma-matta-dhāvamāna-bhū-dharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Newly dressed as a renunciate, the supreme controller of the *sannyāsīs*, Śrī Krishna Chaitanya, wandered all over the province of West Bengal purifying the land with the touch of His lotus feet. After accepting the new name “Śrī Krishna Chaitanya,” the Lord rescued the living entities by offering them Krishna’s Holy Names. Intoxicated with ecstatic emotions erupting from the deepest planes of dedication’s mellows, He appeared like a golden mountain as He continuously ran here and there in every direction. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 18

**śrī-gaḍādharaḍi-nityānanda-saṅga-varddhanam
advayākhyā-bhakta-mukhya-vāñchitārtha-sāadhanam
kṣetra-vāsa-sābhilāṣa-māṭṛ-toṣa-tatparam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Bestowing further prosperity to all, the association of Śrī Chaitanya enhanced those grand personalities like Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Lord Nityānanda, and others. When Lord Chaitanya incarnated on the Earth planet, He fulfilled the desires of the principal *mahābhagavat* devotee Śrī Advaita Āchārya. Also, the Supreme Lord agreed to reside in Jagannātha Purī just to please His mother Śachīdevī. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 19

**nyāsi-rāja-nīla-śaila-vāsa-sārvvabhaumapaṁ
dākṣiṇātya-tīrtha-jāta-bhakta-kalpa-pādapam
rāma-megha-rāga-bhakti-vṛṣṭi-śakti-saṁcaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Arriving in the sacred place of pilgrimage, Śrī Nīlāchala, the valiant king of the renounced order, Śrī Chaitanyadeva, saved the most powerful scholar recognized throughout the length and breadth of India. Śrī Vāsudeva Sārvvabhauma, the most dynamic intellectual of all time in the vast Vedantic doctrine and school of logistics, was rescued by the Lord from the impersonal well of Śaṅkarāchārya's transformation theory, *vivartavād*. Later, the Lord travelled to southern India, where He encountered the followers of various philosophical doctrines. Wherever He travelled, the aspirations of the devotees met their highest fulfillment, as the Lord was like a desire tree. On the banks of the Godāvarī River, the Lord met that deep raincloud of pure dedication Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, and instructed him to shower upon others the sweet raindrops of *rasa* which exist in the land of spontaneous devotion, Vraja. Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya also answered the questions the merciful Lord posed with the essence of all instruction. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 20

**prema-dhāma-divya-dīrgha-deha-deva-nanditaṁ
hema-kañja-puñja-nindi-kānti-candra-vanditaṁ
nāma-gāna-nṛtya-navya-divya-bhāva-mandiraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The tall divine figure of Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva enhances the joy of the universal gods as He is the charming embodiment of pure love. The radiant aura emanating from His beautiful form insults millions of golden lotuses while winning the respect of that effulgent personality Chandradeva. Śrī Gaurāṅga is the background stage of all spiritual pastimes as exhibited in the ever-fresh dynamic moods of *sattvika-bhāva* as seen in His joyful dancing when congregationally chanting Lord Krishna's Holy Names. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 21

**dhvasta-sārvvabhauma-vāda-navya-tarka-śāṅkaraṁ
dhvasta-tad-vivartta-vāda-dānavīya-ḍambaram
darśitārtha-sarvva-śāstra-kṛṣṇa-bhakti-mandiraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The grand intellectual Sārvvabhauma tried his level best to establish the impersonal doctrine of Śāṅkarāchārya, which is in direct opposition to the conclusions of pure dedication. Sārvvabhauma used the most deceitful means in the art of word jugglery. He tried to pervert the sense of words, he idly heckled the arguments or assertions of the Lord without attempting to prove the opposite side, and he

tried to find the weak points in the Lord's arguments. However, Śrī Chaitanya, whose charming figure was cloaked in the fresh garments of a radiant renunciate, presented consistent arguments in conjunction with the Vedic literatures, and easily checked and destroyed the scholar's atheistic interpretations. The Lord loudly proclaimed that the doctrine of Śaṅkarāchārya known as *vivartavād* is practiced by followers in the ascending method of understanding who are interested in their external self-adoration. Such worship is the product of a demoniac intellect and backed by atheistic perseverance. All importance given to the nonmanifest aspect of material nature was refuted when Lord Gaurasundara established that spiritual variegatedness in the Supreme Lord's personality is the highest reality taught in the Vedic literature.

This was shown in the Lord's explanation of the *Upanisads*, where it is stated:

**apāṇipādo javano grahitā
paśyatyacakṣuḥ sa śṛṇotyakarnaḥ**

"The Lord has no hands or legs, yet He walks and touches. The Lord has no eyes or ears, yet He sees and hears."

Lord Gaurasundara also explained the *ātmarāma* verse which is found in the grandest of all famous literature, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He clearly showed that the Vedas, Purāṇas, Vedānta, and all other existing Scriptures, which are like a magnificent temple where the Supreme Lord's wonderful pastimes are eternally resounded, support the conclusion that everything in this world is a reflection of the eternal variegatedness found in the spiritual realm. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 22

**kr̥ṣṇa-kr̥ṣṇa-kr̥ṣṇa-kr̥ṣṇa-kr̥ṣṇa-nāma-kīrttanam
rāma-rāma-gāna-ramya-divya chanda-narttanam
yatra-tatra-kr̥ṣṇa-nāma-dāna-loka-nistaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Later, the Supreme Lord travelled to the holy places of pilgrimage in South India with the clever intention of delivering the fallen souls. Appearing as a beautiful young renunciate, He distributed the sweet Names of the Lord, singing: “*Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna he,*” as He strolled down the different pathways, entered temples, and visited homesteads during the sacred pilgrimage. Infused with an inconceivable type of divine inspiration, the Lord freely chanted “*Rāma Rāma*” and joyfully danced with the most charming gestures. Irrespective of time or personal qualification, the assembled bystanders were delivered by the Lord, who inspired them to chant Krishna’s Holy Names. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 23

**godavaryya-vāma-tīra-rāmānanda-saṁvadam
jñāna-karma-mukta-marmma-rāga-bhakti-sampadam
pāraṁkīya-kānta-kr̥ṣṇa-bhāva-sevanākaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The famous conversation of Lord Gaurasundara with Rāmānanda Rāya on the banks of the Godāvarī River is known as the *Rāmānanda-saṁvād* in the *Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta*. In those discussions, the highest form of dedication is pure love of God in a heart free from fruitive aspirations and scriptural calculation. Also, Lord Krishna, who appeared as the son of Nanda Mahārāja, was ascertained as the sole recipient of the sweetness relished in the mellows of *pāraṁkīya-rasa*. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 24

**dāśya-sakhya-vātsya-kānta-sevanottarottaram
śreṣṭha-pārakīya-radhikāṅghri-bhakti-sundaram
śrī-vraja-sva-siddha-divya-kāma-kṛṣṇa-tatparam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Chaitanya showed that there are various relationships which exist in connection with Lord Krishna. Those relationships begin with servitude, and progress to friendship and parental love, extending to a conjugal relationship. But the epitome of charm and beauty is reserved for the son of Nanda Mahārāja in the forest groves of Vṛndāvana. That is service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in conjugal love, and is known as *pārakīya*. Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva embodied this sort of divine aspiration. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 25

**śānta-mukta-bhṛtya-trpta-mitra-matta-darśitam
snigdha-mugdha-śiṣṭa-miṣṭa-suṣṭha-kunṭha-harṣitam
tantra-mukta-vāmya-rāga-sarvva-sevanottaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Gaurāṅgadeva explained that a devotee in passive adoration enjoys the happiness of being free from all material miseries, and a devotee in servitude relishes the pleasure of contentment. A devotee in friendship becomes overwhelmed with happiness arising from close affection, whereas a devotee in the parental mood is free from any trace of calculation, experiencing deepened affection in ecstatic joy. Lord Chaitanya further revealed that the devotee in conjugal love known as *svakīya* only partially relishes the sweetness of this mellow, due to a tinge of scriptural etiquette. However, when the conjugal mellow is beyond scriptural restrictions, then spontaneity and freedom, added by the mood of *vāmya*, the highest expression of divine pleasure in the Lord's service, is bestowed. Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva gave license to these high ideals. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 26

**ātma-navya-tattva-divya-rāya-bhāgya-darśitam
śyāma-gopa-rādhikāpta-kokta-gupta-ceṣṭitam
mūrcchitāṅghri-rāmarāya-bodhitātma-kiṅkaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Chaitanya revealed the nature of the ever-fresh pastimes which He performed in Navadvīpa to Rāmānanda Rāya, whose fortune is beyond this world. Lord Chaitanya also manifested His form as the cowherd boy Śyāmasundara, which was endowed with the mood and luster of Śrī Rādhā and couched in pure dedication. When Rāmānanda Rāya glimpsed the matchless beauty of the Lord's figure, he fainted before the tender lotus feet of the Lord. Following this, Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva restored His eternal servant's consciousness. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 27

**naṣṭa-kuṣṭha-kūrmma-vipra-rūpa-bhakti-toṣaṇam
rāma-dāsa-vipra-moha-mukta-bhakta-poṣaṇam
kāla-kṛṣṇa-dāsa-mukta-bhaṭṭathāri-piñjaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Gaurasundara embraced the brahman devotee named Vāsudeva, who was afflicted with leprosy in Kūrmakṣetra near Jagannātha Purī. By the Lord's grace the brahman was cured, and he obtained a beautiful body and mental satisfaction. Later Lord Gaurāṅga liberated the South Indian brahman known as Rāmadāsa from the misconception that Sitādevī's chastity was spoiled by the touch of a demon. The Lord cited the *Kūrma Purāṇa* to prove that the Absolute Truth existing on the spiritual platform

is beyond material perception. In this way the Lord nourished His devotee with instructions pertaining to pure devotion. The Supreme Lord also delivered Kālākrishna Dāsa from the illusory influence of the false renunciates in the province of Mālābara who were in the corrupt nomadic community called Bhaṭṭathāri. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 28

**raṅganātha-bhaṭṭa-bhakti-tuṣṭa-bhaṅgi-bhāṣaṇam
lakṣmya-gamya-kṛṣṇa-rāsa-gopikaika-poṣaṇam
lakṣmya-bhīṣṭa-kṛṣṇa-śīrṣa-sādhya-sādhanākaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The Lord once visited Raṅgakṣetra in South India on the banks of the Kāverī River, which is the most important place of worship for the Vaiṣṇava devotees who adore Śrī Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa and believe Them to be the utmost object of their devotional practices. When the Lord visited the father of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Veṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, He was very satisfied with his family's service attitude. Cunningly, the Lord smiled and instructed them that even Śrī Lakṣmīdevī, after prolonged penances, could not enter into the *rāsa-līlā* pastimes of Lord Krishna. This is because only the cowherd maidens can actually incite those pastimes. Therefore, the cowherd boy Krishna, who is the original form of Lord Nārāyaṇa, and who attracts the heart of Lakṣmīdevī, is the Supreme Truth and the fundamental object of all devotional practices. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 29

**brahma-saṁhitākhyā-kṛṣṇa-bhakti-śāstra-dāyakam
kṛṣṇa-karṇa-sīdhu-nāma-kṛṣṇa-kāvya-gāyakam
śrī-pratāparudra-rāja-śīrṣa-sevya-mandiram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

While travelling in South India, Lord Gaurasundara discovered the famous literature *Śrī Brahmā Samhitā*, which is rich with devotional conclusions, and presented it to His devotees. Overwhelmed by the deep ecstasies of pure dedication, the Lord also sweetly sang the charming verses of the *Śrī Krishna Karṇāmṛtam*, in which the wonderful pastimes of Vraja are glorified by that grand poet of South India, Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura. And it was the tender lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya which was placed upon the head of the great King Pratāparudra, who had full dedication at his command. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 30

**śrī-rathāgra-bhakta-gīta-divya-narttanādbhutam
yātri-pātra-mitra-rudrarāja-hṛc-camatkṛtam
guṇḍicāgamādi-tattva-rūpa-kāvya-saṅcaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Surrounded by innumerable devotees, Lord Gaurasundara displayed His divine and wonderful dancing figure in front of the Rāthayātrā cart while performing congregational chanting of the Lord's Holy Names. The Lord's personality totally charmed the hearts of Pratāparudra Mahārāja, the assembled pilgrims, and all the other dear friends of the King. The Lord also revealed the inner purport of Lord Jagannātha's pastime of riding the cart to the Guṇḍicā temple when He mentioned the verse by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī:

priyaḥ so 'yam kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāham̐ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spṛhayati

“O My dear friend, now I am at last reunited with My most beloved Krishna in Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī, and He is the same Krishna. We are enjoying Our meeting, but still I wish to return to the banks of the Kālindī, where I could hear the sweet melody of His flute sounding the fifth note beneath the trees of the Vṛndāvana forest.” I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 31

prema-mugdha-rudra-rāja-śauryya-vīryya-vikramam̐
prārthitāṅghri-varjitānya-sarvva-dharmma-saṅgamam
luṅṭhita-pratāpa-śīrṣa-pāda-dhūli-dhūsaram̐
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

When northern India was under Muslim rule, that great kingly emperor of the independent state of Orissa, Pratāparudra, was completely wonderstruck and overtaken by the magnanimity, prowess, and activities that Lord Chaitanya exhibited in pure love of Godhead. The great King Pratāparudra rejected all his earlier ties with traditional religiosity and his valiant kingly nature, and he threw himself before the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanyadeva in full surrender. The merciful Lord then bathed the surrendered emperor's head with the sacred dust of His tender lotus feet. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 32

**dākṣiṇātya-suprasiddha-pañḍitaugha-pūjitaṁ
śreṣṭha-rāja-rājapātra-śīrṣa-bhakti-bhūṣitaṁ
deśa-māṭṛ-śeṣa-darśanārthi-gauḍa-gocaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The Supreme Lord was adored by the famous scholarly class of men in South India. The greatest princes and their ministers viewed the Lord with deep faith, and treated Him like the crest jewel recipient of their respect. According to the correct principles set forth in the bonafide disciplic succession, the Lord came to West Bengal to see the sacred Ganges. He also came to see His birthplace and His mother Śachīdevī, as if it were for the last time. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 33

**gaura-garvvi-sarvva-gauḍa-gauravārtha-sajjitaṁ
śāstra-śāstra-dakṣa-duṣṭa-nāstikādi-lajjitaṁ
muhyamāna-māṭṛkādi-deha-jīva-sañcaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

During His travels, Lord Gaurāṅgadeva's fame flooded the length and breadth of Bengal. Therefore, when He returned to Navadvīpa five years after accepting *sannyāsa*, all of Bengal, which was proud of Lord Gaurāṅga, became enthusiastic to glorify His extraordinary personality. Even the proud atheistic class of scholars were embarrassed about their vile natures when they observed how the ordinary people in all walks of life had such resolute faith in the Lord. When Mother Śachī and the Lord's other family members, who were lifeless due to separation from their Lord, had another glimpse of Śrī Chaitanyadeva, their life's substance was rejuvenated. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 34

nyāsa-pañca-varṣa-pūrṇa-janma-bhūmi-darśanaṁ
koṭi-koṭi-loka-lubdha-mugdha-dṛṣṭi-karṣaṇam
koṭi-kaṇṭha-kṛṣṇa-nāma-ghoṣa-bheditāmbaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

Returning to His birthplace after five long years of *sannyāsa*, the Supreme Lord was met by millions, young and old alike. Everyone's eyes were overwhelmed with eagerness to see the Lord, who was attracting their innermost heart of hearts. The Lord's ecstatic presence excited the multitudes to continuously resound the Names of Lord Hari, and they created an uproar that reverberated in every direction, beyond the limits of the sky. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 35

ārtta-bhakta-śoka-śānti-tāpi-pāpi-pāvanam
lakṣa-koṭi-loka-saṅga-kṛṣṇa-dhāma-dhāvanam
rāma-keli-sāgrajāta-rūpa-karṣaṇādaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva eased the anxiety the devotees had experienced due to His long separation and forgave many sinful, offensive, anxiety-ridden souls such as Gopāla Chāpāla and others. The Lord then began to run towards Vṇḍāvana along the banks of the Ganges. An ocean of people pursued the Lord up to the capital of Bengal, which at that time was known as Rāmakeli. At Rāmakeli, Lord Gaurāṅga was attracted by His two eternal associates who appeared to be ministers in the Muslim government. The Lord showed deep affection for Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and his elder brother, Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 36

**vyāghra-vāraṇaina-vanya-jantu-kṛṣṇa-gāyakam
prema-nṛtya-bhāva-matta-jhāḍakhaṇḍa-nāyakam
durga-vanya-mārga-bhaṭṭa-mātra-saṅga-saukaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Leaving Rāmakeli, the Lord continued through Bengal towards Jagannātha Purī. After leaving Purī Dhāma, Lord Chaitanya passed through the Jhāḍakhaṇḍa forest on His way to Vṛndāvana. There He inspired the jungle animals such as tigers, deer, and elephants to join in the congregational chanting of Lord Krishna's Holy Names. Intoxicated by the sweet Names of the Lord, the animals joyfully danced along with the Lord, who was madly absorbed in the deepest devotional ecstasies. The Supreme Lord experienced profound realizations in solitary worship as He walked down the deep and impenetrable jungle paths of Jhāḍakhaṇḍa with Balabhadra Bhaṭṭāchārya. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 37

**gāṅga-yāmunādi-bindu-mādhavādi-mānanam
māthurārta-citta-yāmunāgra-bhāga-dhāvanam
smārta-vrajāti-tivra-vipralambha-kātarām
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Gaurasundara showed great honor towards the Deities along the Ganges-bank in Kāśī, and unto Bindu Mādhava at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamunā in Prayāga. Following the current of the Yamunā, the Lord began to quickly run along her banks in anxious pursuit of a glimpse of the sacred place known as Mathurā. As divine thoughts of Vṛndāvana's pastimes overwhelmed

His memory and caused intolerable feelings of separation, Lord Gaurasundara fell unconscious. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 38

**mādhavendra-vipralambha-māthureṣṭa-mānanam
prema-dhāma-dṛṣṭakāma-pūrvva-kuñja-kānanam
gokulādi-goṣṭha-gopa-gopikā-priyaṅkaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Chaitanya stated that the mood of deep separation that Mādhavendra Purī was able to taste, as depicted in the following beautiful verse first spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, is the zenith point and desirable object of pure adoration:

**ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvad-aloka-kātaram
dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham**

“O my Lord! O most gracious master! O master of Mathurā! When will I see You again? Because of my not seeing You, my agitated heart has become unsteady. O most beloved one, what shall I do now?” After the Lord entered into Vraja, the background stage where pastimes of pure love are enacted, He became overwhelmed to His heart’s full satisfaction. The Lord was charmed to see the beautiful gardens and forest groves that served as His playground for spiritual pastimes in a previous era. While visiting the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana, the Lord exhibited various different dealings with the cowherd boys and maidens. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 39

**prema-guñjanāli-puñja-puṣpa-puñja-rañjitaṁ
gīta-nṛtya-dakṣa-pakṣi-vṛkṣa-lakṣa-vanditam
go-vṛṣādi-nāda-dīpta-pūrvva-moda-meduram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

While strolling through the forest groves of Vṛndāvana, the Lord was joyfully welcomed by swarms of humming bumblebees busily engaged in discussion about pure love as they hovered over the blooming flowers. Millions of trees lining the forest groves harmoniously offered their respects unto Lord Gaurasundara in unison with a variety of birds that were expertly singing and dancing in sheer delight. The Lord's mind became overflowed by loving feelings due to remembering how the cows, calves, and oxen of the holy abode of Vṛndāvana would affectionately call for Him in previous pastimes, thereby elating His emotions in pure love. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 40

**prema-buddha-ruddha-buddhi-matta-nṛtya-kīrttanam
plāvitāśru-kāñcanāṅga-vāsa-cāturaṅganam
kṛṣṇa-kṛṣṇa-rāva-bhāva-hāsyā-lāsyā-bhāsvaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Hopelessly overwhelmed by a surge of pure love, Lord Gaurasundara madly danced and chanted the Holy Names of Krishna. A profuse current of flowing tears streamed from His eyes, passing over the radiant luster of His giant golden form, over His brilliant garments that resembled the sun, and over the ground in all four directions. The Lord's joyful pastimes were ecstatically enhanced by such

gestures as His loudly mispronouncing the Holy Name of Krishna in a delirious state, or His roaring with laughter due to being ecstatically absorbed in deep emotion. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 41

**prema-mugdha-nṛtya-kīrttanākulāriṭāntikaṁ
snāna-dhanya-vāri-dhānya-bhūmi-kuṇḍa-deśakam
prema-kuṇḍa-rādhikākhyā-śāstra-vandanādaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Surcharged with the confusing dictations of pure love of God, Lord Gaurasundara, dancing in ecstasy, anxiously approached the sacred place of Rādhā Kuṇḍa, which was unmanifest at that time. The Lord hastily took bath in that flooded paddy field, sanctified the water, and revealed it to be Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa. In deep humility, the Lord began to carefully recite verses from the Scriptures depicting Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa as the divine embodiment of pure love.

**yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos
tasyāḥ kuṇḍaṁ priyaṁ tathā
sarva gopīṣu saivaikā
viṣṇor-atyanta vallabhā**

“Just as Śrī Rādhā is very dear to Lord Krishna, similarly Her divine pond, Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa, is dear to the Lord. Of all the cowherd maidens, She is the dearest consort to Lord Krishna.” I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 42

**tintiḍī-talastha-yāmunormmi-bhāvanāplutaṁ
nirjanaika-rādhikātmabhāva-vaibhavāvṛtam
śyāma-rādhikāpta-gaura-tattva-bhittikākaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

As the Lord was visiting various places in Vṇḍāvana where Lord Krishna performed His pastimes, He visited that famous tamarind tree that existed during the Dvāpara era. Sitting beneath the tamarind tree, the Lord's memory of His confidential water-sporting pastimes with the cowherd maidens was aroused when He saw the dancing gestures of the Yamunā's waves. The Lord's entire being was captured by tasting the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā within the depths of His heart. Identifying with that selfsame sweetness and emotion that possessed His entire self, the Lord's entire existence was stolen away. This place is indicated to be the place of origin of *Gauratattva*, for it was here that Lord Śyāmasundara became greatly absorbed in the divine mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Himself the origin of all, eternally resides in this place. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 43

**śārikā-śukokti-kautukāḍhya-lāśya-lāpitaṁ
rādhikā-vyatīta-kāmadeva-kāma-mohitam
prema-vaśya-kṛṣṇa-bhāva-bhakta-hṛc-camatkaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Gaurāṅga mentioned a witty conversation that was carried on between a parrot and his mate. In their talk, Lord Krishna, the transcendental Cupid, is described to be illusioned due to His deep feelings of separation from Śrī Rādhā.

**rādhā-saṅge yadā bhāti
tadā 'madana-mohanah'
ayathā viśva-moho 'pi
svayaṁ 'madana-mohitah'**

The female parrot said, “When Lord Krishna is with Rādhārāṇī, He is the enchanter of Cupid; otherwise, when He is alone, He Himself is enchanted by amorous feelings, even though He enchants the whole universe.” By this pastime, Lord Gaurāṅga charmed the devotees’ hearts by showing that Lord Krishna’s sweetness and charm ultimately lies in the fact that He can be subdued by pure love. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 44

**śrī-prayāga-dhāma-rūpa-rāga-bhakti-saṅcaram
śrī-sanātānādi-kāśī-bhakti-śikṣaṇāḍaram
vaiṣṇavānurodha-bheda-nirvviśeṣa-pañjaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

It was in the sacred place of Prayāga, in the bathing area known as Daśāśvamedha Ghāṭa, that Lord Gaurāṅga taught Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī that the ultimate objective of one’s devotional practices is to relish the sweet mellows found in Śrī Vṛndāvana, and the Lord instructed him to widely distribute that sweetness. Later in Kāśī, the Lord elaborately described to Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī many topics of pure dedication, such as knowledge of proper acquaintance with the environment, the means of applying that knowledge, and the ultimate goal of obtaining pure love of Godhead. Also, at the special request of a Maharastrian brahman and Tapana Miśra and other devotees, the Lord destroyed the ignorant conception of the *māyāvādī* renunciates in Vārāṇasī. Lord Gaurāṅgadeva personally met the impersonalists there in a public assembly, and pointed out that their mode of self-adoration was ultimately based on enviousness and narrow-mindedness. In this way the Lord established that factual independence was exhibited by those worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 45

**nyāsi-lakṣa-nāyaka-prakāśānanda-tārakam
nyāsi-rāśi-kāśi-vāsi-kṛṣṇa-nāma-pārakam
vyāsa-nāradādi-datta-vedadhī-dhurandharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

While en route to Jagannātha Purī from Vṇḍāvana, the Lord met and instructed Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī in Prayāga. Following this, Lord Gaurāṅga arrived in Vārāṇasī where He found Prakāśānanda Saraswatī to be the leader of millions of impersonalist renunciates who were followers of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. By His pure and affectionate personality, Lord Gaurāṅga rescued Prakāśānanda Saraswatī from the deep well of the transformation theory of Śaṅkarācārya and intoxicated the *sannyāsis* and residents of Kāśī by engaging them in the glorification of Lord Krishna's Holy Names. Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva was the transcendental expert who granted their passage over the material ocean, like a vessel carrying the nectar of all the scriptural conclusions handed down in the disciplic line from the sage Nārada to Śrīla Vyāsadeva. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 46

**brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya-kṛṣṇa-nāradopadeśakam
śloka-turyya-bhāṣaṇānta-kṛṣṇa-samprakāśakam
śabda-varttanānta-hetu-nāma-jīva-nistaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

When Lord Chaitanyadeva was in Kāśī, He taught a grand assembly of the impersonalist renunciates that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as taught in the bonafide disciplic succession from

Lord Krishna to Nārada and handed down by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, is the factual commentary on the conclusions of the *Vedānta-sūtras*. Sri Gaurāṅga also explained the four fundamental verses of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and revealed Lord Krishna as the ultimate reality beyond all duality and the original principle of the entire universal arrangement. By the Vedic aphorism “*anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*,” Lord Chaitanya established that conscious sound in its highest expression is Lord Krishna’s Holy Name, and that it bestows the utmost benefit by releasing the soul from its conditioned state of existence. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 47

**ātma-rāma-vācanādi-nirvviśeṣa-khaṇḍanam
śrauta-vākya-sārthakaika-cidvilāsa-maṇḍanam
divya-kṛṣṇa-vigrahādi-gauṇa-buddhi-dhikkaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

By explaining the famous *ātmārāma* verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sixty-one times, Lord Gaurāṅga sliced to pieces the impersonalist doctrine propagated by Śaṅkarāchārya. The Lord also recited many references from the Upaniṣads, such as *apāṇi-pādo javano grahītā paśyaty acakṣuḥ sa śṛnoty akarṇaḥ*, whereby He revealed the charming sweet nature of the Absolute Truth’s spiritual pastimes. Lord Chaitanya fully censured the hateful conception of the impersonalists that Lord Krishna’s transcendental form, name, qualities, pastimes, and Deity manifestation are simply an imaginary transformation of the illusory energy *māyā*. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

**brahma-pāramātmya-lakṣaṇādvayaika-vācanam
śrī-vraja-svasiddha-nanda-līla-nanda-nandanam
śrī-rasa-svarūpa-rāsa-līla-gopa-sundaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

When Lord Gaurāṅga referred to the verse *brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate* in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, He harmoniously accommodated the conception of the nondifferentiated aspect of reality, brahman, the ultimate goal of the impersonalists, with the conception of the localized aspect of reality, *paramātmā*, the goal of the mystic perfectionists. The Lord adjusted these two truths by showing that they are included within and surpassed by the ultimate conception of the nondualistic Absolute Truth, *bhagavān*, who is the primeval principle of reality. When revealing this axiomatic truth in connection with the joyful and confidential nature of the Supreme Lord's spiritual pastimes, Lord Gaurāṅga pointed out the divine nature of Vraja, which is existing above the Vaikuṅṭha planets.

**vaikuṅṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhā-kunḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevām vivekī na kaḥ**

“Superior to the spiritual realm of Vaikuṅṭha is Mathurā, where Śrī Krishna first appears. Superior to Mathurā is the Vrindāvana forest where Krishna enjoyed the *rāsa* dance. Better still is Govardhana Hill, which was the site of even more confidential pastimes of love. But best of all is Rādhā Kuṇḍa, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana Hill, and holds the supreme position because it is overflooded with the nectar of the highest kind of divine love. Who, acquainted with the science of devotion, will not aspire for the divine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī at Rādhā Kuṇḍa?” Initially, Lord Gaurāṅga revealed the nature of pure loving service rendered unto

the son of Nanda Mahārāja in the parental relationship. But when considering the flow of dedication's sweet mellows, Lord Gaurāṅga described the ultimate aspect of the Supreme Lord's personality to be Śrī Gopījanavallabha, whose divine figure is the unlimited reservoir of all the primary and secondary mellows tasted in pure devotion. Śrī Gaurāṅga also hinted that the joyful and charming *rāsa-līlā* pastimes are an all-conscious reality, none other than the personal potency of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Such transcendental pastimes are found within the superexcellent and inconceivable spiritual world, and are the highest conception of spiritual existence, auspiciousness, and beauty. Lord Gaurāṅga suggested this to be the supreme achievable object of the living entities. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 49

**rādhikā-vinoda-mātra-tattva-lakṣaṇānvayaṁ
sādhū-saṅga-kṛṣṇa-nāma-sādhanaika-niścayaṁ
prema-sevanaika-mātra-sādhya-kṛṣṇa-tatparaṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

In this manner Lord Gaurāṅgadeva taught that all scriptural conclusions, as perfectly passed down by the various spiritual preceptors through the medium of sound, culminate in the embodiment of Śrī Rādhāvinoda, the all-encompassing basis of proper acquaintance with the environment. The means by which one may reach Lord Krishna is by chanting His Holy Names in the association of pure devotees, while the ultimate goal in pure love is service to Lord Krishna, who is so dear to the cowherd maidens of Vrindāvana. Lord Gaurāṅgadeva taught these essential scriptural conclusions in the assembly of scholarly persons. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 50

**ātma-rāma-vācanaika-ṣaṣṭīkārtha-darśitaṁ
rudra-saṁkhya-śabda-jāta-yad-yad-artha-sambhṛtam
sarvva-sarvva-yukta-tat-tad-artha-bhuridākaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Gaurasundara explained this famous verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sixty-one times to Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī, and later to Prakāśānanda Saraswatī:

**ātmārāmaś ca munayo
nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim
itthaṁ-bhūta guṇo hariḥ**

“Even the liberated souls fully satisfied in the self are irresistibly attracted by the superexcellent qualities of Krishna and surrender to Him with unalloyed devotion.” The Lord separately combined each of the eleven words found in that verse and established that each one is an enormous storehouse of unlimited wealth supporting the conclusion of pure devotion. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 51

**śrī sanātanānu-rūpa-jīva-sampradāyakaṁ
lupta-tīrtha-śuddha-bhakti-śāstra-supracārakam
nīla-śaila-nātha-pīṭha-naija-kāryya-saukaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Gaurasundara revealed His disciplic line by inspiring Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī, his younger brother Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, and Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī. The Lord requested them to excavate the lost places of pilgrimage and compose pure devotional literature which describes the application of spiritual practices and spontaneous devotion. Lord Gaurāṅga also lovingly revealed His worshipable personality to the servitors of Śrī Jagannātha Deva at Nīlāchala (Śrī

Purī-dhāma). I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 52

**tyāga-bāhya-bhoga-buddhi-tivra-daṇḍa-nindanam
rāya-śuddha-kṛṣṇa-kāma-sevanābhi-nandanam
rāya-rāga-sevanokta-bhāgya-koṭi-duṣkaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Lord Gaurasundara strongly condemned those who externally accepted the dress of a renunciate yet, like monkeys, actually harbored desires for sense pleasures. On the other hand, He honored that great devotee Rāmānanda Rāya's devotional efforts to intimately teach some young girls a form of dance drama for the pleasure of Lord Jagannātha. Considering Rāmānanda's service to be on the platform of spontaneous devotion, the Lord proclaimed that such a level of service was a great fortune attainable only after millions of births. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 53

**śrī-prayāga-bhaṭṭa-vallabhaika-niṣṭha-sevanam
nīla-śaila-bhaṭṭa-datta-rāga-mārga-rādhanam
śrī gadādhara-rpitādhikāra-mantra-mādhuram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The famous spiritual preceptor of the Vishnuswāmī disciplic succession *śuddhādvaita*, Śrī Vallabha Bhaṭṭa, lived in the village of Āḍhāila in sacred Prayāga, and personally served Lord Gaurāṅgadeva with resolute devotion in his residence. Later in Jagannātha Purī, Lord Gaurāṅga allowed Vallabha Bhaṭṭa to enter into and relish the sweet taste experienced in parental attachment to baby Krishna. The Lord also arranged for him to learn the appropriate mantras for his worship from Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 54

**śrī-svarūpa-rāya-saṅga-gāmbhirāntya-līlanam
dvādaśābda-vahni-garbha-vipralambha-śīlanam
rādhikādhirūḍha-bhāva-kānti-kṛṣṇa-kuñjaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Diving deep into the reality of His own beauty and sweetness, Lord Govinda stole the mood of Rādhārāṇī and, garbing Himself in Her brilliant luster, appeared as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. For the last twelve years of His manifest pastimes He was deeply absorbed in union and separation, and He shared His heart's inner feelings with His most confidential devotees such as Swarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya: *bāhire viśajvālā haya, antare ānandamaya*.

“The wonderful characteristic of divine love of Krishna is that although externally it works like fiery lava, internally it is like sweet nectar that fills the heart with the greatest joy.” Volcanic eruptions of ecstasy flowed from the heart of Śrī Gaurāṅga in the agony of separation from Krishna. This Golden Lord, who appeared like an intoxicated elephant, is none other than Lord Govinda. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 55

**śrī-svarūpa-kaṇṭha-lagna-māthura-pralāpakam
rādhikānu-vedanārtta-tīvra-vipralambhakam
svapnavat-samādhī-dṛṣṭa-divya-varṇanāturam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, embracing the neck of Śrī Swarūpa Dāmodara, began to sorrowfully recite the prayers Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī had previously spoken in the agony of separation when Lord Krishna left Vrindāvana for Mathurā. The Lord would continuously taste the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who was experiencing untold agony from the burning fire of Her tragic separation from Lord Krishna. With a heavy heart, the Lord would describe what He was

directly realizing in divine trance. Those realizations are just like dreams to ordinary men. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 56

**sātvikādi-bhāva-cihna-deha-divya-sauṣṭhavam
kūrmma-dharmma-bhinna-sandhi-gātra-puṣpa-pelavam
hrasva-dīrgha-padma-gandha-rakta-pīta-pāṇḍuram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

The eightfold symptoms depicting the moods of pure dedication would decorate and radiantly enhance the beauty of the Lord's bodily parts. Sometimes He appeared like a tortoise who had withdrawn his limbs into his shell, and at other times His body appeared elongated due to His joints becoming dislocated. Sometimes Lord Gaurasundara's figure was as tender and aromatic as a lotus flower. At other times the Lord's body would appear red, yellow, or brilliant with the white hue of the jasmine flower. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 57

**tīvra-vipralambha-mugdha-mandirāgra-dhāvitam
kūrmma-rūpa-divya-gandha-lubdha-dhenu-veṣṭitam
varṇitāli-kūla-kṛṣṇa-keli-śaila-kandaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Grief-stricken and overwhelmed with tragic feelings of separation, Lord Chaitanya quickly ran to the lion-gate of Lord Jagannātha's grand temple. Moments later, the Lord fell to the ground. In deep separation He manifested the form of the tortoise incarnation Kūrmadeva, and an extraordinarily sweet fragrance began to emanate from the Lord's unconscious figure. This attracted the *telāṅgī* cows who resided at Lord Jagannātha's Temple, and they surrounded the Lord. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

**indu-sindhū-nṛtya-dīpta-kṛṣṇa-keli-mohitaṁ
ūrmī-śīrṣa-supta-deha-vāta-raṅga-vāhitaṁ
yāmunāli-kṛṣṇa-keli-magna-saukhya-sāgaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Once on a moonlit night, Lord Gaurāṅgadeva, relishing the sweet mellows of Lord Krishna's pastimes, was wandering along the ocean's shore with His associates. Suddenly the Lord saw the reflection of the moon dancing upon the rolling waves. Unexpectedly, the Lord became overwhelmed by recollections of Lord Krishna's pastimes in the Yamunā River and fell unconscious. Next, Lord Gaurāṅga's body, unseen by the devotees, became as light as a piece of dried wood and was gracefully carried away by the wind-god while lying upon the crest of the ocean's rolling waves in a divine trance. Realizing Lord Krishna's water-sport pastimes in the Kālindī River with His dearest cowherd-maiden friends, the Lord dove deep into an ocean of divine ecstasy. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

**rātri-śeṣa-saumya-veśa-śāyitārdra-saikataṁ
bhinna-sandhi-dīrgha-deha-pelavāti-daivatam
śrānta-bhakta-cakratīrtha-hṛṣṭa-dṛṣṭi-gocaraṁ
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

After searching for the Lord throughout the night, the exhausted devotees finally found Him at night's end near Chakratīrtha, His elongated form lying upon the moist sand. The devotees' eyes were filled with joy as they glanced upon the delicate and serene figure of their Lord. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 60

**ārtta-bhakta-kaṇṭha-kṛṣṇa-nāma-karṇa-hṛdgataṁ
lagna-sandhi-suṣṭhu-deha-sarvva-pūrvva-sammatam
ardha-bāhya-bhāva-kṛṣṇa-keli-varṇanāturam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

As the anxious devotees began to loudly chant the Holy Names of Krishna, this divine vibration entered the Lord's ears and touched the depths of His heart. Immediately the Lord's dislocated joints reunited, and He displayed the beautiful figure which their eyes were accustomed to relishing. In a semiconscious state, the Lord began to describe with deep feelings of separation what He had seen while absorbed in divine trance. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 61

**yāmunāmbu-kṛṣṇa-rādhikāli-keli-maṇḍalam
vyakta-gupta-dr̥pta-tr̥pta-bhaṅgi-mādanākulam
gūḍha-divya-marmma-moda-mūrcchanā-camatkaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

In the sacred waters of the Yamunā in Vrindāvana, Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, along with Their dearest cowherd-maiden friends, perform various charming water-sport pastimes. These divine pastimes are sometimes revealed, sometimes hidden, sometimes in opposition to each other, and sometimes harmonious. In this way the Lord's pastimes are couched in different gestures which bring about different types of divine hankering. The melodious tune of this confidential spiritual treasure which astounds the entire universe was distributed by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 62

**āśya-gharṣaṇādi-cāṭakādri-sindhu-līlanam
bhakta-marmma-bhedi-tīvra-duḥkha-saukya-khelanam
atyacintya-divya-vaibhavāśritaika-śaṅkaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Upon glancing at the Caṭaka hill, intolerable feelings of separation overwhelmed the Lord, and different pastimes in the mood of profound adoration were incited, whereby the Lord began to rub His beautiful face on the ground. When Śrī Gaurāṅga would remember the water-sport pastimes of Lord Krishna, He would jump into the ocean and exhibit the divine symptoms of one intoxicated by pure love. By performing these pastimes, the Lord would inundate the devotees' hearts with waves from the grand ocean of love of Krishna. Those desperate waves carried both transcendental anxiety and joy up onto the shore of the devotees' hearts. Such inconceivable auspiciousness was bestowed only upon the Lord's most surrendered associates. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 63

**śrotra-netra-gatyatīta-bodha-rodhitādbhutaṁ
prema-labhya-bhāva-siddha-cetanā-camatkṛtam
brahma-śambhu-veda-tantra-mṛgya-satya-sundaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is not only beyond the mundane experiences of sight and sound, but He also arrests all intellectual endeavors to know Him. Being situated in pure love of Godhead, He remains a mystery and astonishes even those living entities who are fixed in self-realization. The revealed Vedas of Lord Brahmā and the Tantric literatures of Lord Shiva are simply searching after Śrī Gaurasundara, reality the beautiful. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 64

**vipra-sūdra-vijña-mūrkhā-yāvanādi-nāmadam
vitta-vikramocca-nīca-sajjanaika-sampadam
strī-pumādi-nirvvivāda-sārvvavādikoddharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

By freely distributing the Holy Name of Krishna, Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva purified the scholarly intellectual class, the laborer class, the illiterate, and even the lowest sections of society. The Lord alone was the embodiment of the greatest wealth for all sincere and gentle souls, both the rich and the poor, the aristocratic and the lowborn. Therefore, Lord Chaitanya is respected and honored by men and women alike as the savior of all, in both the mundane and spiritual worlds. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 65

**sindhu-sūnya-veda-candra-śāka-kumbha-pūrṇimā
sāndhya-cāndrakoparāga-jāta-gaura-candramā
snāna-dāna-kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅga-tat-parātparam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Like a golden moon, Śrī Gaurachandra appeared in the year 1407 Śakābda (1486 A.D.), at the onset of a lunar eclipse on a full-moon evening in the month of March. When the Absolute Truth Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva incarnated in the beautiful courtyard of Sacīdevī, the residents of Māyāpura were bathing in the sacred Ganges, congregationally chanting the Holy Names of Hari, and making offerings of various types of jewels to the Lord. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 66

**ātma-siddha-sāvalīla-pūrṇa-saukhya-lakṣaṇam
svānubhāva-matta-nṛtya-kīrttanātma-vaṇṭanam
advayaika-lakṣya-pūrṇa-tattva-tat-parātparam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

This is the all-conquering conclusion: the highest conception of the Ultimate Reality must also be the highest form of *ānanda*, ecstasy. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is Krishna, ecstasy Himself, tasting His own sweetness and dancing in ecstatic joy. His own Holy Name is the cause of His ecstasy, expressed as dancing, and the Holy Name is the effect of His ecstasy, expressed as chanting. The cause is the effect. The dynamo is creating ecstatic energy which makes Him dance, and His chanting distributes that ecstasy to others. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 67

**śrī-purīśvarānukampi-labdha-dikṣa-daivatam
keśavākhyā-bhāratī-sakāśa-keśa-rakṣitam
mādhavānudhī-kiśora-kṛṣṇa-sevanādaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

Śrī Īśvara Purī became very fortunate when Lord Gaurāṅga exhibited His causeless mercy by accepting initiation from him. Śrī Keśava Bhāratī was similarly favored in that in his presence, Lord Gaurāṅga shaved His beautiful curly hair and accepted from him the garments of a renunciate. And Lord Chaitanya gave undivided attention to Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, stating that his attachment for serving Lord Krishna's Kiśora form in conjugal love was the highest expression of dedication. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 68

**sindhu-bindu-veda-candra-śāka-phālgunoditaṁ
nyāsa-soma-netra-veda-candra-śāka-bodhitam
vāṇa-vāṇa-veda-candra-śāka-locanāntaram
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

I offer my respects unto Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, who rose like a golden moon in Śrī Māyāpura in 1407 Śakābda, revealed the pastime of accepting the garments of the renounced order, *sannyās*, in 1431 Śakābda in order to benedict the entire material universe, and disappeared beyond the ordinary vision of the people of this world in 1455 Śakābda. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 69

**śrī-svarūpa-rāya-saṅga-harṣa-śeṣa-ghoṣaṇaṁ
śikṣaṇāṣṭakākhyā-kṛṣṇa-kīrttanaika-poṣaṇam
prema-nāma-mātra-viśva-jīvanaika-sambharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumigaura-sundaram**

With great joy Śrī Gaurasundara told His dearmost associates Śrī Swarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya that the process of congregationally chanting the Holy Names of Krishna bestows the highest benediction upon the living entities in this age of Kali:

**harṣe prabhu kahena, “śuna svarūpa-rāma-rāya
nāma saṅkīrtana kalau, parama upāya”**

In His famous composition *Śrī-Śikṣāṣṭakam* also, Lord Gaurāṅga has placed the chanting of Lord Krishna’s Names on the topmost level of importance. The Supreme Lord further taught that chanting Lord Krishna’s Names in pure love of Godhead perfectly nourishes and fully satisfies all the living entities in the universe. I offer my obeisances to that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 70

**prema hema-deva dehi-dāsa-ṛeṣa manyatām
kṣamyatām mahāparādha-rāṣīreṣa-gaṇyatām
rūpa-kiṅkareṣu rāmānanda-dāsa-sambharam
prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

O my Golden Lord! (*Suvarṇa-varṇa hemāṅga*) O ocean of *prema*! Kindly grant me the wealth of Your divine love! Please give some slight attention to this fallen soul and pardon his unlimited offenses. There are so many servants of Śrī Rūpa who are so dear to You. My only aspiration is that You count me as one of those servitors. O Gaurasundara, You are the sole protector and embodiment of good fortune for me, Rāmānanda Dāsa. I offer my obeisances to you, O Gaurāṅga Sundar, my most beautiful Golden Lord, the divine form of Krishna *prema*.

Verse 71

**saśraddhaḥ sapta-daśakam prema-dhāmeti-nāmakam
stavam ko 'pi paṭhan gauram rādhā-śyāma-mayam vrajet**

Whoever faithfully recites this composition of seventy prayers known as the *Premadhāma-deva-stotram* will be granted the opportunity to serve that beautiful Golden Lord, Gaurāṅga Sundar, who is none other than Śyāmasundara Himself covered by the heart and halo (*bhāva* and *kānti*) of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Verse 72

**pañcame śata-gaurābde śrī-siddhānta-sarasvatī
śrīdharaḥ ko 'pi tac chiṣyas tridaṇḍī-nauti-sundaram**

These prayers have been composed in the fifth century after the appearance of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu by a certain *saṁnyāsa* disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura named Śrīdhara [Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj].

All Glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

Archchan-kaṇa



Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Kolerganj, P.O. Nabadwip, Dt. Nadia,
West Bengal, India, Pin 741302

Founder-Āchāryya:

Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Sevaite-President-Āchāryya:

Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

All Glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

Archchan-kaṇa

By the performance of *Nāma-saṅkīrtan*, all perfection is attained. Still, to help us along the journey in the life of Devotion there is particular benefit in certain activities of worship.

The practitioner will, after bathing, be seated on an *āsana* facing to the East, and touching water in a *pañcha-pātra* he will invite all the holy places by chanting this *mantra*—

**gaṅge cha yamune chaiva godāvari sarasvati
narmmade sindho kāverī jale 'smin sannidhiṁ kuru**

Sprinkling some of that water on his head, he will chant **om viṣṇuḥ om viṣṇuḥ om viṣṇuḥ** and perform *āchaman*.

He will apply *tilak* with Gopīchandan, with this *mantra*—

**lalāṭe keśavaṁ dhyāyen
nārāyaṇam athodare
bakṣaḥsthale mādhave tu
govindam kaṇṭha-kūpake
viṣṇum cha dakṣiṇe kuṅṣau
bāhau cha madhusūdanam**

**trivikramaṁ kandhare tu
vāmanaṁ vāmapārśvake
śrīdharaṁ vāmapātrā tu
hṛṣīkeśam cha kandhare
prṣṭhe tu padmanābham cha
kaṭyām dāmodaram nyaset
tat prakṣālana-toyam tu
vāsudevāya mūrdhani**

Next, he must purify the flowers. The *mantra*—
**puṣpe puṣpe mahāpuṣpe supuṣpe puṣpa-sambhave
puṣpa-chayāvakīrṇe cha huṁ phaṭ svāhā**

Then purify the *āsana*—
om ādhāra-śaktaye kamalāsanāya namaḥ—with this *mantra* he will worship the *āsana* with a flower.

Worship of the *āsana*:
**āsana mantrasya meru-prṣṭho ṛṣi sutalam chhanda
kūrmma devatā āsanopaveśane viniyogaḥ. pṛthvi
tvayā dhṛtā lokā devi tvam viṣṇunā dhṛtā. tvam cha
dhārāya mām nityam pavitraṁ kuru chāmanakh.**

Establishing the utensils, etc.—

Opposite the worshipper on the left side, with appropriate vessels, he will keep the conch-shell, *pādyā* [water to wash the feet of the worshipping], *arghya* [ingredients for worship], water for performing *āchaman*, and container for *madhuparka* [equal

amounts of cow's ghee, cow's yoghurt and honey; otherwise the same adding cow's milk and sugar, which is also known as *pañchāmṛta*]; on the right he will keep containers of sandalwood, Tulasī, and flowers, etc.; blowing conch, bell, water-pot are on the left; ghee-lamp on the right, and incense and oil-lamp on the left, and other paraphernalia will be located to be conveniently visible to the worshipper; behind, he will keep a vessel containing water for washing his hands.

Purification of the bell—

sarvva-vādyā-mayī ghaṇṭe deva-sevasya vallabhe
tvām vinā naiva sarvveṣāṁ śubhaṁ bhavati śobhane

Purification of the conch—

tvām purā sāgarotpanno viṣṇunā vidhṛtaḥ kare
mānitaḥ sarvva-devaiś cha pāñchajanya namo 'stu te

Next, *Svasti vāchan* and *Maṅgala vāchan* are performed, and after that self-meditation:

Svasti vāchan—

om svasti no govindaḥ svasti no 'chyutānantaḥ svasti
no vāsudevo viṣṇur dadhātu. svasti no nārāyaṇo nara
vai, svastinaḥ padmanābhaḥ puruṣottamo dadhātu.
svasti no viśvakseno viśveśvaraḥ, svasti no hṛṣīkeśo
harir dadhātu. svasti no vainateyo hariḥ svasti
no 'ñjanāsuto hanur bhāgavato dadhātu. svasti svasti
sumaṅgalaiḥ keśo mahān śrī-kṛṣṇaḥ sachchidānanda-

ghanah sarvveśvareśvaro dadhātu.

karotu svasti me kṛṣṇaḥ sarvva-lokeśvareśvaraḥ
kāṛṣṇādayaś cha kurvantu svasti me loka-pāvanāḥ
kṛṣṇo mamaiva sarvvatra svasti kuryyāt śrīyā samam
tathaiva cha sadā kāṛṣṇiḥ sarvva-vighna-vināśanaḥ
om hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

Maṅgal vāchan mantras—

maṅgalaṁ bhagavān viṣṇur
maṅgalaṁ madhusūdanaḥ
maṅgalaṁ hṛṣīkeśo 'yam
maṅgalāyatano hariḥ
viṣṇūchchāraṇa-mātreṇa
kṛṣṇasya smaraṇādd hareḥ
sarvva-vighnāni naśyanti
maṅgalaḥ syān na saṁśayaḥ

Nija-dhyāna—

divya-śrī-hari-mandirādya-tilakaṁ

kaṇṭhaṁ sumālānvidaṁ

bakṣaḥ śrī-harināma-varṇa-subhagaṁ

śrī-khaṇḍa-liptaṁ punaḥ

pūtaṁ sūkṣma-navāmbaram vimalatām

nityaṁ vahantīm tanuṁ

dhyāyechchhṛī-gurupādapadma-nikaṭe

sevotsukāṁ chātmanaḥ

First *Guru-pūjā*, *Guru-dhyāna*—
prātaḥ śrīman-navadvīpe
dvi-netraṁ dvi-bhujam gurum
varābhaya-pradam śāntam
smaret tan nāma pūrvvakam

At Śrī Māyāpur Yogapīṭh in the Transcendental Abode of Nabadwip, the Supreme Lord Śrī Chaitanyadev is seated in a jewelled temple. To His right Śrī Nityānanada, to His left Śrī Gadādhara, and opposite Advaita—all, Their hands folded in prayer, sing His Eternal Glories. Śrīvās Paṇḍita stands in front holding the sunshade. Below them, Śrī Gurudev is present on his holy seat. One must meditate in this way and first worship Śrī Gurudev with sixteen items of worship; in this way:

idam āsanam aiṁ gurave namaḥ [seat]
etat pādyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ [foot-wash]
idam arghyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ [ingredients]
idam āchamanīyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ
[sipping water]
eṣa madhuparkaḥ aiṁ gurave namaḥ [as above]
idam punar āchamanīyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ
[sipping water again]
idam snānīyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ [bathing water]

idam sottarīya-vastram aiṁ gurave namaḥ [cloth]
idam ābharaṇam aiṁ gurave namaḥ [ornaments]
eṣa gandhaḥ aiṁ gurave namaḥ [fragrant substance]
eṣa dhūpaḥ aiṁ gurave namaḥ [incense]
eṣa dīpaḥ aiṁ gurave namaḥ [lamp]
idam sachandanapuṣpam aiṁ gurave namaḥ
[flowers with chandan]
idam naivedyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ
[offering of fruit, water, sweets, grains, etc.]
idam pānīya-jalam aiṁ gurave namaḥ
[drinking water]
idam punar āchamanīyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ
[water to cleanse mouth again]
idam tāmbulam aiṁ gurave namaḥ [Betel, pān, etc.]
idam mālyam aiṁ gurave namaḥ [garland]
idam sarvvaṁ aiṁ gurave namaḥ [everything]

Then chant *Guru-gāyatri* no less than twelve times.

Vijñapti [entreaty]—
tvam gopikā vṛṣaraves tanayāntike 'si
sevādhikāriṇi guro nija-pādapadma-
dāsyam pradāya kuru mām vraja-kānane-śrī-
rādhāṅghri-sevana-rase sukhinīm sukhābdhe

After this, one must offer obeisance—
ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śālākayā
chakṣur unmiṭaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ
śrī-chaitanya-mano 'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhūtale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikaṁ

rādhā-sammukha-saṁsaktiṁ sakhīsaṅga-nivāsinīm
tvāṁ ahaṁ satataṁ vande mādhavāśraya-vigrahāṁ

Next, one must worship Śrī Gaurāṅga who
appears in His fivefold Features of Pañcha-tattva.
Meditation upon Śrī Gaurāṅga—

śrīman mauktika-baddha-dāma-chikuraṁ
susmera-chandrānanaṁ
śrī-khaṇḍāguru-chāru-chitra-vasanaṁ
srag-divya-bhūṣāñchitaṁ
nṛtyāveśa-rasālu-moda-madhuraṁ
kandarpa-veśojjvalaṁ
chaitanyaṁ kanaka-dyutiṁ nija-janaīḥ
saṁsevyamānaṁ bhaje

Then with *Gaura-mantra* one must worship Śrī
Gaurāṅga with the sixteen types of offerings as was
done in *Guru-pūjā*.

On the completion of this *pūjā*, one must silent-
ly chant *Gaura-gāyatrī*.

Praṇāma-mantra is chanted as follows—
ānanda-līlāmaya-vigrahāya
hemābha-divyachchavi-sundarāya
tasmai mahāprema-rasa-pradāya
chaitanya-chandrāya namo namaste

After that, meditating in one's heart on the
Mercy of Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga, one should per-
form the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

First is meditation of Śrī Vṛndāvan, in this
way—

tato vṛndāvanaṁ dhyāyet
paramānanda-varddhanam
kāḷindī-jala-kallola-
saṅgi-māruta-sevitam
nānā-puṣpa-latā-baddha-
vṛkṣa-ṣaṇḍaiś cha maṇḍitam
koṭi-sūryya-samābhāsaṁ
vimuktaṁ ṣaṭ-taraṅgakaiḥ
tan madhye ratna-khachitaṁ
svaraṇa-simhāsaṇaṁ mahat

One must meditate upon Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa seat-
ed upon that golden jewelled throne, in this way—

śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ śrī-ghanaśyāmaṁ pūrṇānanda-kalevaram
dvibhujam sarvva-deveśam rādhāliṅgita-vigraham

As with the worship of Guru-Gaurāṅga, one must perform worship with the sixteen articles of worship through the *Kṛṣṇa-mantra* that has been given by Śrī Guru.

After that, obeisance—
he kṛṣṇa karuṇā-sindho dīna-bandho jagat-pate
gopeśa gopikā-kānta rādhākānta namo 'stu te
tapta-kāñchana-gaurāṅgi rādhe vṛndāvaneśvari
vṛṣabhānusute devi praṇamāmi haripriye

After that, one must silently chant *Kāma-gāyatrī* and *Mūl-mantra* purely, to the best of one's ability. Having done that, *Padyapañchaka* [five ślokas] and *Vijñapti* respectively should be recited.

Padyapañchaka—
saṁsāra-sāgarān nātha
putra-mitra-grhāṅganāt
goptārau me yuvām eva
prapanna-bhaya-bhañjanau [1]

yo 'haṁ mamāsti yat kiñchid
iha loka paratra cha
tat sarvvaṁ bhavato 'dyaiva
charaṇeṣu samarpitam [2]
aham apy aparādhānām
ālayas tyakta-sādhanaḥ
agatiś cha tato nāthau
bhavantau me parā gatiḥ [3]
tavāsmi rādhikā-nātha
karmmaṇā manasā girā
kṛṣṇa-kānte tavaivāsmi
yuvām eva gatiḥ mama [4]
śaraṇam tvām prapanno 'smi
karuṇā-nikarākarau
prasādam kuru dāsyam bho
mayi duṣṭe 'parādhini [5]
Vijñapti—
mat samo nāsti pāpātmā
nāparādhī cha kaśchana
parihāre 'pi lajjā me
kiṁ bruve puruṣottama [1]
yuvatīnām yathā yūni
yunām cha yuvatau yathā
mano 'bhiramate tadvat
mano me ramatām tvayi [2]

bhūmau skhalita-pādānām
 bhūmir evāvalambanam
 tvayi jātāparādhānām
 tvam eva śaraṇam prabho [3]
 govinda-vallabhe rādhe
 prārthaye tvām aham sadā
 tvadīyam iti jānātu
 govindo mām tvayā saha [4]
 rādhe vṛndāvanādhiṣe
 karuṇāmṛta-vāhini
 kṛpayā nija-pādābja-
 dāsyam mahyam pradīyatām [5]

After that, one must offer the *nirmmālya* or that
 which has just been offered and is now *Mahāprasāda*,
 to Śrī Gurudev, etc., as follows:

etat mahāprasāda-nirmmālyam śrī-gurave namaḥ
 etat pānīya-jalam śrī-gurave namaḥ
 etat prasāda-tāmbulam śrī-gurave namaḥ
 etat sarvvaṁ sarvva-sakhībhyo namaḥ
 etat sarvvaṁ śrī-paurṇamāsyai namaḥ
 etat sarvvaṁ sarvva-vrajavāsibhyo namaḥ
 etat sarvvaṁ sarvva-vaiṣṇavebhyo namaḥ

Obeisance to Vṛndāvan—
 tavāraṇye devī dhruvam iha murāri-viharati
 sadā preyasyeti śrutir api virauti smṛtir api
 iti jñātvā vṛnde charaṇam abhivande tava kṛpām
 kuruṣva kṣipram me phalatu nitarām tarṣaviṭapī

Then, the worship of Tulasī is conducted in this
 way—

nirmmālya-gandha-puṣpādi-pānīya-jalam idam
 arghyam śrī-tulasyai namaḥ

Mantra—

nirmmitā tvaṁ parādevair
 archchitā tvaṁ surāsuraibḥ
 tulasī hara me 'vidyām
 pūjām grhṇa namo 'stu te

Obeisance to Tulasī—

yā dr̥ṣṭā nikhilāgha-saṅgha-śamanī
 spr̥ṣṭā vapuḥpāvanī
 rogānām abhivanditā nirasani
 siktā 'ntaka-trāsinī
 pratyāsatti-vidhāyinī bhagavataḥ
 kṛṣṇasya saṁropitā
 nyastā tach-charaṇe subhakti-phaladā
 tasyai tulasyai namaḥ

After offering obeisances to Tulasī, one must chant the Holy Name on Tulasī-*mālā*. In taking the Name there is no consideration of time, place, purity or impurity. It is the Supreme Eternal. After that, one must recite this *mantra* and accept *Śrī Charaṇāmṛta* and take it on one's head—

aśeṣa-kleśa-niḥśeṣa-
kāraṇaṁ śuddha-bhaktidaṁ
kṛṣṇa-pādodakaṁ pītvā
śīrasā dhārayāmy aham

After that, one should accept a little *Mahāprasāda*.

rudanti pātakāḥ sarvve
niśvasanti muhur-muhuh
hāhākṛtya palāyanti
jagannāthānna-bhakṣaṇāt

Then *sāṣṭāṅga-daṇḍavat*—
daurbhyāṁ padbhyāṁ cha jānubhyāṁ
urasā śīrasā dr̥śā
manasā vachasā cheti
praṇāmāṣṭāṅga īritah

Gaura-Līlā—

rātryante śayanotthitah surasaritsnāto
vabhau yah prage
pūrvvāhne sva-gaṇair lasaty upavane
tair bhāti madhyāhnake
yah puryyām aparāhnake nija-gr̥he
sāyam gr̥he chāṅgane
śrī-vāsasya niśāmukhe niśivasan
gaurah sa no rakṣatu

Kṛṣṇa-Līlā—

kuñjād goṣṭham niśānte praviśati kurute
dohanānn āsvanādyam
prātaḥ sāyam cha līlām viharati sakhibhiḥ
saṅgave chārayan gāḥ
madhyāhne chāthanaktaṁ vilasati vipine
rādhayāddhāparāhe
goṣṭham yāti pradoṣe ramayati suhr̥do
yah sa kṛṣṇo 'vatān nah

End of morning worship duties.

In the evening, one must chant the *Mūl-mantra* and *Gāyatrī* twelve times. One should not accept any food that is unoffered to the Lord or of an *unsāttvik* nature.

One should follow to the best of one's ability the vows of Śrī Ekādaśī, the Appearance of the Supreme Lord, etc. One should never associate with the *asat* or non-devotee persons.

Before worship, this is the *mantra* for picking the required Tulasī leaves—
**tulasya amṛta-janmāsi sadā tvam keśava-priye
keśavārtham chichinomi varade bhava śobhane**

End of Archchana-kaṇa

Disappearance of Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī
Thākura
28th Dec., 1996, Śrī Govinda Dhām, Uki, N.S.W., Australia
[translation—Śrī B.A. Sāgar



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Centenary Anthology
Exclusive Guardianship
Holy Engagement
Golden Volcano of Divine Love
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Inner Fulfilment
Search for Sri Krishna—Reality the Beautiful
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Sri Guru and His Grace
Srila Guru Maharaj—His Divine Pastimes and Precepts in Brief
Sri Sri Prapanna-jivanamritam—Positive and Progressive Immortality
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