

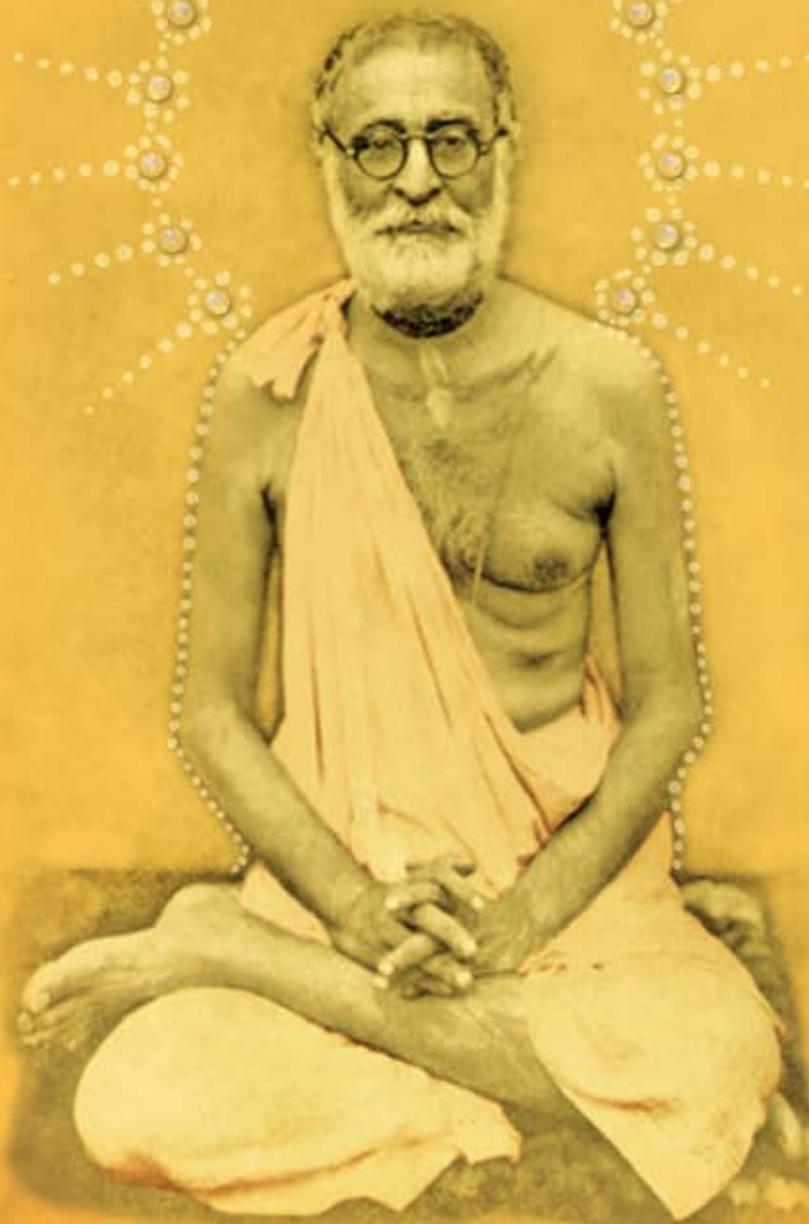
sri sri guru gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

The Harmonist

Rays of

GAUDIYA VEDANTA PUBLICATIONS

No. 19 ♪ GAURA-PŪRNIMĀ 2009



Srila Prabhupādera Upadesāmrta—

Perfect Guidance for Our True Well-being

INSIDE: • The Highest Vaiṣṇava Sees Himself as the Lowest of All • Reverence for the Mundane World is Aversion to Śrī Hari • The Esoteric Meaning of Annakūṭa • The True Meaning of Vyāsa-pūja • and more

*so 'py āścarya-mayaḥ prabhur nayanayor yan nābhavaś gocaro
yan nāsvādī hareḥ padāmbuja-rasas tad yad gatam tad gatam
etāvan mama tāvad astu jagatīm ye 'dyāpy alaṅkurvate
śrī-caitanya-pade nikhāta-manasas tair yat prasaṅgotsavah*

Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta, Verse 50
Śrīla Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī

sah – that; api – also; āścarya-mayaḥ – intrinsically full of astonishing traits; prabhuh – Mahāprabhu [Gaurahari]; nayanayoh – by the eyes; yat – due to this [misfortune]; nābhavat – does not become; gocarāḥ – visible; yat – due to this; nāsvādī – not relished; hareḥ – of Hari; padāmbuja – lotus feet; rasas – ambrosia; tat – that; yat – whatever; gatam – goes; tat – that; gatam – goes; etāvat – upto this point; mama – my; tāvat – that time; astu – let it be; jagatīm – of the earth; ye – those; adya – presently; api – even; alankurvate – decorating; śrī-caitanya – Śrī Caitanya; pade – at the lotus feet; nikhāta – immersed; manasas – mind; tair – with them; yat – that; prasanga – intimate association; utsavah – joyous festival.

*D*ue to my great misfortune, the supremely astonishing Lord, Śrī Gaurahari, was not visible to me. And, as destiny would have it, I never tasted the ambrosia of Śrī Hari's lotus feet; so be it. But I just pray to attain the joyous festival of intimate association with those of Śrī Caitanya's *bhaktas* whose minds are completely immersed in His lotus feet and who decorate the earth even today.



Rays of

The Harmonist

Gaudiya Vedanta Publications

Gaura-pūrṇimā 2009

a compilation of the first year of
the Monthly On-line Edition



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Dedicated to

ĀCĀRYA KEŚARI NITYĀ-LĪLĀ PRAVIṢṭA
OṂ VIṢṇUPĀDA AṢṭOTTARA-ŚATA ŚRĪ

*Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna
Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja*

Founder-Ācārya
of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti

He earnestly desired to re-institute the publication of all the magazines and journals that were being published during the manifest presence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

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oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī
Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

1. To protect the *vicāra-dhārā*, or current of conceptions, of the *svārūpa-rūpānuga-guru-paramparā* as presented in the modern age by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (i.e. to uproot opinions opposed to the genuine conclusions of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*).
2. To promote a co-operative effort to preach the message of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha in accordance with the last instructions of Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Editorial

By the causeless mercy of Śrī Gaurasundara, who is the most magnanimous incarnation and He who gives *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and by the nourishment coming from the rays of auspicious desire within the hearts of the preceptors in the Śrī Svarūpa-Rūpa-Bhaktivinoda-Gaura-Sarasavata-Keśava line, who are His personal associates, the *Rays of The Harmonist On-line Edition* has completed her first year.

She was inaugurated on the appearance day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda on the 26th of February, 2008, and each month she has devoutly performed *kīrtana* in glorification of the name, beauty, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārijī – the same *kīrtana* that was ordained and performed by Śrī Gaura (*gaura-vihita-kīrtana*).

Spreading like rays of light from the spiritual sun in the Gauḍīya sky, the monthly page, *Rays of The Harmonist On-line*, is uncompromisingly dedicated to serving Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga by illuminating and preserving the speciality and authenticity of their conceptions.

In the words of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda:

"The name *The Harmonist* has been adopted from *Sajjana-toṣṇī*, which literally means 'a female who pleases the Lord's own'. *Sajjana-toṣṇī* was founded by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the journal for the present movement of pure devotion.

"*The Harmonist* has dedicated herself to the service of those who are themselves loyal servants of the original Source of all harmony.

"The *vox populi* and prospects of worldly enjoyment contradicts service to the servants of the Lord. *The Harmonist* pins her faith in *Vox Dei* (the voice of the Divine) and prospects for spiritual living based thereon. She strives not to please everybody indiscriminately; rather she only strives to please the servants of the Lord.

"By trying to please those who do not serve the Lord, the prevailing confusion will be further confounded. The method adopted by *The Harmonist* for the promotion of concord has nothing in common with the methods adopted by the humanists, who rely only on themselves and their fellow-beings for attainment of their purpose.

May the current of the conceptions of those in the line of Śrī Svarūpa-Rūpa-Bhaktivinoda-Sarasvata-Keśava flow in the hearts of us all and thus inundate the entire world with its divine tidings as they pour forth from the transcendental realm. This is our sole, earnest entreaty at their lotus feet.



The spirit of this editorial is from the editorial of the *Gauḍīya*, year 16

¹ From "The Movement of Unalloyed Devotion". First printed in *The Harmonist (Śrī Sajjana-toṣṇī)* Vol. XXVII, June, 1929

We perform *bhakti* in many ways. We accept *mantra* from a *guru* belonging to an authorized *sampradāya*. Every day, we mark our bodies with the twelve *tilaka* markings and perform *arcana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We observe Ekādaśī, chant and remember the holy name according to our capability and take *darśana* of holy places like Śrī Vṛndāvana. However, when it comes to avoiding offences to Bhakti-devī, we lack prudence. This is our great misfortune.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructed all the devotees about the symptoms of offensive behaviour toward Bhakti-devī by describing the activities of Mukunda Datta. This description is found in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Madhya-khaṇḍa* 10.185, 188–190, 192):

*ksane dante trṇa laya,
kṣaṇe jāḥhi māre
o khaḍa-jāṭhiyā beṭā
nā dekhibe more*

“Sometimes Mukunda is a perfect figure of humility, approaching Me holding a straw in his teeth, but the next moment he comes to strike Me with an iron rod. I cannot bear to see that pretentious wretch.”

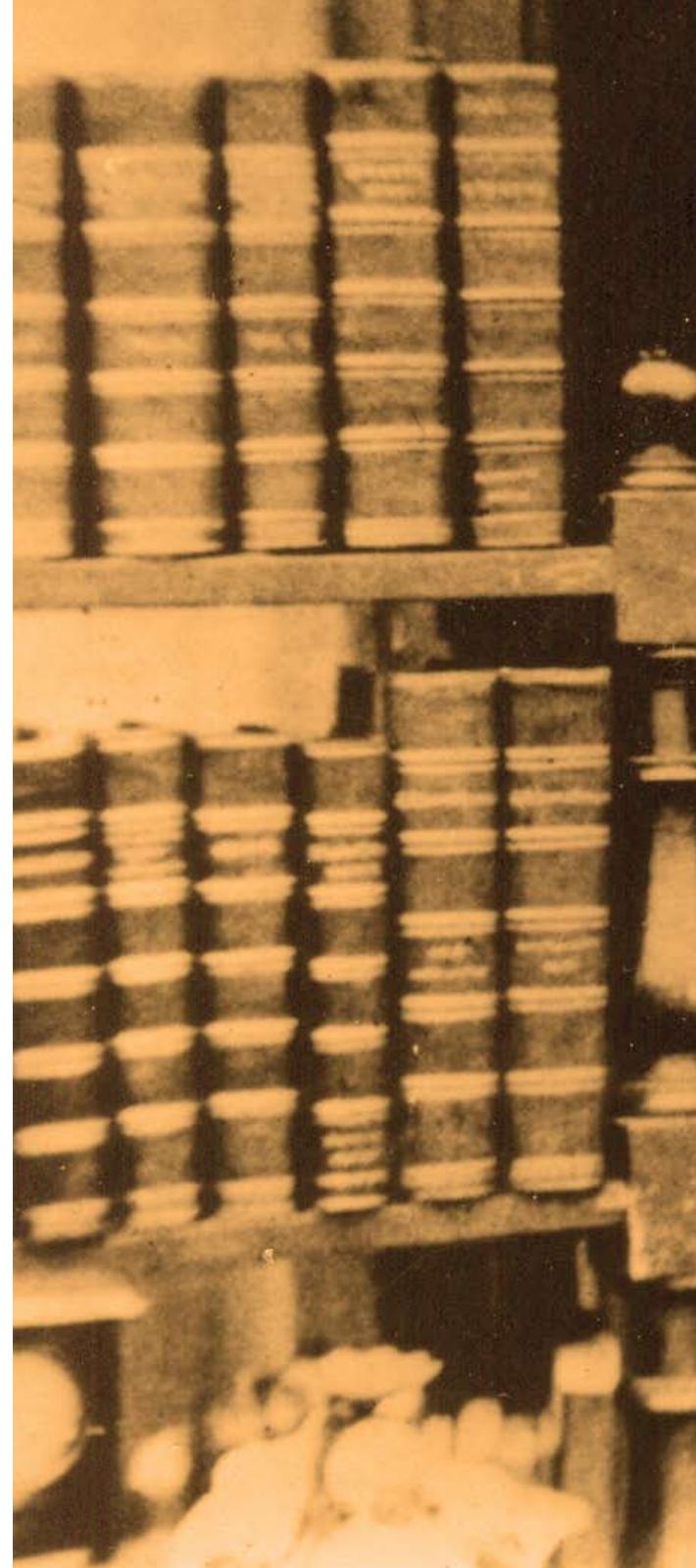
*prabhu bale, – “o beṭā
yakhana yathā yāya
sei mata kathā kahi’
tathāi miśāya*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued: “Wherever that spineless rascal goes, he simply agrees with all of the philosophical views of whoever he is with and comfortably mixes with those people.”

*vāśiṣṭha paḍaye yabe
advaitera saṅge
bhakti-yoge nāce gāya
trṇa kari’ dante*

“When he reads *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha* in the company of impersonalists he favours the impersonal Māyāvāda philosophy. But at other times, when he is among Vaiṣṇavas, he rejects the Māyāvāda doctrine and tries to exhibit symptoms of *bhakti* by singing and dancing with perfect humility.”

*anya sampradāye giyā
yakhana sāmbhāya
nāhi māne bhakti, jāḥhi
māraye sadāya*



Marking the



Appearing in English for the first time

Path of Bhakti for Sādhakas

by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

“It is the nature of a *śuddha-bhakta* to be simple, firmly resolute and one-pointed. He never advocates discussing topics that oppose *śuddha-bhakti* just to appease the masses or to gain a following.”

“And again, in the company of any other *sampradāya*, he rejects the eternity of *bhakti* and invariably condemns the *bhaktas* with aggressive words.

*bhakti-sthāne uhāra haila aparādha
eteke uhāra haila daraśana-vādha”*

“One who claims that processes such as *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* are equal to *bhakti* or even superior to it is no better than one who strikes Me with an iron rod. Such a person commits a serious offence at the feet of Bhakti-devi. Since the *bhaktas* of Bhagavān never extend their association to such offenders, I cannot agree to even see his face.”

Śrī Mukunda Datta is an eternal associate of Bhagavān so these words spoken about him by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are indeed mysterious. However, the heart of Mahāprabhu is infinitely deep and grave, so we should understand that His intention in speaking this way is to give a vital instruction: “Performing the limbs of *bhakti* merely by accepting *dikṣā* will not bring pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One can only attain His favour if one has one-pointed faith in *ananya-bhakti*¹.

Only he in whose heart such exclusive one-pointed faith (*ananya-śraddhā*) in *bhakti* has arisen becomes firmly and resolutely partial to *śuddha-bhakti*. Such a person does not visit places where discussions on *śuddha-bhakti* do not take place, but he situates himself with great relish in any place where the subject of *śuddha-bhakti* is being discussed.

It is the nature of a *śuddha-bhakta* to be simple, firmly resolute and one-pointed. He never advocates discussing topics that oppose *śuddha-bhakti* just to appease the masses or to gain a following. A *śuddha-*

bhakta is always indifferent to anything opposed to *śuddha-bhakti*.

Nowadays, many people do not fear committing the offence of acting in a way that opposes *śuddha-bhakti*. At the mere sight of a *bhakta*, tears may manifest in their eyes and horripilation on their bodies, and during a discussion about Bhagavān they may nearly faint. They may even support spiritual doctrines while among spiritual assemblies, yet later on they become so absorbed in sense objects that they act as though utterly intoxicated by the prospect of obtaining them.

O readers, what is the determination (*niṣṭhā*) of such people? Our appraisal is this:

Merely to obtain fame and recognition (*pratiṣṭhā*), these people pretentiously exhibit some symptoms of devotional sentiment in front of the *bhaktas*. Sometimes their motivation is greed for such *pratiṣṭhā*, and sometimes it is their greed for material comforts, facilities and sense objects. To achieve these ends such people behave in these diverse ways. Sadly, such people teach this behaviour to the world and thus they not only make offences to *śuddha-bhakti* but they also clear the way for the total destruction of everyone on earth.

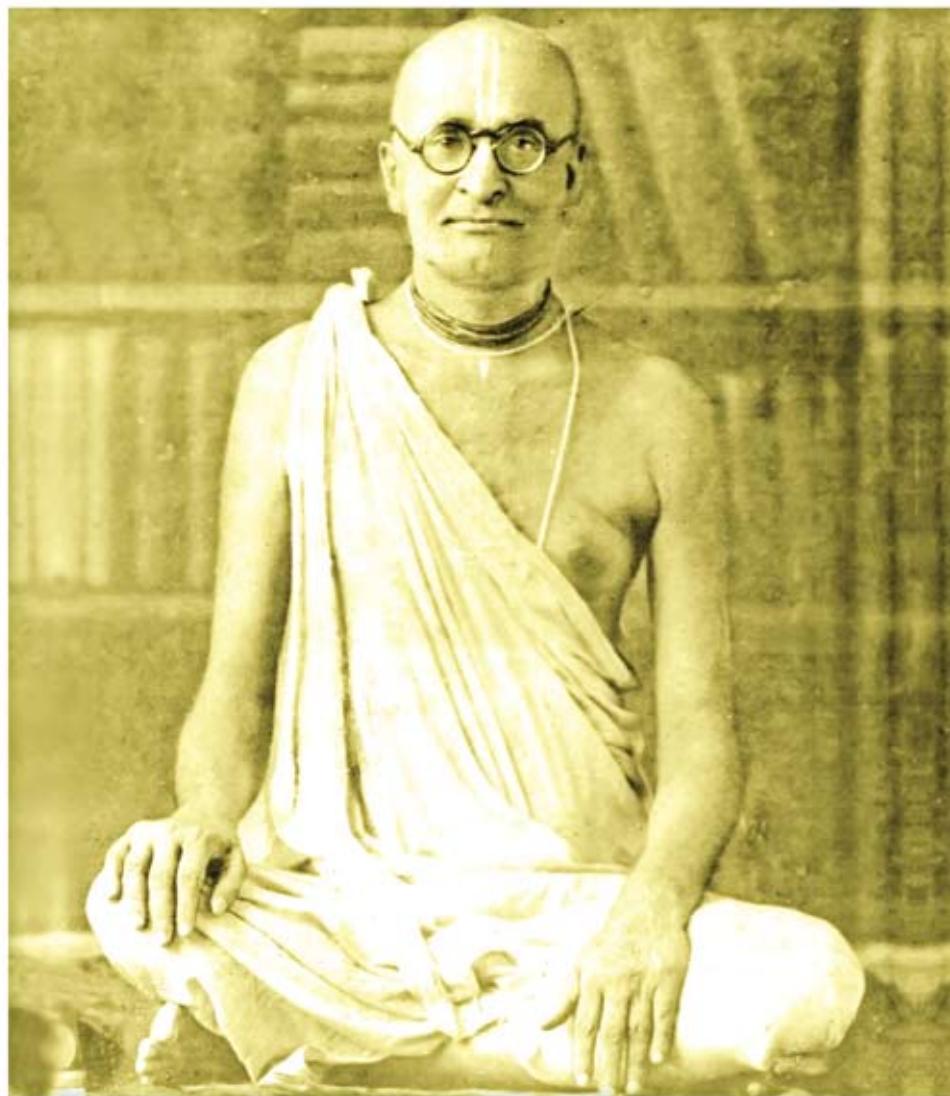
O readers, let us become careful and act in such a way that we never make any offence to Bhakti-devī. First, let us take a vow to perform *śuddha-bhakti* by remaining completely indifferent to anything that is opposed to it. We will neither speak nor act in opposition to *bhakti* just to fulfil someone’s expectations. We will maintain simplicity in every action and we will not allow our behaviour to contradict the disposition of our heart. And we will not try to gain *pratiṣṭhā* by displaying artificial symptoms of *bhakti* to those who are in fact opposed to *bhakti*.

Our bias will solely be toward *śuddha-bhakti*. We will never support any other *siddhānta*. Let our hearts and behaviour indeed be the same.

¹ The word *ananya* literally means “without another”, so *ananya-bhakti* indicates devotional service to Śrī Bhagavān unalloyed by any other doctrine.



Translated from Śrila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s
Prabhāndhāvalī



Śrīla Prabhupādera

Apadeśāmṛta

Perfect Guidance for Our True Well-being –
The Nectarean Instructions of
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Question 1: Who can understand the secrets of bhajana?

Answer: Only an exceptionally intimate servitor (*viśrambha-sevaka*) of the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva, who is the best among the ardent followers in the line of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, can fathom the mysteries of *bhajana*. An intimate servitor is a devotee with *guru-niṣṭhā*, or one who has unflinching faith in and love for the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva. The Śruti, or authorized Vedic literature, states:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanah*
Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23)

"The true import of the scriptures is revealed in the hearts of those great souls who have the same unflinching *bhakti* for their *guru* and the Supreme Lord."

Question 2: How will we attain spiritual strength?

Answer: If we serve Śrī Gurudeva with ardent devotion and love, profuse spiritual strength will enter our heart. Only by service to the spiritual master and the holy name can one attain *bhakti-bala*, the strength of devotion.

Question 3: When we act out of a sense of duty, is it *bhakti*?

Answer: Feelings of duty, debt and so forth are functions of the mind. They are not the characteristics or constitutional nature of the soul. A sense of obligation operates on the level of the mind, intelligence and false ego, whereas *bhakti* functions on the level of the soul. Any activity that is not performed out of pure love is not pure *bhakti*. Acts that are performed with divine affection are alone pure *bhakti*. Duty is but a regulation. The characteristic nature of the soul is *bhakti*, and the characteristic nature of the mind is a sense of duty. Acting according to the characteristic nature of the soul is the only way to secure our real welfare.

Question 4: What does *anyābhilāṣa* mean?

Answer: "As long as I remain in this world, I will simply gratify my senses." Such a desire, separate from the desire to please Kṛṣṇa, is *anyābhilāṣa*.

Question 5: How can one's false identity as the doer be dispelled?

Answer: Be lower than a blade of grass – in other words, identify yourself as a servant of the Supreme Lord. Then the conception of being the doer will not exist at all. At that time, one can chant Kṛṣṇa's holy name blissfully.

Question 6: When does the living entity attain his ultimate welfare?

Answer: The absolute reality becomes accessible to us only when we take shelter of the lotus feet of the spiritual master and when, surrendering ourselves fully to the spiritual master, we make service to Kṛṣṇa our life and soul.

Question 7: Whose prayers does Kṛṣṇa hear?

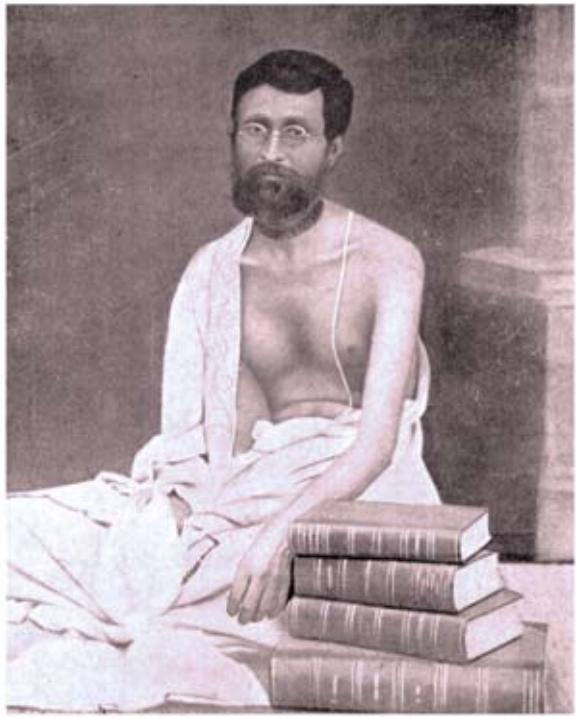
Answer: "O Kṛṣṇa, I do not desire anything from You for my own happiness. I respectfully comply with whatever You desire. If that means I have to suffer, then that suffering will be my pleasure. You are the embodiment of auspiciousness, and therefore there is nothing inauspicious in Your arrangements." If a servitor has this kind of sincere faith, Kṛṣṇa will accept his prayers; otherwise, He will not.

Question 8: Who is a real disciple?

Answer: One is only a real disciple if he can surrender fully to the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva, upon whom the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has conferred the full responsibility for his well-being.

"It is incumbent upon me to submissively accept whatever arrangements Śrī Gurudeva makes for my well-being." This is truly the attitude of a real disciple. Without it, inauspiciousness is inevitable. Real disciples are those who constantly serve the Supreme Lord under the guidance of the spiritual master, without becoming enjoyers – that is, without trying to use their senses to enjoy the sense objects.

“A sincere disciple always has the perfect awareness that besides his spiritual master, nothing in this world is his own.”



Everything in this world is an instrument for serving Śrī Guru; everything is meant for Kṛṣṇa's service. If one wishes to enjoy these instruments of service to Śrī Guru, one will never attain any auspiciousness. If we cannot perceive *guru* in everything, then inauspiciousness is inevitable for us.¹ A true disciple realizes this in the core of his heart and makes uninterrupted service to the spiritual master and to Śrī Kṛṣṇa the sole objective of his life.

A real disciple constantly has *guru-darśana*, both internally and externally. Although he regards himself as small and insignificant (*laghu*) his vision is great and profound, for he does not view anything in relation to his own enjoyment.

A sincere disciple always has the perfect awareness that besides his spiritual master, nothing in this world is his own. A real disciple is always situated in his identity as a servant of his spiritual master (*guru-dāsa*), whom

he regards as non-different from the Supreme Lord. He maintains deep faith in his spiritual master and natural love for him.

A true disciple regards the spiritual master as the kin of his soul, as very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as the object of his love and affection, as his eternal master, as eternally worshipful, and as his life and soul. A real disciple knows that Śrī Gurudeva is simultaneously the epitome of *bhakti* and an embodiment of the Supreme Lord. Śrī Gurudeva is dearer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than His own life, and is His non-different manifestation (*prakāśa-vigraha*).

There is no possibility of attaining service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa without becoming the servant of the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. Only those who perform service to Śrī Guru are real Vaiṣṇavas, or real disciples. Besides them, everyone else is *ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā*, “bewildered by false ego” [see *Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.27]. In plain words, they want to become enjoyers.

Question 9: How can one attain perfection within a single lifetime?

Answer: If one gives up one's free will and fully surrenders to Śrī Gurudeva, and then performs *bhajana* without duplicity under his guidance, one will attain perfection within a single lifetime.

¹ A true disciple does not see the ordinary objects of this world the way the common man sees them. He has *guru-darśana* in everything he does and sees. Someone who does not have *guru-darśana* sees mundane reality and looks upon things with a mood of enjoyment. Moreover *guru-darśana* means to see everything as superior to oneself and meant for Kṛṣṇa's service.

Question 10: By what means can one know Śrī Bhagavān?

Answer: One will have to hear with faith the *kathā* of Bhagavān coming from the lotus lips of Śrī Gurudeva. There is no way to know Śrī Bhagavān other than by whole-heartedly surrendering unto the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. Only a person who does so can know Śrī Bhagavān.

Question 11: What is the most severe nāma-aparādha, or offence to the holy name?

Answer: To consider Śrīla Gurudeva to be an ordinary human being is the most deadly offence, the most severe *nāma-aparādha*. By maintaining a conception of him as a mere mortal, one cannot attain auspiciousness, even in billions of births. A person with such a mundane conception of the *guru* will encounter various types of obstacles in *bhakti* and will be in danger of drowning in the ocean of material desires. Besides the lotus feet of Śrī Guru nothing can save us from the clutches of harmful association. The *jīva* is unable to surrender himself at the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva only because he considers Śrī Gurudeva to be an ordinary human being.

Question 12: What is the function of the ācārya?

Answer: The *ācārya* carries the message of Śrī Bhagavān. He comes to us to deliver the message of Vaikuṇṭha. One must accept that message of Vaikuṇṭha emanating from the lotus lips of Śrī Guru through ears imbued with a service mood. If there is full surrender, then by the mercy of the *ācārya* one can attain everything. No one besides the residents of Vaikuṇṭha can accurately deliver the message of Vaikuṇṭha. To learn about Calcutta, you must hear from one who has seen Calcutta. Only then can you receive true information about Calcutta.

Question 13: What is the real meaning of sannyāsa?

Answer: Performing uninterrupted *bhajana* of Hari is indeed real *sannyāsa*. The *sannyāsa*, or renunciation, of the devotees of Śrī Bhagavān is their rejection of sense enjoyment (*bhukti*) and liberation (*mukti*). The devotees renounce the desire for sense enjoyment and liberation, and take shelter of the lotus feet of Bhakti-devī.

Question 14: What is the function of the sādhu?

Answer: The function of the *sādhu* is to remain in touch with the Absolute Truth twenty-four hours a day. By association with such a living source, or living *sādhu*, and by hearing *hari-kathā* from him, one will inevitably develop faith in Bhagavān and one's service attitude will also awaken. Indeed, one has to associate with a *sādhu* to become a *sādhu*. If we associate with a *sādhu* by surrendering to him, then, without a doubt, anything that is a hindrance will be eradicated. Indeed, the function of the *sādhu* is to remove the fear and anxiety of those who take shelter of him or associate with him, and to bring them happiness.

The association of a *sādhu* is likened to the action of a battery.² The function of the *sādhu* is to make the people of the world, who are averse to Bhagavān, inclined towards Him. This alone is real compassion upon the living entity (*jīve dayā*). One's eternal auspiciousness is inevitable if one takes *sādhu-saṅga* thoroughly. The sole indication that a person has accepted thorough *sādhu-saṅga* is that he will hear the *kathā* of the *sādhu* with submission and surrender to him, and pass his life accordingly, immersed in devotional service. The activity of the *sādhu* is to deliver conditioned souls like us from the clutches of *māyā*.

Question 15: What kind of perspective should we accept to assure our auspiciousness?

Answer: If we can see the whole universe as engaged in the service of Śrī Bhagavān, then we will never experience any distress.

We must hear *kathā* about how to serve Bhagavān from one who can show us Bhagavān and who is engaged in service to Him twenty-four hours a day. This is the only way to attain our eternal, spiritual well-being. With their eyes of devotion, the *sādhus* who are *bhaktas*, or devotees of Bhagavān, always see Śyāmasundara Kṛṣṇa within their hearts. Through the association and mercy of such *sādhus*, we also can see Bhagavān in our hearts.

² A battery animates electric devices according to their inherent function. In the same way, the *sādhu* activates the inherent service nature of the *jīvas* who have turned away from Śrī Kṛṣṇa from a time without beginning.



“The deity is the worshipful incarnation of Bhagavān. The lord (*iṣṭa-deva*) of the *sādhu*’s heart manifests externally as the deity.”

Śrī Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī, the deity in Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Mayapura, manifested by Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura

We will constantly busy ourselves in service to Bhagavān without wasting even a single moment. We have to serve, remaining exclusively in the association of *sādhus*. By constantly remaining in such *sādhu-saṅga*, our aptitude for service will continuously be enhanced.

Bhagavān fulfils every desire of His surrendered *bhaktas* without fail, and He never rejects them – *kṛṣṇa sei satya kare, yei māge bhṛtya* (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 15.166). Only Śrī Bhagavān has the ability to protect us by giving us shelter. Other than He, no one else has such power. With such resolute faith, we can become free from fear and anxiety, and become happy and successful. Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of auspiciousness; and therefore if we have complete faith in His nature to bestow auspiciousness, we will certainly attain such auspiciousness. Words cannot express the kind of great auspiciousness that is obtained by surrendering fully at the lotus feet of Bhagavān.

Question 16: Is the deity (*śrī-vigraha*) Bhagavān Himself?

Answer: Of course. The deity of Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa Himself: “*pratimā naḥ tumi—sākṣāt vṛajendra-nandana* – You are not a statue; You are directly the son of Nanda Mahārāja” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 5.96).

The deity is the worshipful incarnation of Bhagavān. The lord (*iṣṭa-deva*) of the *sādhu*’s heart manifests externally as the deity.

Question 17: Where does a person find his guru?

Answer: Whoever Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of compassion, chooses to send to you as your *guru*, that person alone will manifest before you externally as the *mahānta-guru*, the *guru* in the form of the foremost living *sādhu*. By the mercy of Bhagavān we will obtain a *guru*, and by the mercy of the *guru* we can attain Bhagavān.

A person will get a *guru* according to his particular destiny. People of different types vary in their disposition, and therefore Bhagavān, who is omniscient, sends them each a particular type of *guru*. There are those who want *niṣkapaṭa-kṛpā*, the real mercy of Bhagavān, and who depend entirely on Bhagavān for their eternal welfare. Being pleased with such simple-hearted, sincere persons, Bhagavān Himself manifests before them as the *guru*, to bestow mercy upon them. But for those who want *kapaṭa-kṛpā*, the deceptive mercy of Bhagavān, Bhagavān’s *māyā*, or external potency, will send them a ‘*guru*’ according to the particular disposition of their heart.

There is no impediment for one who is sincere. He will very quickly meet a bona fide *guru*.

Question 18: Is it necessary to be in the association of saintly persons (*sādhu-saṅga*) at all times?

Answer: We must be in *sādhu-saṅga* at every moment. I am weak. Without *sādhu-saṅga* I cannot possibly save myself. If I remain far away from *sādhu-saṅga*, then I will fall pray to the ill-mentality that “I am the master”. If we do not live in accordance with the instructions of the *sādhu* or the *guru*, then we will be plunged into great calamity. The moment we are without shelter, *māyā* will capture us. Consequently, we will roam here and there in this material world as a servant of *māyā*.

Question 19: How is one delivered from the cycle of material existence (*samsāra*)?

Answer: Without the mercy of Bhagavān, no one can ever be delivered from material bondage. We are the eternally purchased slaves of Kṛṣṇa. As soon as we forget this, we must become the slaves of *māyā*. Only service to Bhagavān constitutes *bhakti*. The desire for sense gratification is not *bhakti* (*abbhakti*); it is entanglement in material existence. The only way to be delivered from this disastrous material existence is to hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, accompanied by self-surrender, submissive inquiry and a service attitude. By hearing *hari-kathā* with affection (*prīti*), the tendency to get entangled in material existence will come to an end.

Question 20: Should one accept disciples?

Answer: Without becoming a *śuddha-bhakta*³ or a *mukta* (liberated soul), a person should not accept disciples. First, he should become a disciple himself by taking shelter of a bona fide *guru*, and he should also hear *hari-kathā* from his lips. Then in his own life he should practise all he has heard from Śrī Guru. Thereafter, by humbly performing *kīrtana* – that is, repeating to others what he has heard – gradually he may also become a *guru* himself.

It is self-deception to think “I will intentionally remain *laghu* (insignificant) forever.” One must become *guru*⁴. This means one has to become a true devotee of

³ One of the definitions of *śuddha-bhakta* given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda is one who is free from the desire for wealth, women and fame.

⁴ A literal definition for *guru* is heavy, or weighty with

Kṛṣṇa, fully engaging all one’s senses in service to Kṛṣṇa, at every moment.

This does not necessarily mean that one must accept disciples. Still, by the desire of Bhagavān, some *śuddha-bhaktas* impart instructions for the welfare of the people in general. They are devoid of any selfish motive in doing so. Their purpose is to make those who are *laghu* (insignificant) become *guru* (significant); to make those averse to Bhagavān inclined towards Him; and to make everyone a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Question 21: Is Kṛṣṇa the wealth of the guru?

Answer: Śrīla Gurudeva is the proprietor of Bhagavān. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the wealth of Śrī Gurudeva, so only Śrī Guru can give us Bhagavān. It is solely by the mercy of Śrī Guru that one will attain Kṛṣṇa’s mercy and have *darśana* of Him.

Question 22: What does “darśana of Bhagavān” mean?

Answer: To have *darśana* of Bhagavān means cent-per-cent engagement of the senses in the service of Godhead. In other words, it means to serve Bhagavān with all of one’s senses throughout the twenty-four hours of the day. To be thus engaged is in fact to be established in *ātma-dharma* (the constitutional function of the soul) and is actual *bhagavat-darśana*. Internal and external *sphurti* (transcendental vision) of Kṛṣṇa, which arises by Śrī Guru’s mercy as well as by the influence of one’s *bhajana*, is indeed *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa.

Question 23: Is it especially necessary to have antar-darśana (internal darśana)?

Answer: Certainly. To relinquish external vision – vision aimed at enjoying this world – along with the physical forms therein, it is especially necessary to have internal vision. Someone who does not have internal vision will surely have external vision, in which he sees everything as meant for his own enjoyment. Indeed, external vision means seeing *māyā*, or illusion.

.....
significance. In other words, to perform significant service to Kṛṣṇa, one must accept heavy responsibility.

“ To think, ‘I will protect myself,’ is a fiendish, non-devotee mentality. As soon as this type of ill-thought comes, one is endangered. ”



Army mil (<http://www.flickr.com/people/soldiersmediacenter/>)

When someone is extremely eager to see the contents of the letter, he will not waste his time staring at the external envelope. If we can perceive the whole universe as engaged in the service of Bhagavān, our external vision of it will be dispelled.

“Bhagavān pervades the whole universe; everyone’s heart is His place of residence. He constantly resides in the temple of my heart to bestow upon me the opportunity to serve Him.”

When this realization intensifies and becomes strong, we will see the whole world as His residence, just as we see our heart – *ātmavat manyate jagat*. We will perceive the presence of our worshipful Lord everywhere. At that time there will be no question of having *bahir-darśana*, external vision; *itara-darśana*, separate vision from the interest of Kṛṣṇa; *laghu-darśana*, insignificant vision; *viśva-darśana*, objective vision of the phenomenal universe; and so forth. Only then will we perceive the whole world to be full of transcendental happiness.

Question 24: Can I protect myself?

Answer: Never. To think, “I will protect myself,” is a fiendish, non-devotee mentality. As soon as this type of ill-thought comes, one is endangered.

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my sole protector. What do I have to fear?” We should exclusively imbibe this exalted conception, just as Bhakta Prahlāda Mahārāja did. If we become indifferent to the narrations and instructions of Śrī Bhagavān, then soon after, our reliance on Him will

lessen. As a result of this, our various ill-thoughts and our false egos will place us in a calamitous situation.

We will constantly busy ourselves in service to Bhagavān without wasting even a single moment. We have to serve, remaining exclusively in the association of *sādhus*. By constantly remaining in such *sādhu-saṅga*, our aptitude for service will continuously be enhanced.

Bhagavān fulfills every desire of His surrendered *bhaktas* without fail, and He never rejects them – *kṛṣṇa sei satya kare, yei māge bhṛtya* (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 15.166). Only Śrī Bhagavān has the ability to protect us by giving us shelter. Other than He, no one else has such power. With such resolute faith, we can become free from fear and anxiety, and become happy and successful. Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of auspiciousness, and therefore, if we have complete faith in His nature to bestow auspiciousness, we will certainly attain such auspiciousness. Words cannot express the kind of great auspiciousness that is obtained by surrendering fully at the lotus feet of Bhagavān.

Question 25: Who will be delivered?

Answer: It is only when we do not engage ourselves in service to Bhagavān that other thoughts, characteristic of the enjoying mentality, grasp us. The embodiment of compassion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is always ready to protect us from this danger, but how will we be protected if we do not entirely depend upon Him? As the *guru*, Kṛṣṇa protects the *jīva*. Śrī Guru is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa’s

mercy. Śrī Gurudeva, the representative of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, descends to this world to deliver the *jīva* from material existence and bring him back to Kṛṣṇa. Only those fortunate seekers of the Truth who whole-heartedly accept the mercy of Śrī Gurudeva can be delivered from this material existence and enter into the abode of transcendental peace and happiness.

Question 26: How will I attain spiritual well-being?

Answer: “Kṛṣṇa is my eternal master and I am His eternal servant.” When we are fortunate to have this knowledge or realization come into our life, then all inauspiciousness will be burnt to ashes and all auspiciousness will become accessible to us.

Question 27: What is the path to our auspiciousness?

Answer: The sole path to auspiciousness, whether we are amidst prosperity or calamity, is to fully surrender ourselves at the lotus feet of Bhagavān.

If someone abandons the attitude of surrender, “Kṛṣṇa will certainly protect me,” and instead pretends to be his own protector, then, at once, he will in fact become the cause of his own utter ruination. In all respects, depending on Kṛṣṇa is most beneficial. If we do not, we will surely suffer, birth after birth. Śrī Bhagavān, who is affectionate to His devotees, accepts full responsibility for those who take shelter of Him. It is best if we become fully dependent on Him as soon as possible.

Question 28: Who is a bhakta?

Answer: A *bhakta* is exclusively he who gives up his own happiness for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s happiness, who gives up his own sense enjoyment for His enjoyment, and who can thus remain constantly engaged in serving Him. He alone will attain auspiciousness.

The tendency to give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa is *bhakti*. The disposition characterized by the thought “I must remain in a state of happiness”, wherein we simply desire our own happiness, is *abhakti*, or the antithesis of *bhakti*. It will only bring us distress.

The *abhaktas* (non-devotees), thinking they can imitate Śrī Kṛṣṇa, consider, “I will live a mundane, sensual life, enjoying with women.”

Rather than accepting the ideals of the *abhaktas*, we must become inspired by the ideals of the *bhaktas*. Only then will our lives become auspicious.

If we do not constantly engage ourselves in Kṛṣṇa’s service, then we will either become a *bhogī* (one who chases after sense objects) or a *tyāgī* (one who runs away from sense objects), but we cannot become a *bhakta*.

Question 29: What is the process by which one can attain *bhagavad-darśana*, or direct personal audience with Śrī Bhagavān?

Answer: Under Śrī Guru’s guidance, become saturated with a mood of service and wait expectantly for Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. This alone is the way to attain *darśana* of Bhagavān.

The verse, *tat te nukampām...⁵* gives evidence of this; *bhagavad-darśana*, direct personal audience with Śrī Bhagavān, comes through Śrī Guru, the transparent via medium.

The path of *śuddha-bhakti*, or pure *bhakti*, is most certainly the path to *bhagavad-darśana*.

Question 30: How will I attain service to Kṛṣṇa?

Answer: Without being *mukta*, or in the liberated state, one does not attain the qualification to serve Kṛṣṇa. Only one who surrenders everything at Bhagavān’s lotus feet is factually liberated.

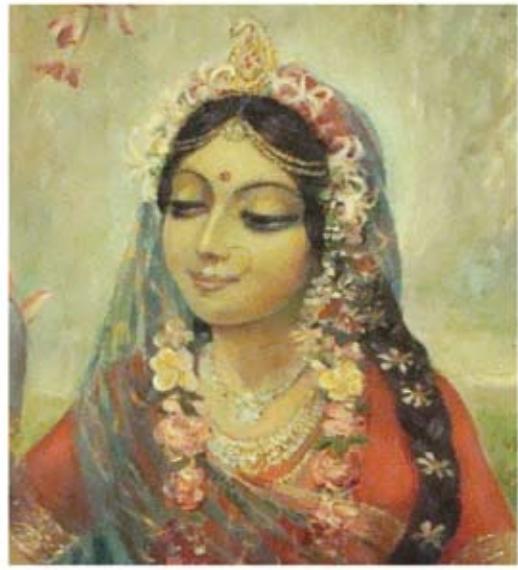
Reluctance in offering everything to Bhagavān is no doubt symptomatic of the shackled living entities’ state of aversion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Liberated souls render service to Kṛṣṇa by offering Him everything they possess. They make every possible endeavour for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure and welfare. But it is not possible to become liberated or to surrender everything to Kṛṣṇa in this way without receiving the mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the asset of Śrī Gurudeva. No one can attain Kṛṣṇa unless Śrī Gurudeva delivers Him to us. Therefore, without rendering service to Śrī Gurudeva, one never becomes eligible to render service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

To serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one must first become Śrī Guru’s possession. By this alone one will attain this service (*kṛṣṇa-sevā*). In the absence of subordination to Śrī Guru

⁵ Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.8

“When Śrī Vārṣabhāṇavī-devī (Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu) accepts someone as one of Her own – as a *rūpānuga*, or one of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī – then, only, is the full mercy of Kṛṣṇa accessible to him.”



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(*guru-ānugatya*) and service to him (*guru-sevā*), *kṛṣṇa-sevā* is impossible.

Question 31: Are we the servants of śrī nāma?

Answer: Certainly. In our self-realized state, or our constitutional state, our only activity is to serve Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's name is truly Kṛṣṇa Himself; therefore, service to *śrī nāma* is indeed service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

As soon as we forget our service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa or *śrī nāma*, we forget our constitutional nature. In the resultant state of distorted consciousness, we undergo suffering, being grasped by the jaws of *māyā* (the illusory energy).

By the mercy of Śrī Guru, when *sambandha-jñāna* (knowledge of our relationship with the absolute) is awakened, we come to know that we are the eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa and we realize that, *īśāvāsyam idam sarvam*, every object throughout the universe is an instrument for serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Those who desire eternal happiness upon deliverance from material existence must incessantly perform *kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. This alone is the instruction of Mahāprabhu. Therefore, the devotee sees that he is the servant of *śrī nāma*, that every living entity within this universe is meant to bring joy to Kṛṣṇa, and that each and every object is an instrument to be used in serving Him.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy name is *akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the ocean of transcendental humours; He is *sac-cid-*

ānanda-vigraha, the condensed form of eternity, cognizance and bliss; and He is Śrī Śyāmasundara, Yaśodānandana.⁶

Service to *akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma* is alone service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Therefore, the devotees please Śrī Guru and Kṛṣṇa by rendering uninterrupted service to Kṛṣṇa through the medium of *śrī-nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Question 32: By what means can one receive the complete mercy of Kṛṣṇa?

Answer: When Śrī Vārṣabhāṇavī-devī (Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu) accepts someone as one of Her own – as a *rūpānuga*, or one of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī – then, only, is the full mercy of Kṛṣṇa accessible to him. He can only attain this fortune if he can become the *kiṅkarā*⁷ of Śrī Guru, who is himself the best of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī.

⁶ The name Śyāmasundara is a reference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's exquisite beauty and to His extraordinary dark blue complexion. The name Yaśodānandana is a reference to His playful childhood pastimes as the son of Yaśodā-gopī, the queen of Vraja.

⁷ The word *kiṅkarā* (*kiṁ* means “what” and *kara* means “to do”) indicates the question, “What should I do?” A *kiṅkarā* is one who is always eagerly ready to serve with the mood, “What shall I do to serve you? What service shall I do? What may I do for you?”

It is thus necessary for each and every one of us to become *trṇād api sunīca*, more humble than a blade of grass. To become *trṇād api sunīca*, we shall have to forsake our present identity, qualities and possessions, and identify ourselves as the servant, or *kiñkarā*, of Śrī Guru and *śrī nāma*.

Question 33: Who can become a real guru?

Answer: One who considers himself to be a Vaiṣṇava is branded “Avaiṣṇava” (a non Vaiṣṇava), and one who considers himself to be *guru*, or superior to others, is totally unfit to be a *guru*. Only one who regards himself as the disciple of the disciple of Śrī Guru is capable of becoming a *guru*. Only a *guru-niṣṭhā bhakta*, one who has unflinching *bhakti* unto Śrīla Gurudeva and Bhagavān alike, can perform the function of *guru*.

Question 34: How will we attain service to Śrī Bhagavān?

Answer: The day we realize that Śrī Gurudeva – who is *sevā-vigraha*, the embodiment of service – is non-different from Śrī Caitanyadeva, we will obtain service to Śrī Gaurasundara. On that day we will obtain the fortune of performing confidential service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. Only when we realize that the *mahānta-gurudeva*, or foremost of Vaiṣṇavas performing the function of *guru*, is a direct personal associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva, will the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda manifest in our pure and spotless hearts.

Question 35: How will we understand the subject matter of Vaiṣṇava philosophy?

Answer: A person may be a great scholar or a great thinker, but until he accepts the shelter of an *ācārya*, whose character is the very embodiment of Vaiṣṇava philosophy, he cannot embrace the philosophy of Vaiṣṇavism within his heart. It is stated in *Gītā* (4.34):

*tad viddhi pranipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninās tattva-darśināḥ*

Acquire this knowledge by offering prostrated obeisances to a *guru* who imparts transcendental

knowledge, by asking him relevant questions and by rendering service to him. Those who have seen the truth, who are expert in the imports of *śāstra*, and the *jñānīs* who have realised the Absolute Reality, will enlighten you with that knowledge.

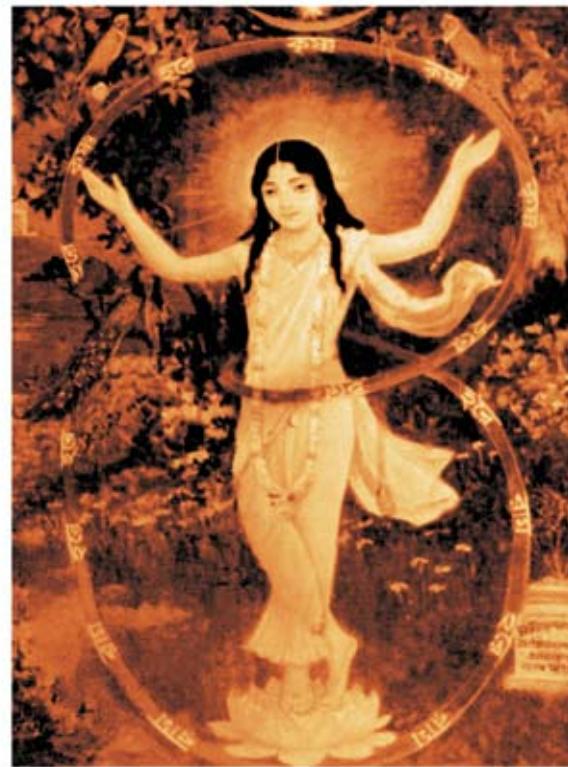
In other words, if anyone possesses the three qualities of unconditional surrender, honest enquiry and a serving temperament, he can understand Vaiṣṇava philosophy. When someone who possesses these three types of *dakṣinā*, or genuine offerings of submission, presents himself before an *ācārya*, the *ācārya* instructs him on the philosophical truths of Vaiṣṇavism. No type of mundane, or material, *dakṣinā* ever tempts the instructing *ācāryas* of Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

Question 36: Is the gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu the highest benefaction?

Answer: Indeed. There is no higher benefactor than Mahāprabhu and His devotees, nor will there ever be. In the name of benevolence, other types of altruism cause harm, whereas the benevolence of Mahāprabhu and His devotees is truly the eternal and supreme benevolence. Such benevolence does not last only for two to ten days. It is not a temporary charity that causes pain and misery after some time. Nor is it a benevolence by which one party is benefited while the other is harmed, as when one country benefits at the expense of other countries. Others are distressed for the sake of my temporary happiness; and when others are happy, I feel no enjoyment. For my own convenience I can ride on a horse-drawn cart, but the horse is inevitably inconvenienced.

Mahāprabhu and His associates never deceived humanity at large by propagating this type of mundane benevolence. Their contribution, their benefaction, offers the paramount benefit to all living entities – at all the times and in all circumstances. Their benevolence does not benefit one particular country and harm another. Their benefaction is for the whole universe. Therefore, Mahāprabhu and His associates never propagated narrow-minded, communal and temporal benefits. The benevolence of Mahāprabhu never resulted in injustice to anyone. It is therefore known as *amanda-udaya-dayā* – compassion that never causes harm or injustice to anybody but bestows the highest auspiciousness. For this reason it is said that Mahāprabhu is greatly munificent

“Mahāprabhu’s compassion is complete, and all other types of compassion are limited and deceitful.”



(*mahā-vadānya*) and His devotees are magnanimous to the highest degree (*mahā-mahā-vadānya*). This is not a story or tale, nor is it mere poetry or a literary work; it is the subject matter of the highest truth.

Mahāprabhu’s compassion is complete, and all other types of compassion are limited and deceitful. All other *avatāras*, such as Matsyadeva (the fish incarnation), Kūrmadeva (the tortoise incarnation), Varāhadeva (the boar incarnation), Lord Rāmacandra, and even Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, have bestowed Their compassion only upon those who surrendered to Them, and They annihilated those who were antagonistic to Them. Mahāprabhu, however, bestowed His compassion even to those who were antagonistic to Him, such as the Chand Kazi and the followers of Buddhism in South India. He never hesitated to distribute His *amanda-udaya-dayā*.

Question 37: How will I know that I have gained sambandha-jñāna?

Answer: *Sambandha-jñāna* is obtained by the mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, who bestows transcendental knowledge. The day one realizes one’s eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa

(*sambandha-jñāna*) by the mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, one will understand, “Kṛṣṇa is my only eternal master, and I am His eternal servant. Service to Kṛṣṇa is indeed my eternal occupation.”

Kṛṣṇa is the sovereign emperor of the whole universe as well as of all the transcendental Vaikuṇṭha planets, which lie beyond this universe. Therefore, no one can refrain from worshipping Him. There is no advantage, however, to worshipping Him indirectly. Those who worship the sun god or Gaṇeśa or Kṛṣṇa’s Śakti-devī are in fact worshipping Kṛṣṇa’s shadow potency, for no one exists independently of Kṛṣṇa. Someone who worships the shadow potency is unable to gain knowledge and realization of his own eternal, constitutional form (*svarūpa-jñāna*) or of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha-jñāna*).



Translated from *Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta*⁸
Questions re-numbered for the monthly on-line editions

⁸ *Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta* is a compilation of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda’s instructions, in question-and-answer form.

Reverence for the is Aversion to Śri

A letter written by

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Appearing in English for the first time

Mundane World Hari

śrī śrī krṣṇa-caitanya-candrau vijayatetamam

Sarasvat Catuspathi
181 Manikatala Street
Vidan Square, Calcutta
26 February, 1918

[The name of the recipient did not appear in the published Bengali letter.]

Today I received your kind letter, dated 24th February. I arrived here last week. By the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I am feeling unaffected by the dejection of this world, which is averse to Him.

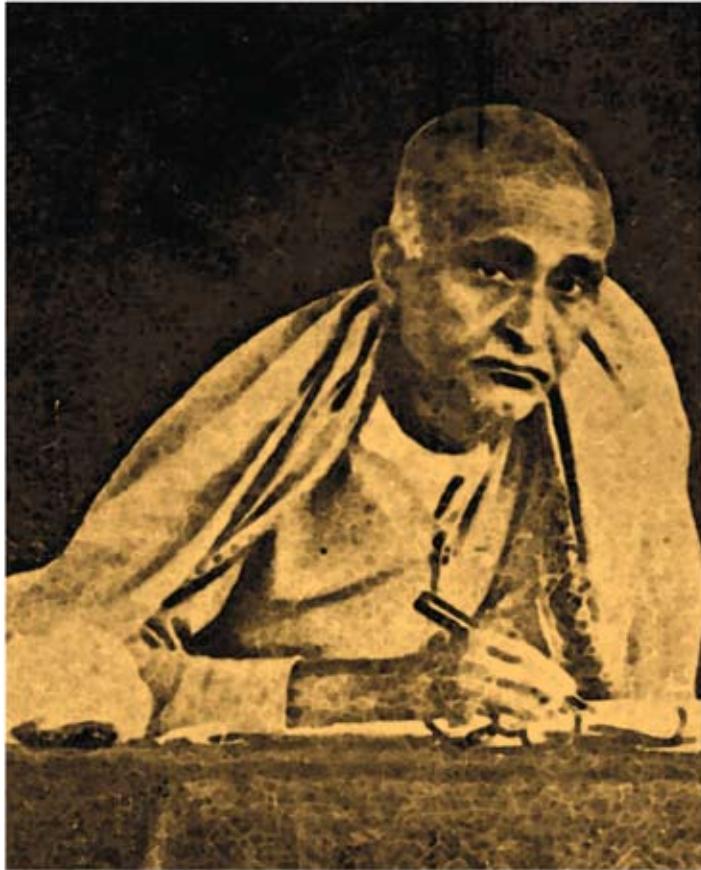
It is inappropriate to associate with anyone other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His *bhaktas*. That association alone is full of auspiciousness, purpose and eternality. Detrimental association (*duḥṣāṅga*), or in other words, association with anyone or anything that is not in a transcendental relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is truly inauspicious for us. For this reason, you should not value anything that is neither Kṛṣṇa nor *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

Your dreams are baseless, a mere depiction of your own thoughts in relation to sense-enjoyment and the result of past bad association. Therefore, eliminate such ideas and impressions from your heart.

*divyam jñānam yato dadyāt
kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmāt dīkṣeti sā proktā
deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ*

That spiritual undertaking which awakens *divya-jñāna* (transcendental knowledge) and destroys all sinful reactions at the root is called *dīkṣā* by authorities learned in the Absolute Truth.

How can one who is unable to vanquish your conception as the enjoyer of this visible material world be able to liberate your



In this material world,
if the false egos of being
an observer, a judge, an
enjoyer, a knowledgeable
person and so on, prevail,
then even endeavours
that are centred around
Śrī Hari appear to be
material, or just like
any mundane activity.

mind? Someone who discusses spiritual matters or practises spiritual life with those who are entrapped by the snake-like noose of worldly enjoyment will become infected with desire to enjoy sense objects. Therefore, my humble advice to anyone who aspires for his own auspiciousness is that he must always remember the following *śloka*, which was uttered by Mahāprabhu Himself:

*niṣkiñcanasya bhagavad-bhajanomukhasya
pāram param jigamiṣor bhava-sāgarasya
sandarśanam visayinām atha yoṣitām ca
hā hanta hanta viṣa-bhakṣṇato 'py asādhu*

Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka (8.23)

Alas! For someone who is seriously engaged in cultivating devotional service (*bhagavad-bhajana*) so that he may cross the ocean of nescience, and who has completely abandoned all material activities, it is considered more abominable to expectantly see a *visayī* (sense enjoyer) or to savour gazing at a woman, than to willingly drink poison.

To discuss spiritual topics with friends who are worshippers of Goddess Durgā (the shadow of the pure spiritual potency) does nothing but validate bad association (*duḥṣaṅga*). The one and only result one attains from this bad association is aversion to Kṛṣṇa, even within one's dreams. You still hold this mundane world in high esteem and reverentially consider it more important than Kṛṣṇa. This reverence for the mundane world is alone our aversion to Śrī Hari. You should abandon such a mentality and honour the words of saintly persons. Only then can the desire to enjoy the objects of the senses, which is implanted deeply in the heart, be uprooted. Mundane thoughts and the false notion of being an enjoyer will continue to trouble you as long as you remain eager to acquire that which is not Śrī Kṛṣṇa, considering yourself to be a beggar for the mundane objects of this world – just like the fruitive worker, who wants to enjoy the results of his action.

If a person is able to chant the names of Śrī Hari without offences, it should be understood that certainly, in his previous birth, he ceased engaging in pursuits that are fully aimed at enjoying the fruits

of his *karma*, and so forth. One becomes inclined to chant the holy names of Śrī Hari as a result of *dikṣā* only. You are a servant of Śrī Hari (*hari-dāsa*), free from the bindings of *karma*. Why, then, are you again inclined to external pursuits, such as the performance of fruitive action? While trying to mitigate the effects of *karma* at their root, you have again developed an inclination to enjoy the fruits of your action. Have you not chanted the holy name of Śrī Hari, even once?

As long as the *jīva* is foolish and considers himself crippled by material lacking, an inclination to perform action (*karma*) arises in him. Thus in order to become wealthy, he again invokes the propensity to perform actions based on sense enjoyment. Those servants of Śrī Hari who are liberated from these worldly conceptions engage themselves solely in chanting the holy names of Śrī Hari. Since the materially conditioned *jīvas* cannot comprehend their own position as eternal servants of Śrī Hari, they become elevationists¹, and thus invoke heresy.

Why is a person like you, devoted to chanting the holy name as you are, busying himself with such activities? You should always keep in mind that one cannot attain Kṛṣṇa while in bad association (*duḥṣaṅga*). Only when one discards detrimental association and keeps association with devotees (*sādhu-saṅga*) can one achieve the lotus feet of Śrī Hari. To speak anything further in this regard would be superfluous.

Your conjecture as to who has written all of the articles in *Śrī Sajjana-toṣṇī*, except the one entitled “Duḥṣaṅga”, is correct. From the beginning, his written language has been unrelenting and firm. You can present his writing in milder and sweeter language for the benefit of society at large, and in this way make up for this apparent deficit. However, by *amūśilana* (perpetual endeavour), or by reading these articles again and again, you also will awaken your eternal, constitutional tendency. At that time you will be able to see that this seemingly harsh language is actually soft.

Why do you see the visible worldly objects of sense gratification as a non-devotee sees them? You should try to perceive these material sense objects in

¹ Śrīla Prabhupāda used this word in English in his original letter to indicate those who are dedicated to attaining worldly promotion.

relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and in this way, they will not be able to cause you any harm. Moreover, it is incorrect to consider that a devotee derives worldly happiness or distress from mundane sense objects. Under the influence of the material conception of life, wherein one perceives the objects related to Śrī Hari as objects of one's own sense enjoyment, attachment to such sense objects intensifies, eventually terminating in mere material happiness.

Not a scent of *kṛṣṇa-prema* exists in material happiness. The pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are not material. Rather, they are matters of the spiritual world (*vaikuṇṭha-vastu*) and thus are not subservient to your mundane consideration. Always spend your time in *sādhu-saṅga* and grounded in intelligence that is devoted to the service of *sādhus*.

In this material world, if the false egos of being an observer, a judge, an enjoyer, a knowledgeable person and so on, prevail, then even endeavours that are centred around Śrī Hari appear to be material, or just like any mundane activity. Following in the footsteps of Vaiṣṇavas, try to perceive this visible, material world as saturated with the transcendental nature of Śrī Hari (*hari-bhava-maya*), or in other words, as engaged in the service of Śrī Hari (*hari-sevonmukha*). You should understand that your body, words and mind are always to be engaged in the service of Śrī Hari. It is imperative to perform all one's endeavours solely for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajendra-nandana, who is *advaya-jñāna* (the single, non-dual truth), and His servitors are not mundane entities of this world. They are not subordinate to your material sense perception. When one develops the proclivity to serve, then, through one's internal, spiritual senses, which are imbued with one's identity as a servitor, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are perceived as the only true objects of service.

I hope you are well.

Śuddha-Vaiṣṇava dāsa-anudāsa
Akiñcanā,
Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī

 Translated from *Śrīla Prabhupādera Patrāvalī*,
a compilation of letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

In the very beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in its middle and at its end, we have been repeatedly advised about the efficacy of *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The principle of *śrī nāma-bhajana* (loving service to the holy name) is deeply set at the root of the limb of devotion called *mathurā-vāsa*, or *śrī dhāma-vāsa* – residence in the places of Śrī Bhagavān's pastimes – for these holy places are frequently visited by *sādhus* who are always engaged in *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Furthermore, the principle of chanting the holy name accompanies the service of *śrī mūrti*, the transcendental deity, for it is conducted with *mantras* (incantations) framed with Śrī Bhagavān's names. Thus *śrī nāma-kīrtana* is glorified above all, and all success is available through it.

We also have the statement from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.70):

*bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
'krṣṇa-prema', 'krṣṇa' dite dhare mahā-śakti*

Among all forms of *bhajana* (loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa) the nine limbs of *bhakti* are best, for they have the great power to bestow both *krṣṇa-prema* and Kṛṣṇa.

The foremost of these nine types of *bhajana*, again, is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. One who chants the holy names without making spiritual offences (*aparādhas*) is sure to gain the wealth of transcendent love.

In the *Bhakti-sandarbha* (273) we find the following statement:

Even if, in Kali-yuga, there is some other form of devotion ordained as duty, that duty should be performed along with the limb of *bhakti* known as *kīrtana*.

No kind of *bhakti* – such as residence in Mathurā, association with holy saints, service to *śrī mūrti* or hearing the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – is complete without *śrī krṣṇa-nāma-kīrtana*. Only one who gives importance to *śrī krṣṇa-nāma-kīrtana* above everything else has access to the fruit it bears.

In *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (11.137), a verse from an ancient scripture is cited:

*yena janma-śataiḥ pūrvavivāsudevaḥ samārcitaḥ
tan-mukhe hari-nāmāni sadā tiṣṭhanti bhārata*



Śrī nāma-

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

The holy names of Śrī Hari are always present on the lips of a person who has been properly worshipping Him – Śrī Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa – for hundreds of lives.

Indeed, among all spiritual practices, *saṅkīrtana* is the best and foremost means of attaining the grace of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Other types of *sādhana*, or devotional practices, are only worthy of being called *sādhana* if they favourably assist the performance of *saṅkīrtana*; otherwise they should be known as obstructions to actual *sādhana*. Whether one is a child or an old or young man, male or female, learned or



“ As long as we do not join the perfect *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* conducted by genuine devotees, *māyā* will delude us in various ways. And if we join the *kīrtana* of the blinded self-deceivers, who are not anxious for their true well-being, then surely we will not attain our own true well-being. ”

saṅkīrtana

illiterate, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, pious or sinful – regardless of the condition of life someone may be in – there is no spiritual practice for him other than *śrī kṛṣṇa nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Kīrtana is called *saṅkīrtana* when many people perform it together. But will it be worthy of the name *saṅkīrtana* if some worthless people, without any ardour for Śrī Bhagavān’s service, come together to shout in unison? It will be true *hari-saṅkīrtana* when we join the *saṅkīrtana* of true devotees who are serving Śrī Bhagavān according to the principles established in the Vedas and allied *sāstras*. Contrastingly, it is not *hari-*

sankīrtana when it is conducted for the prevention of the epidemics of cholera or pox, for prosperity in trade, for gain or for respect and fame. This *kīrtana* is *māyā-kīrtana* – chanting within the jurisdiction of the illusory potency.

As long as we do not join the perfect *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* conducted by genuine devotees, *māyā* will delude us in various ways. And if we join the *kīrtana* of the blinded self-deceivers, who are not anxious for their true well-being, then surely we will not attain our own true well-being. If we follow people who never receive instructions from the true Vaiṣṇavas but just imitate them by decorating their bodies with *tulasī* beads and other marks, and who shout out what appears to be names of God in external sound alone, we will not find *śrī hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*.



Adapted from *The Gauḍiya*, Volume 23, Number 10



**“Without any delay,
Godhead enters the heart
of one who constantly and
faithfully hears and chants
the narrations of His
transcendental activities.”**

Chant the to others or

We shall be enabled to realize our lasting good if only we place ourselves wholly under the protective guidance of Śrīla Vyāsadeva. Note in particular a verse from one of the Upaniṣads that tells of having vision of the Golden Lord: “*yadā paśyāḥ paśyate rukma-varṇāṁ*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, appears in a form the colour of molten gold (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.3*).” Our lasting good will be the repercussion of learning to view that Unlimited Entity by means of transcendental service, which links us to Him, engaging our thoughts in Him and seeking to attain knowledge of Him in loyal pursuance of the teachings of Śrī Vyāsa.

In the act of listening to discourses about the Transcendental Entity, the faculty of hearing will expand and acquire new powers. The transcendental word chanted by Devaṛṣi Nārada made His way into the cavity of Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s ear. He was thus enabled to have a vision of the Absolute Personality. Under the influence of the domineering aptitude that prevails in this mundane world, we adopt the cults of hero-worship and apotheosis on the one hand, or, on the other hand, we become anthropomorphists, zoomorphists and the like.¹ By being infected with these respective modes of thought, Godhead will surely reveal Himself to us in just the way we chose to embellish Him.

.....
¹ Apotheosis refers to declaring a mortal man to be God or a god, and conversely, anthropomorphism in this context indicates the tendency to mistake God as a mortal man (or animal, as with zoomorphism).

Transcendental Word

He will be eclipsed

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

If we abuse the prerogative of human life, if we choose to consider ourselves to be on an equal footing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then we shall fall into the snare of delusion and be consigned to perdition. The consequence of conceitedly supposing oneself to be master in one's own right has been analyzed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva in the verses *ye 'nye aravindākṣa* – those who approach the platform of liberation egoistically claim to be liberated, but they fall down again by neglecting the lotus feet of the Lord (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.32), “*jñānī prayasam* – one should give up trying to know Godhead through the empirical process” (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.3), and “*sreyah-sṛitī bhaktim* – the effort of cultivating knowledge that is devoid of *bhakti* is as useless as beating empty husks of grain” (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.4). We are truly benefited by listening attentively to these discourses of his.

“Without any delay, Godhead enters the heart of one who constantly and faithfully hears and chants the narrations of His transcendental activities.” Our real good is assured if we have the good fortune to hear the word of Godhead at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru. The divine master constantly chants the word of Godhead. He has no other function.

It is imperative that we listen to and accept the word chanted by Śrī Guru and yet, even after we have been enabled to receive the word issuing from the lotus lips of Śrī Guru, we still cannot retain Him, for He tends to be eclipsed if He is not chanted to others. If we busy ourselves in any unnecessary pursuit by abstaining from chanting the word received from Śrī Gurudeva, we lose our connection to the eternal entity and render ourselves fit for welcoming sorrow:

*tat te 'mukampāṁ su-samikṣamāṇo
bhūñjāna evātma-kṛtam vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vapurbhir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk*
(*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8)

A person is entitled to the treasure of serving the lotus feet of Godhead, who redeems us of our worldly bondage, if he lives with his heart, speech and body submitted to Him and if, through his good vision, he truly sees the mercy of Godhead in the sufferings he brought about by his own deeds. There is no other way of being delivered from this world. Whatever Godhead does is for our good. We can be redeemed if we behold His mercy in every event and in every activity. But if we notice any defect in His work, or realise any cruelty therein, it is sure to result in evilness and difficulty.

All my difficulty is due to the fact that I happen to be engrossed in activities other than serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If my taste for serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa truly increases day by day, then I shall be blessed indeed. He who engages us in activities of this nature is certainly Śrī Gurudeva. The line of genuine *gurus* consists only of persons who are loyal followers of Śrī Vyāsadeva.

Just by being touched by my Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus feet, I lost all sense of this external world. I do not know if any transcendental agent equal to him in greatness has ever appeared in this world. How may those who are busy with the likes of lust and anger present in this world, ever know him?

 Adapted from *The Gauḍiya*, Volume 24, Number 5

The Highest Vaiṣṇava Sees Himself as the Lowest of All

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Those who are fit possess an abundant power of devotion. They are strong. I should not apply myself to finding out the shortcomings of the Vaiṣṇavas, condemning service to Lord Viṣṇu or seeking to establish my own point of view by neglecting the method that may enable me to serve the Lord and His devotees. No language can describe the havoc that is wrought in human life by such arrogance. I make this submission with all humility: “Kindly refrain from merely imitating the conduct of the Vaiṣṇavas and please always follow their line of thought.” There is no relationship for us other than with the devotees of Viṣṇu. Relationship with other people can only aggravate the desire for sensuous gratification.

Many years have now passed over me one by one. I at last realize that there is no other help for me than the mercy of the holy feet of the Vaiṣṇavas. Every one of my acts is worthy of contempt. Yet I pray to those who look upon me from above that, if they consider it allowable for me to follow their conduct and teachings, they enable me to no longer have a contemptible attitude. I pray to them to kindly impart to me the strength and fitness needed in order to communicate their power to those who are unintelligent, ignorant and devoid of all strength.

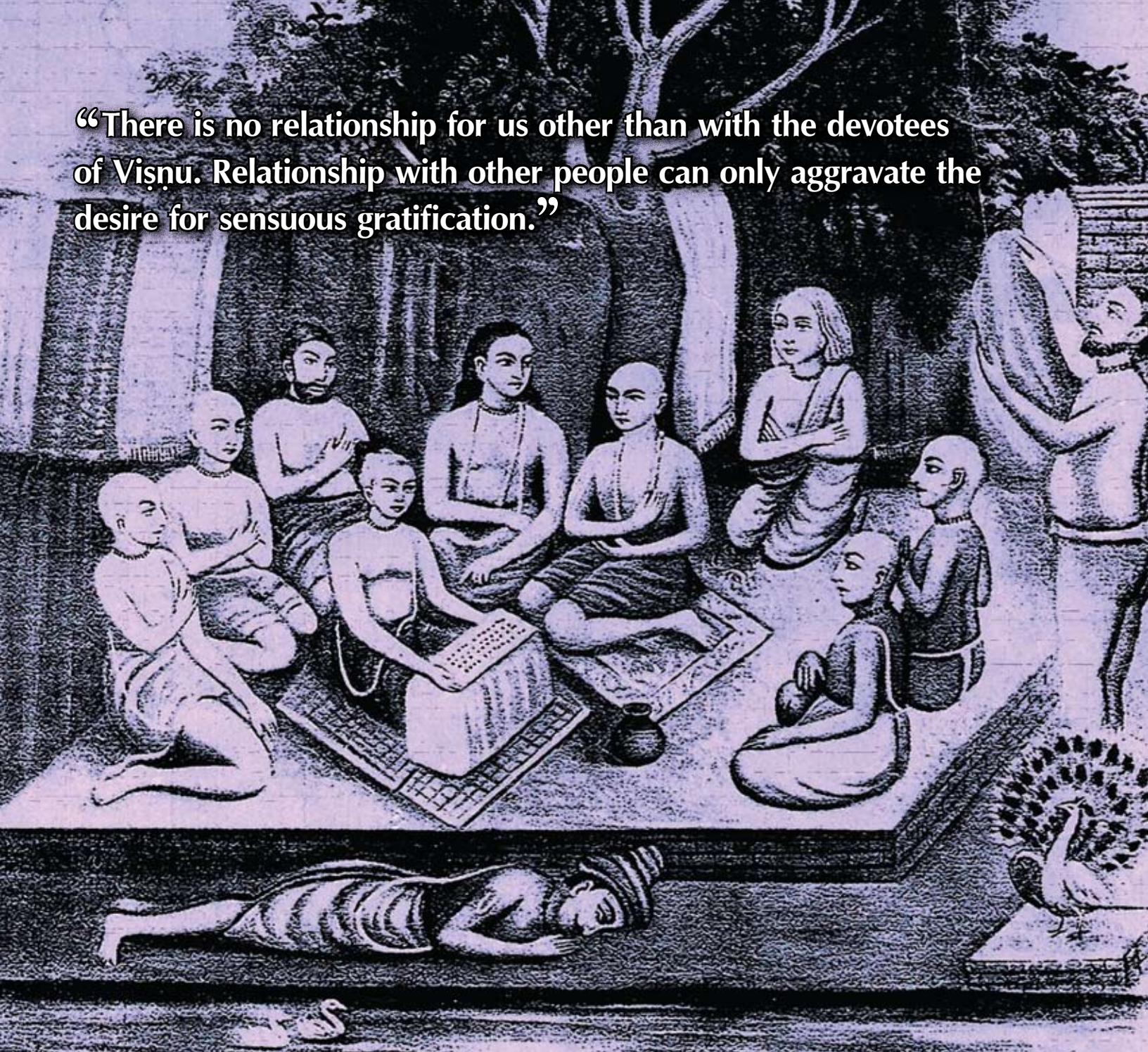
He who serves Lord Hari counts himself as the least of all entities. He is lifted to the highest order of the Vaiṣṇavas when he can feel himself the last of all. He can then proclaim the message of the highest devotion to Lord Hari.

**“He who serves
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“The best of all people deems himself to be less than all others.” Such is the great dictum. It is necessary for the best person to scrutinize his own ineligibility. Why should a person be anxious to pry into the defects of others when he does not seek to scrutinize his own conduct? Is this the disposition of a Vaiṣṇava? On the other hand, even those who are low in the scale of service may attain the higher level. Let us remember the verse: “What to speak of people who listen to and remember the instructions of the spiritual scriptures with care, even women, śūdras, Hūnas, Śavaras, and those who have attained the bodies of beasts and birds due to their sinful past lives can know God and prevail over His deluding power if they follow the conduct of the devoted servants of the Lord, who covers all the worlds by His wonderful strides” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 2.7.46).

“The acts and expressions of the Vaiṣṇavas cannot be understood even by the wise.” The devotees are attached to the Lord, who pervades the worlds

“There is no relationship for us other than with the devotees of Viṣṇu. Relationship with other people can only aggravate the desire for sensuous gratification.”



with His wonderful strides. Let us not be misled by appearances. Many people have been liable to mistake the pebble for the pearl, the snake for the rope and evil for good by relying on appearances and thus falling victim to delusion. It is only when a person allows himself to fall into the clutches of self-delusion that his senses show their eagerness to supply him with the cravings incidental to the phenomenal world because he supposes himself to be an inhabitant of the same. We should carefully consider how we will be delivered

from being exploited like this by the deluding energy. Adopting the mentality of a lord in order to compensate for our present inadequacies will never bring us relief. Nor will it bring us relief to avoid what certain hasty observers have been pleased to dub “the slave mentality” of the devotees of God. Such modes of thinking accelerate our march towards the inferno by plunging us into the course of sensuous indulgence.



Adapted from *The Gaudiya*, Volume 24, Number 7

Utilize Every Moment to

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Śrī Bhagavān has said: "A truly intelligent person should shun evil company but seek the association of holy saints who, with their instructions, gnaw away the knot of our mind's worldly attachments" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.26.26). This means that for our true well-being we should always accept the guidance of the true *guru* and not be misled by pseudo *gurus*. The *guru* never accepts *preya-panthā*, the path to pleasure, for he is a follower of *śreya-panthā*, the path to true well-being. And he instructs his disciples and others to walk along this real path as his own true *guru* instructed him.

If a disciple asks the *guru* for permission to drink alcohol, the *guru* is sure to disapprove and never grant it. When the *guru* does not indulge the disciple in his prayer for the cravings of his mind, he might dismiss the *guru*. Such disciples accept only those *gurus* who are ready to supply fuel to their desire to indulge in sense enjoyment. These days, accepting a *guru* has become a fashion meant not for the disciple's true well-being, but for getting one's sensual pleasures approved of. Like selecting a barber or washer-man, such appointments only satisfy social or family customs.

As soon as Truth is ascertained, it should be ardently put into practice then and there. Since the span of our life is very short, we should not misspend even a moment of what still remains of it in attending to worldly affairs. Rather, we should utilize it to perform our service to Śrī Hari. King Khaṭvāṅga attained his highest good by engaging in Lord Hari's service for but one *muhūrta* (forty-eight minutes) and Ajāmila by serving Him just at the time of death. The following anecdote illustrates this point:

Śivānanda Bhāṭṭācārya – by faith a Śākta, or worshipper of goddess Kālī, or Durgā – sent his son Rāma-kṛṣṇa to purchase some sacrificial animals like goats and buffalos and other necessary articles for



the upcoming festival of Durgā-pūjā. When Rāma-kṛṣṇa was returning home after purchasing them, he met Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura, a holy saint of the highest order. After Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura talked with the youth instructively, the youth's mind was changed altogether. He let the animals go in order to obtain initiation from the Ṭhākura, and went home empty-handed.

Śivānanda was waiting expectantly for his son to return with the goats, buffalos and other articles for Devī-worship. Seeing that he returned without them, he anxiously asked about them.

Attain True Well-being



Srī Rāma-kṛṣṇa replied that he had been blessed to have gotten the grace of the illustrious Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Narottama. Upon hearing this, his father flared up with excessive wrath and called him a disgrace to the family for accepting a *guru* who had not taken birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family.

Rāma-kṛṣṇa was fortunate enough that upon hearing the Truth from the mouth of Ṭhākura Mahāśaya he was roused from the worldly mire and at once gave up the duties of this world as deplorable and insignificant in order to engage in the service of Hari.

“We are encompassed by death, and whoever does not deliver us from it cannot be obeyed as our well-wisher, even if he is a *guru*, a near relative, a father, a mother, a demigod or a husband.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.5.18)

Since we cannot rely on even the duration of a breath, for it may be our last, we should utilize even this moment for attaining our true well-being. For this end, we should not listen to anyone of this world who might give us contrary advice. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.18) Śrī Ṛṣabhadeva teaches us, “We are encompassed by death, and whoever does not deliver us from it cannot be obeyed as our well-wisher, even if he is a *guru* (like Śukrācārya to Bali), a near relative (like Rāvaṇa to Vibhīṣaṇa), a father (like Hiranyaśāṅku to Prahlāda), a mother (like Kaikeyī to Bharata), a demigod (like Indra to Nanda), or a husband (like the *yājñika-brāhmaṇas* whose wives were devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa).” Such was the case with Śrī Rāma-kṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, who wisely courted his father’s certain displeasure to secure his true well-being.



Adapted from *The Gaṇḍīya*, Volume 24, Number 10



Who is

Who is a true *guru*? It is he who is constantly engaged in the service of Śrī Hari. And who is the truly learned man? It is he who, in the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is well conversant with actual knowledge of the *jīva*'s bondage and his deliverance from it (C.f. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.19.41).

We should only accept as our *guru* he who employs all of his time, cent-per-cent, in God's service. Otherwise we will fail miserably by following him. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* has instructed us: "A true *guru* teaches his disciple through his own behaviour and practice. He cannot teach *dharma* who does not abide by it himself."

The Śrutis instruct us, "One who seeks true knowledge of *tat* – that Supreme Being – should gather the necessary articles for initiation and approach a *guru* who is conversant in the Vedas and steeped in realization of Brahman – the Supreme Spirit" (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.2.12). This instruction has also been given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.21): "One who seeks his highest well-being should surrender himself to a *guru* who is well-versed in the imports of the Vedas, who has full realization of Parabrahma and who has thereby become the shelter of true peace." Neither platform-speakers, who are but skilled in giving speeches, yet who conduct themselves improperly, nor professional priests can be *gurus*.

One who does not stay constantly engaged in *hari-bhajana* (devotional service to Śrī Hari) will be anxious to take up other engagements on the strength of *śrī nāma* and will thus risk committing the severe *aparādha*, or offence, of utilizing *śrī nāma* in sinful affairs. Moreover, one who acts in the capacity of *guru* for a salary or according to a contract cannot be a *guru*, nor can one who reads the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* blindly. First of all,

a True Guru?

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

refrain from approaching such professional priests and platform-speakers. Observe whether or not they fully devote their time to *Śrimad-Bhāgavatam*. For one who is steeped or accomplished in realization of Parabrahma, one's full time is occupied with service to God.

From whom should we hear the *Śrimad-Bhāgavatam*? We should hear and learn the *Bhāgavatam* from a true Vaiṣṇava, for it cannot emanate from the mouth of one who is not a *bhāgavata*, or true devotee. Pretending to ably recite it just leads others astray. He who does so is himself deceived and as such, deceives others. How can the *Bhāgavatam*, which is not different from Śrī Bhagavān, really play on the tongues of the professional readers who pose as conversant scholars when reading it before others, but who have no true devotion to Śrī Bhagavān due to being engaged in worldly enjoyment? On the plea of discussing the *Bhāgavatam*, they simply gratify their own senses instead of the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

He who is anxious for his true well-being should never come in contact with such professional readers and thereby court his own downfall, while falsely believing that he will truly be benefited by accepting them as his *gurus* and hearing from them as though he were their disciple. How can someone who is busy with

the maintenance of his wife and children; who is fully devoted to his desire for worldly enjoyments, which arise out of illusion; and who tries to employ God, the highest Entity worthy of adoration and service, in supplying him fuel for the fire of those enjoyments; act as *jagad-guru*, or the true instructor of all people?

“One who does not stay constantly engaged in *hari-bhajana* will be anxious to take up other engagements on the strength of *śrī nāma* and will thus risk committing the severe *aparādha*, or offence, of utilizing *śrī nāma* in sinful affairs.”

What do we observe in the *Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* and in the conduct and preaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees? Those who foster within their hearts fear, affliction, illusion, sensual desires, greed, and feelings of frustration in relation to their bodies, wealth, friends and so on due to their attachment to some object other than God, have not surrendered themselves to God. Such undedicated individuals cannot advise others to surrender to God. Even if they give verbal instructions, their preaching, which is bereft of any practical examples from their own conduct, is ineffective.

Only a *mahābhāgavata* (exalted devotee of God) who

has no worldly possession or attachment, and who has sincerely surrendered himself to Kṛṣṇa and exclusively serves Him twenty-four hours a day can legitimately occupy the *ācārya*'s seat.



Adapted from *The Gaudiya*, Volume 24, Number 11

Srī Nāma Sevā in

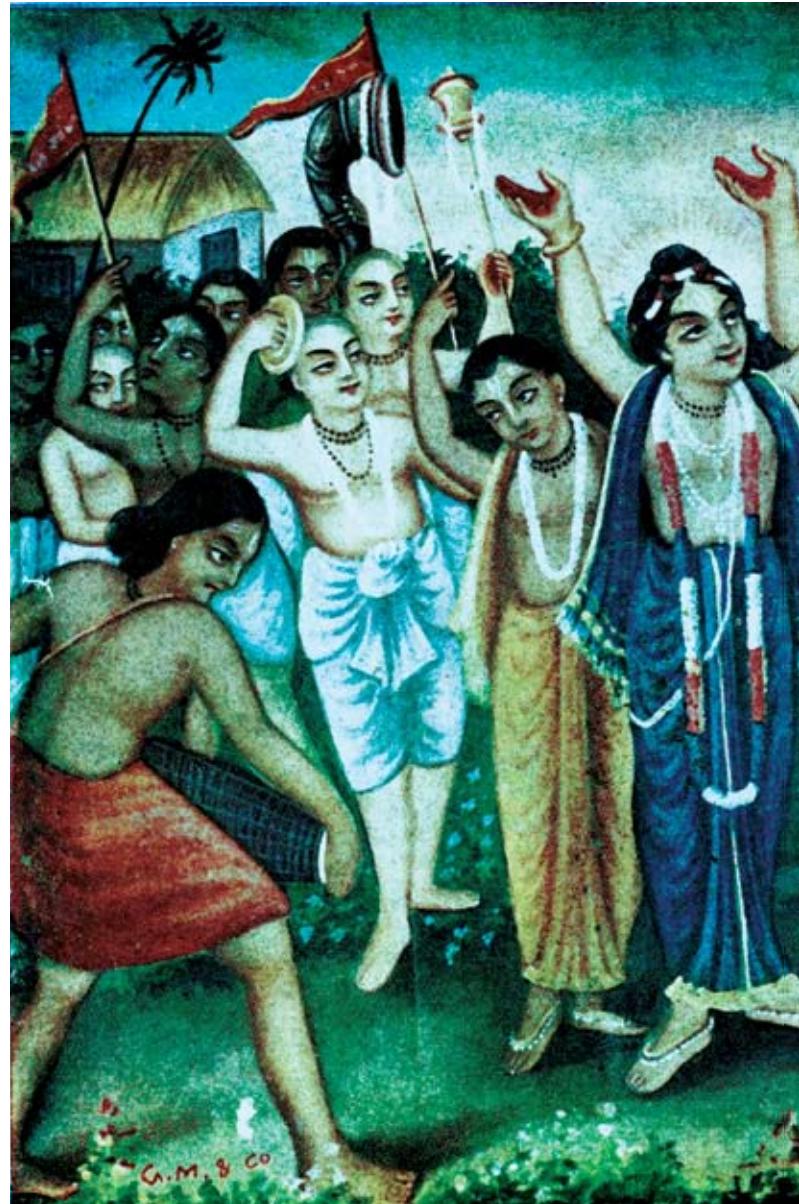
by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Within this world, only those who attend to Śrī Bhagavān's holy name (*nāma*), His abode (*dhāma*) and His desires (*kāma*) are truly worthy of adoration. No being can extricate himself from misunderstanding, which arises from *māyā*, without serving *śrī nāma*. The result of serving *śrī nāma* is that one will be freed from all forms of prejudice and will become settled in serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa's desires (*kāma*). And the result of serving *śrī dhāma* is that one will be freed from the clutches of the tremendously dangerous conception that "I am the Lord; God has no eternal name, form, qualities, pastimes, majesty and so on." Then, by serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *kāma* (desires), one will save oneself from the serious danger of selfish, sensual gratification. Thus freed from transient lust (*kāma*), one will become firmly established in serving the transcendental Kāmadeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as well as the Kāma-gāyatrī¹.

If by good fortune we are able to gain attachment to serving the desires (*kāma*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa then we can reorient the various inferior desires for the material, sensual, bodily enjoyments that have arisen within us; and we can reorient the progress of our subtle body, or mind, if it has grown apathetic toward endeavours to serve Śrī Bhagavān. Then our desires and the path of our mind will follow a trend just contrary to its present one.

If we engage ourselves in the service of *śrī dhāma* then service to the desires (*kāma*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is available to us. The word *dhāma* can mean rays,

1 “Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is identical with the Vedic hymn known as the Kāma-gāyatrī, which is composed of twenty-four and a half syllables. Those syllables are compared to moons that arise in Kṛṣṇa. Thus all three worlds are filled with desire” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 21.125). Translation by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, © Bhaktivedanta Book Trust



prowess, influence, home, place, body, birth and so forth. According to truly learned savants of God, *śrī dhāma* should be accepted in its sense as that in which there is no malice, jealousy or evanescence, and that which is eternally self-manifested, spiritual and blissful. By adventing in *śrī*

Śrī Dhāma



dhāma, Śrī Caitanyadeva has made the world conscious of its transcendence.

We had failed to realize the exaltation of *śrī dhāma*; we had no predilection for serving *śrī dhāma* and not so much faith in the worshipful deity form of Śrī Bhagavān. We remained

“He who seeks connection with *śrī dhāma* finds that his attachment to *grāma* (domestic life) soon expires. Then his service to *śrī nāma*, which is the means of attaining true blessedness, soon carries him to his true goal: service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *kāma*. ”

absorbed in study, sure of our notion that we could vanquish everyone on earth through our expertise in dialectics, the splendour of our erudition, and the glory of our exemplary character. But then some holy saints, who were engaged in serving *śrī dhāma*, enlightened us. They told us that the very service to *śrī dhāma* that we had been neglecting would in fact bring us the highest welfare.

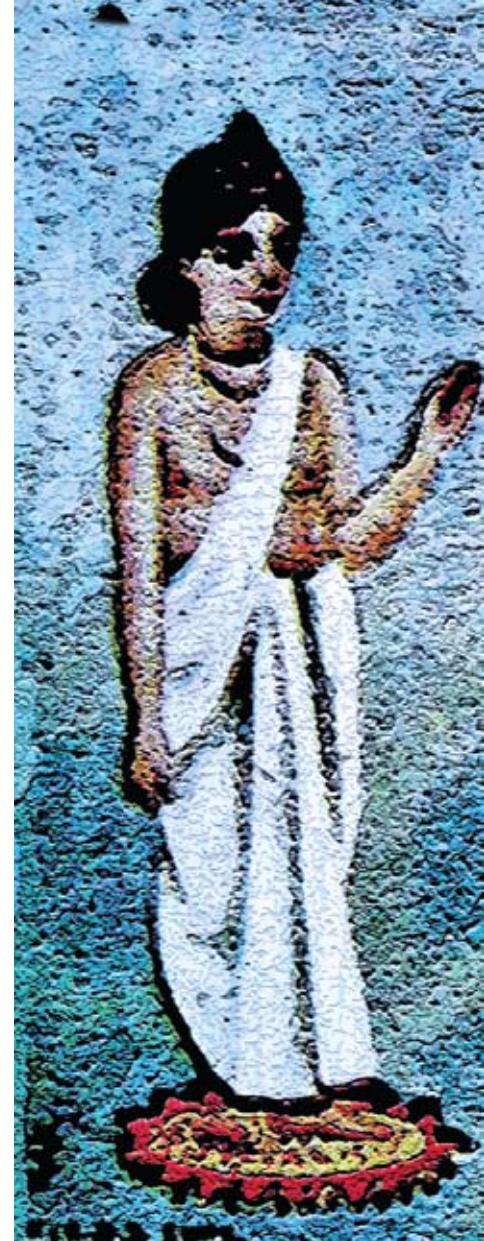
He who seeks connection with *śrī dhāma* finds that his attachment to *grāma* (domestic life) soon expires. Then his service to *śrī nāma*, which is the means of attaining true blessedness, soon carries him to his true goal: service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *kāma*.

The holy name (*śrī nāma*) of Śrī Vaikuṇṭha (the spiritual dimension) has descended to this earth, and it is in *śrī dhāma* that *śrī nāma* has been deposited. The performance of *nāma-sevā* does not bestow *kṛṣṇa-kāma-sevā*, service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s desires, which is the true and ultimate objective, upon one who disconnects oneself from *śrī dhāma*.

 Adapted from *The Gauḍīya*, Volume 24, Number 12

Our Only Duty is to Serve Kṛṣṇa

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda



Some people attempt to become heroes through action (*karma*), some strive to fulfil other desires (*anyābhilāṣā*), others (*jñāniś*) strive to cultivate realization of *brahma*, and yet others (*yogīś*) try to achieve oneness with God. However, we know that worship done to acquire *dharma* (religiousity), *artha* (material prosperity), *kāma* (selfish desires) or *mokṣa* (liberation), which are connected with base selfishness only, is mere pretence. It has nothing to do with liberated souls. Rather, it is nothing more than the ravings of conditioned souls in bondage. Śrī Caitanyadeva gave the order to people throughout India, “Advise everyone, whomever you encounter: worship Kṛṣṇa!” Thus He told them to make endeavours for God from whatever position they occupied, no matter where or when they lived or who they were.

Now, to carry out His commandment, there is no other course than to cultivate what we have learned at the lotus feet of our Śrī Gurudeva. The only work for a worshipper of God is to see that His worship increases more and more. Our prayer should ever be that our attachment to Kṛṣṇa may increase more and more. We do not want power and pelf. Nay, we do not even want cessation of further births.

The special advice that Śrī Caitanyadeva has given us – advice regarding the easiest process to rid ourselves of those desires that are so natural to mankind – is simply that we take shelter in devotion. He has said, “Alas! For someone who is seriously engaged in cultivating devotional service (*bhagavad-bhajana*) so that he may cross the ocean of nescience, who has completely abandoned all material activities, it is considered more



abominable to expectantly see a *viṣayī* (sense enjoyer) or to savour gazing at a woman, than willingly drinking poison" (*Caitanya-candrodaya* 8.23).

One may take poison and die, but one should never keep company with a sense enjoyer or an object of sense enjoyment. He who after beginning *hari-bhajana* (divine service to Śrī Hari) becomes entangled with objects of sense enjoyment is ruined. It is for this reason that we receive the teaching at the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva that we have no other duty to perform than serving Kṛṣṇa. His only blessing has been, "May your mind rest in Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīman Mahāprabhu has advised those who seek true well-being to totally shun the company of those who are occupied with becoming emancipated by achieving oneness with non-distinct *brahma*, since such men are even more insincere than those who hanker for worldly

enjoyments. We should shun all such bad company and associate with true *sādhus*. Their only duty is to cut through all varieties of accumulated evil designed by the *jīvas*, and doing so is truly their natural motiveless desire.

Worldly people, cherishing the duplicity of their hearts, generally announce one thing publicly while concealing something quite different. And the funny part of it is that they are anxious to show the public that the duplicity of their hearts is liberality or the virtue of reconciling opposites. These double-tongued men brand the creeds of men who are candid and who do not adopt duplicity themselves as sectarian, bigoted and so forth.

We should only associate with those candid fellows, not with the others.

 Adapted from *Gauḍiya*, Volume 25, Number 2



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Appearing in English for the first time

The Esoteric Meaning of Annakūṭa

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

In the year 1949 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, along with his god-brothers and disciples, observed *kārtika-vrata* in Ayodhyā.

On 22 October 1949, on the occasion of Annakūṭa-mahotsava, he delivered the following short discourse.

There is a *mantra* in the Śruti that proclaims:

annam vai brahma

Food grain (*anna*) is identical to the supreme transcendental entity (*brahma-vastu*).

One must realize the meaning of Śruti through *vidvat-rūḍhi-vṛtti*¹, a profoundly learned understanding of its direct meaning.

If we assume that this *mantra* simply indicates the superficial meaning of the word *anna* – food grain – it will only intensify our tendency to enjoy this world and maintain our aversion to Kṛṣṇa, which is typical of conditioned souls like us. The food grain (*anna*) that is born of material nature can never be referred to as transcendental substance (*brahma*). Yet the foodstuffs that are offered to Śrī Hari are “*brahma-vat-nirvikāram hi yathā viṣṇu-stathaiva tat* – like *brahma*, devoid of any transformation; they are directly Śrī Viṣṇu Himself.”

The transcendental entity is certainly *brahma*, and in its form as sound vibration (*śabda*) it is received through the ears. For this reason it is known as *śabda-brahma*. Similarly, in the term *anna-brahma* from the above *mantra*, *anna* (food grain) can only truly mean *hari-kathā*, for only *hari-kathā* provides the soul with spiritual satisfaction and nourishment, dispelling the soul's hunger. If we accept transcendental *anna*, or *hari-kathā*, our soul will be enlivened as it blossoms into full maturity. This alone is the direct *prasāda*, or mercy, of Bhagavān. We can make it our aim to accept *hari-kathā* as our true *bhagavat-prasāda*.

This *anna* in the form of *hari-kathā* is certainly the Transcendental Entity (*brahma*), because *hari-kathā* is directly Śrī Hari. The perfect philosophical conclusions

¹ The meaning of *rūḍhi-vṛtti* is “direct or primary meaning”.

When this term is further qualified by the adjective *vidvat* (learned) it becomes “the esoteric direct meaning”.



of the Vedic scriptures confirm that the meaning of the word *brahma* exclusively refers to Lord Viṣṇu. The *mahājanas* of previous times, along with our *guru-varga*, cause the jubilation of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's senses (*go*) to swell (*vardhana*) in ever-novel ways by making an *anna-kūṭa*, or mountain of *anna* in the form of *hari-kathā*. They have worshipped Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in this way. Today on the auspicious day of Śrī Govardhana-pūjā and the Annakūṭa-mahotsava, our sole activity is to glorify Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

Śrī Govardhana is the best of Śrī Hari's servants, *hari-dāsa-varya*. Although Govardhana is *āśraya-vigraha*, the abode of love for Kṛṣṇa, devotees see him as *viṣaya-vigraha*, the object of that love, or Kṛṣṇa Himself. The *gaṇḍaki-śilā*, or *sālagrāma-śilā*, is directly worshipped as Śrī Nārāyaṇa. In the same way, the *govardhana-śilā* is worshipped as Kṛṣṇa Himself. Govardhana-dhārī (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the lifter of Govardhana mountain) and Govardhana, are one and the same entity. Yet, that unmatched intense greed to please Kṛṣṇa's senses (*go*) known as *kṛṣṇa-kāma* or *kṛṣṇa-prīti*, which forever swells (*vardhana*) to new heights, is indeed Govardhana.

Instead of performing the worship of demigods like Indra or of demigoddesses, we must worship Govardhana in every way. These are truly the teachings of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam.



Translated from Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā

Year 1, Issue 10, 1949



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This three part series by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja is based on the following verse:

anarpita-carinī cirat̄ karuṇayāvatiṛṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasāṁ sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hrdaya-kandare sphuratu vah śacī-nandanaḥ
Vidagdha-mādhava (1.2)

May the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī, Śrī Gaurahari, forever manifest spontaneously within the innermost core of your heart. Adorned with the radiant splendor of molten gold, He has descended (*avatīrṇaḥ*) in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow upon the world that which has not been given for a long time – the beauty of His own brilliantly radiant *ujjvala-prema-rasa bhakti*, service in the highest mellow of amorous love.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 are available in *Rays of The Harmonist* 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Casting off

by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya then mentioned the next topic: the renunciation of fruitive action, or *karma-sannyāsa*. In Kali-yuga, *sannyāsa* has come to mean the mere acceptance of *sannyāsa* garb, but the actual pre-requisite for *sannyāsa* is a purified heart. When one becomes detached from the fruits of action by performing selfless work (*niṣkāma-karma*), one's renunciation is perfect. On the other hand, if anyone accepts *sannyāsa* while his heart is still impure, then the thirst for enjoyment will fully remain. His *sannyāsa* is not a means to achieve love for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema*).

First of all, in Kali-yuga, it is not possible for everyone to accept *karma-sannyāsa*. Moreover, even for those who can accept it, such *sannyāsa*, which is a way of living above *karma*, is simply a state of harmony with the three modes of material nature. It cannot help one attain love of God (*bhagavat-prema*).

The reason for this is that the Virajā River (the dividing line between the material and spiritual natures) is the very place where the three modes of material nature exist in a state of harmony, and although the predominance of the three modes is not perceived in the Virajā River, the internal potency of Bhagavān is still not active there.

Bhagavad-bhakti, loving devotion to the Supreme Lord, is possible when one is in the shelter of His internal potency known as *yoga-māyā*: “*mahaṭmānas tu* – the great souls always remain in the shelter of

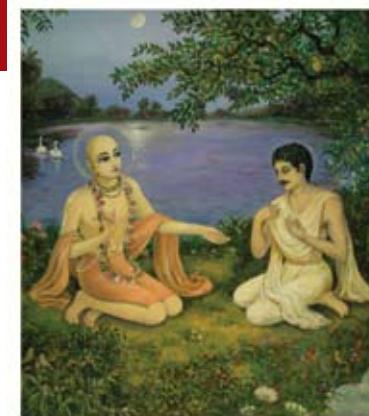
the Mundane is External

In Part 2 of this article, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya explained to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the value of *varṇāśrama-dharma* as a means to satisfy the supreme Lord Viṣṇu. When Mahāprabhu rejected this as external, Rāmānanda Rāya told Him that to offer Śrī Kṛṣṇa the results of one's action is the essence of all perfection (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 8.58–9).

My divine energy¹. A person may achieve deliverance from the illusory potency, or *mahā-māyā*, but unless he receives the shelter of the internal potency, or *yoga-māyā*, it is impossible for him to grasp the message of Vaikuṇṭha.

The prime reason that Śrī Gaurasundara advented in this world was to deliver to its inhabitants the message of Vaikuṇṭha and to bestow upon them immaculate, transcendental and spontaneous love of God, *bhagavata-prema*. This *prema* is devoid of any scent of awe and reverence and issues from the ocean of *bhāva* (transcendental emotions) in the incomparable realm of Goloka Vṛndāvana – the topmost place in Vaikuṇṭha. What, therefore, can renunciants (*sannyāsīs*) understand about the Unparalleled Entity, regardless of whether their hearts are pure or impure? Understanding that those renunciants lack eligibility to receive *kṛṣṇa-tattva-rasa*², Śrī Gaurasundara also rejected the acceptance of such *sannyāsa*, regarding it as external.

Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya then spoke about *jñāna-miśra-bhakti*, or devotion that is mixed with a desire for liberation. On this path, after a person finally attains the stage of self-realization called *brahma-bhūta* and subsequently becomes full of bliss (*brahma-bhūta prasannātmā*), he may then perceive the path of devotion to the Lord. However, until he actually sees it, the prospect



© Vasudeva dāsa

of merging with the impersonal aspect of the Supreme (*nirviśeṣa-sāyujya-mukti*) blinds him. For a pure devotee of Bhagavān, this *sāyujya-mukti* is no better than hell. He refuses any kind of salvation other than loving service to Bhagavān even though the Lord is eager to award him various other kinds of *mukti*, like attainment of a form similar to His own (*sārūpya-mukti*) and residence on the same planet as Him (*sālokya-mukti*).

Thus, in *jñāna-miśra-bhakti* there is no hope of ever attaining pure love. A person with the egotism that he is already liberated can have no realization of the variegated features of Absolute Reality – He who casts away all delusion. Therefore such egotism reflects the tendency to be antagonistic to Bhagavān.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu imparted to the world the eternal object of the eternally pure living entity's worship (the *nityā sevya-vastu* of the *nityā śuddha-jīva*). The worship of the *nityā sevya-vastu* is not a concocted religion that has arisen from someone's imagination; it is the soul's intrinsic function. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended to personally give this. He thus embodies the statement “*karuṇayā-avatīrṇāḥ-kalau* – the most compassionate incarnation, who has descended in this Age of Kali”.



Excerpt from Part 3 of “The Most Compassionate Avatāra”

Appearing in *Rays of The Harmonist*, Kārtika, 2008

Translated from *Śrī Gaudīya Patrikā*,

Year 7, Issue 3, 1956

¹ C.f. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 9.13

² *kṛṣṇa-tattva-rasa* is the ambrosia of *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, or the ambrosia of the reality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.



Translated into English for the first time

The Deep Akhāṇḍa

Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga Jāyataḥ

Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍiya Maṭha
Goloka-ganja, (Dhubadi)
Assam [India]
6th June 1972

[The name of the recipient did not appear in the published Bengali letter]

Affectionate greetings.

Śrī Guru, the Vaiṣṇavas and Śrī Bhagavān – these three are *antaryāmī*. In other words, they are the internal witnesses and know our heart. They see the Truth and speak the Truth. They extend their causeless compassion to the conditioned souls of this world in ways that are unnoticed by mortal intelligence and inconceivable to it. Truly nothing in this world can compare to their compassion. Only a soul who possesses sufficient spiritual merit can fathom something of their unsurpassed compassion.

Śrī Guru and Bhagavān see into the core of our hearts. Longing to see the innermost love and devotion of the *sādhakas* and *sādhikas* blossom, Śrī Guru and Śrī Bhagavān fulfil their desires in ways that are at times obvious and at others unseen. In this way they secure the *sādhakas'* and *sādhikas'* conviction in *sādhana-bhajana*. Without becoming exclusively dedicated to *bhajana*, how else can one reap any genuine results?

“*Uttama haiyā āpanāre māne tṛṇa-adhama* – a person who is truly situated on an advanced stage of *bhakti* deems himself more insignificant than a piece of straw.” This mentality is the sole requisite and the metre of one’s eligibility to obtain the mercy of and Bhagavān. If the deep passion to engage in devotion, the *bhakti-vṛtti*, fails to rise in one’s heart, do you think it is possible for one to receive causeless mercy? Causeless mercy, of course, does not depend on any condition, and yet it will escape the reach of one bereft of *bhakti*.

Meaning of Guru-tattva

A letter written by

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

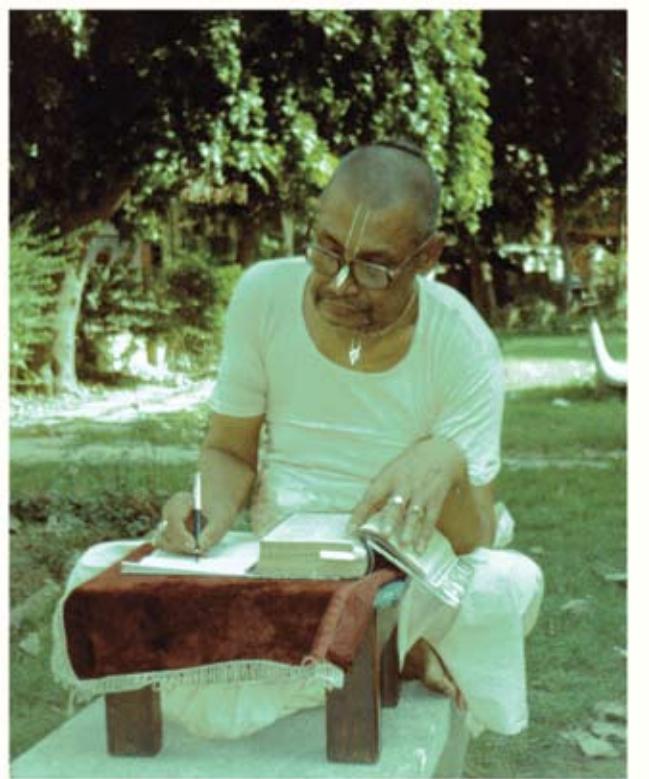
"Yogyatā-vicāre, kichu nāhi pāi, tomāra karuṇā sāra – when I look for my own eligibility, I find that I have none; your compassion is the essence of everything I have" (*Gurudeva, kṛpā-bindhu diyā*). Every *sādhaka* or *sādhika* expresses his or her feelings of humility with such heartfelt prayer. Despite being established in the rightful eligibility to receive the grace of and Bhagavān, it is the devotee's innate propensity to express such humility. That alone is his real merit and the wealth of his *sādhana*; that humility is really his heroic glory.

Causeless mercy is something that escapes the appreciation of someone beset by mundane conceit and egotism. In a state of such egotism, a person's impetus and longing to serve cannot fully flourish, and he fails to perceive the omniscience of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān. Gripped by mundane vanity, the conditioned soul is locked into foolish arrogance, similar to that of a bloated, puffing frog that disparages the ocean on the assumption that nothing surpasses his dingy water-hole – only because he has been forever stuck in it. He even thinks that he can slight the whole earth.

Those who have found shelter, however, surpass all obstacles and hurdles on the strength of their *bhakti* and become illuminated with the divine, unsurpassable compassion of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān:

aśoka abhaya amṛta ādhāra tomāra caraṇa-dvaya
tāhāte ekhana viśrāma labhiyā chāḍīnu bhavera bhaya

[from *Śaraṇāgati* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura]





Śrī guru-tattva is the
śakti of the Absolute,
or in other words,
its transcendental
feminine aspect.

Your two feet are the foundation of immortal existence free from sorrow and fear. Finding solace in their shelter, I have now shed my mortal terror of material existence.

The above verse represents the ardent prayers of devotees who are resolute in loving service.

*guru, vaiṣṇava, bhagavāna – tinera smaraṇa
tinera smaraṇe haya vighna-vināśana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā, 1.20–21)

Śrī Guru, the Vaiṣṇavas and Bhagavān – even remembrance of these three obliterates all obstacles.

By extolling their qualities the heart is cleansed and the multitude of vices (*amarthas*) and impediments to the process of *bhajana* are cast far away. No vanity or egotism can survive in a heart that is honestly rapt in hearing, chanting and remembering the glories of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān. Such persons have been initiated into the religion of honouring all others, with no expectation of receiving respect in return. They have already abandoned all such adversities to *bhajana*. This indeed is the undeniable and conclusive truth.

“*Vaiṣṇavera guṇa-gaṇa karile jīvera trāṇa* – if the soul sings of the Vaiṣṇavas’ glories he will obtain deliverance.” According to this statement, it is essential to offer prayers, praises and hymns to Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, even though they are in fact equipoised, being satisfied in the bliss of their own *bhajana* and completely aloof from any external gain.

Those who have taken shelter at the feet of a genuine *guru* have already deserted ill-suited company. Only by establishing themselves in *sadācāra*, or respectable and ideal conduct, could they have proceeded to accept a *guru*. Once strong conviction (*niṣṭhā*) in *bhajana* develops in a person, he abandons *asat-saṅga*, the company of all types of persons who are detrimental to his *bhajana* – no matter how near and dear those persons are – knowing them to be enemies playing the role of his relatives.

If you are to walk the path of *bhajana*, you must certainly be wary of offences. That does not mean that when one is unable to do so, one retreats, or withdraws, from the path.

aparādha-śūnya ha'ye laha krṣṇa-nāma

from *Nadiyā-Godrume*
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Free yourself from offence and just chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
This is the instruction of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā, 4.71)

If one utters the holy name without offence, one attains the wealth of divine love.

prema-dhana vinā vyarthā daridra jīvana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā, 20.37)

Without the wealth of divine love, the life of a poor person like me is without use.

For such reasons, it is instructed that one remain distant from any blasphemy of the *sādhus*, of the scriptures and of Śrī Guru. Although in the preliminary stages one may make some offence while chanting the holy name, by the grace of Śrī Nāma Prabhu all such offences will be dispelled.

“*Guru mātā, guru pitā, guru hana pati* – Śrī Guru is our mother, Śrī Guru is our father, Śrī Guru is our husband and master.” This statement of the *mahājanas* is in no way opposed to the conclusive truth, nor is it flawed by any improper sentiment.

Śrī Guru is *āśraya-vigraha*, the form and abode of divine love. He is a beloved maidservant of Śrī Bhagavān. *Śrī guru-tattva* is the *śakti* of the Absolute, or in other words, its transcendental feminine aspect. Teaching others to serve Śrī Bhagavān is Śrī Guru’s constitutional function. He is a *gopī*, a legitimate maidservant under the direction of the *sakhīs*. As such he is a dearly beloved servant-girl, adept in the art of serving in the pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān, that supreme enjoyer and object of all loving relationships.

“*Choḍata puruṣa abhimāna, kiñkarī hailū āji kāna | varaja-vipine sakhi-sātha, sevana karabu rādhānātha* – O Kāna, by abandoning the ego that I am the enjoyer, today I have become Your maidservant. O Rādhānātha, in the forest of Vraja, in the company of the *sakhīs*, I will serve You.” This is the true nature (*svarūpa*) of perfected souls. Although they are garbed in male form in this world, they have achieved the transcendental nature (*bhāva*) of *gopīs*, either as *sakhīs* or *dāsīs*. Facilitating the love sports of the transcendental, ever-fresh Cupid is their sole preoccupation.

One must also know Śrī Gurudeva to be *bhagavat-svarūpa* – he who, in nature, personifies Śrī Bhagavān. There is a difference, however, when Śrī Bhagavān Himself descends and assumes the role of *guru*. At that time, He is established in the identity of the *viṣaya-vigraha* (the object of all love). Though He performs the function of the *āśrayā-vigraha* (the abode of love) He is in truth the Absolute Enjoyer, the supreme objective of all service. In that case, would it be wrong to

Causeless mercy is something that escapes the appreciation of someone beset by mundane conceit and egotism. In a state of such egotism, a person’s impetus and longing to serve cannot fully flourish, and he fails to perceive the omniscience of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān.

address *guru* as *pati*, meaning the husband, or master, of one's life?

Guru is a single indivisible principle, which reveals varying specialities and astonishing traits when deliberated upon. *Guru-tattva* can be understood according to various considerations and perspectives in each of its divisions: the Supersoul (*antaryāmī*), Śrī Guru within the heart (*caitya-guru*), and Śrī Guru manifest directly before our vision (*mahānta-guru*). For one who understands the indivisible principle of *guru-tattva* in its totality, there is no fault in addressing *viṣaya-vigraha puruṣottama* Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra as one's *pati* (meaning "husband" or "the master of one's life") during the time in which He assumes the role of *āśrayā-vigraha* and manifests His pastimes accordingly. Only after deliberating upon all such aspects of *guru-tattva* have the Vaiṣṇava *mahājanas* written the afore-mentioned couplet, which states Śrī Guru to be one's *pati*.

Furthermore, the nurturing and affection a mother or father gives their child differs vastly from the love shared by a husband and wife. No matter how old a son or daughter gets, in the eyes of a mother and father they will always be the beneficiary of their affection – in a subordinate position. A husband and wife, however, are equals.

Even amongst friends (*sakhya-bhāva*), although they share an intimacy as one soul and one life, their equality with each other retains feelings of seniority or juniority to others. In *vātsalya-bhāva*, children (juniors) are always the dependents, while parents (seniors) are the providers. But in conjugal love no such distinction exists, although some obligations and restrictions are imposed:

sevya-sevaka sambhogे dvayor-bhedah kuto bhavet? vipralambhe tu sarvasya bhedah sadā vivardhate

from *Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-Vihārī-Tattvāṣṭakam* (2)

by Śrī Śrimad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

In the utter union of the servant with the served, from whence comes the distinction between the two? But in the utter separation of these lovers, the full range of their distinction expands forever.

This verse substantiates that intimacy and equality exists between husband and wife. It is solely for this reason that when we offer *tulasī* leaves at the feet of Śrī rādhā-atiṅgita-vigraha, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa embraced by and united with that of Śrī Rādhārāṇī (or in other

words the form of Śrīman Mahāprabhu), we are in fact offering *tulasī* at Her feet also. But when Their forms manifest separately, Śrī Rādhā cannot accept *tulasī* leaves at Her feet.

Think yet again, though: in this mundane world, the designations and distinctions of male and female exist. But in Goloka Vṛndāvana, Puruṣottama Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only *puruṣa* (enjoyer), and all others are His potencies (*śakti*), or His 'female' servants. The *Bhagavad-gītā* states that the *jīva* is *śakti*, and therefore a real entity in the form of a quality; that is, she is one of Śrī Bhagavān's characteristics or capacities. Hence, it is not ever possible for the *jīva* to be the enjoyer.

In the material realm, a woman experiences three phases of life – as a daughter, as a wedded wife, and as a mother. Specialities and differences exist in and between all three phases. As a daughter and mother, a woman experiences both sides of the affection exchanged between a parent and child. As a wedded wife, however, she experiences the arousal of conjugal love within her. Each variety of love, as a servant, a friend, a parent or a lover, bears the mood of servitude, yet expresses its own unique speciality.

So, relating all this to *akhaṇḍa-pūrṇa guru-tattva*, the indivisible, complete principle of Śrī Guru, if one were to use the word *pati* in reference to Śrī Guru, it would be directed towards the *viṣaya-vigraha* aspect of divinity, which is also related to and included in *guru-tattva*.

Ātma-samarpaṇa, or full submission of the self, is the sole goal of every *sādhaka* and *sādhika*. If this completeness, or entirety, does not come in one's *sādhana*, Śrī Bhagavān will remain at a great distance. Evidence of this is Draupadī as well as the *vrajakumārīs*.¹

With this I shall conclude.

Your ever-well-wisher,
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana

Translated from the compilation of letters (*Patrāvalī*) of
Śrī Śrimad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

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¹ In both these examples, Kṛṣṇa remained at a distance until the devotees fully surrendered themselves to Him.

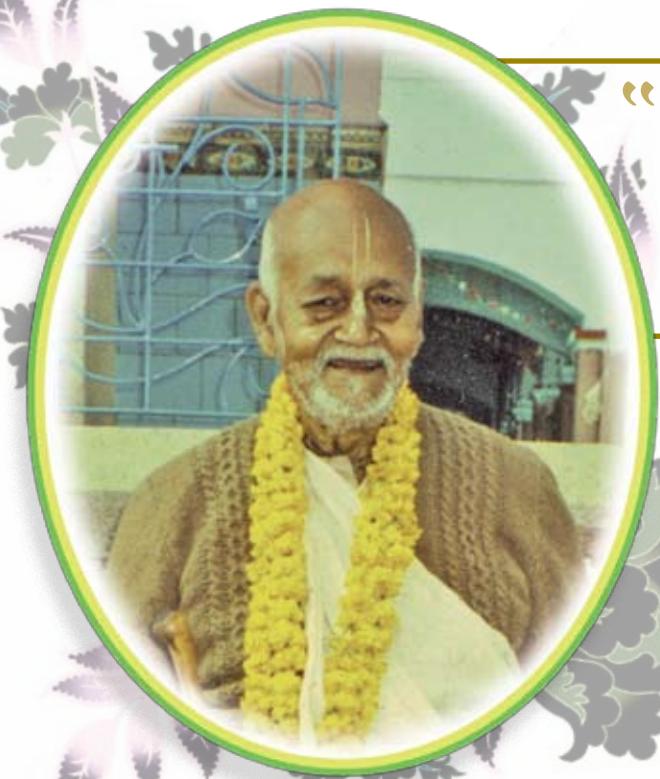
Praise to Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana!

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja



A short English class delivered in Varṣāṇā during Kārtika, 1996

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“Without cleaning our heart, we cannot accept the highest *prema*, we cannot understand it and we cannot be in the position to attain it. It is not at all possible.”

Why did Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu praise this *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*? *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* is the best teaching He delivered. There is no parallel to this *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*. Let it be most successful. In the state of *viraha* (separation) there is no consolation other than *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*. It is the only thing.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appreciated this and instructed the human beings that this is the best of all good things, of all devotions – *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam param vijayate*. And He remarked, “It is suitable for all classes of devotees. From the worst to the best, it is suitable. The best position can be had by this *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* only. It is complete *sādhana*, it is easily performed and it bestows the highest perfection. It will give one the best position in the spiritual world. This *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* will also give the best position in this world.

By this chanting, by this *kīrtana* of the name and glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we can possess the highest position. For the lowest devotees, whose minds are always thinking of worldly pleasures, what is stated? It is stated that the desire for worldly pleasures should first be removed. For this reason, Mahāprabhu said, “*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam* – the mirror of the heart is to be cleansed.” This is to be done first. *Citta-darpaṇa*, the mirror of the heart should be scrubbed clean.

By which process will it be cleaned? By this *kīrtana*. *Kīrtana* is enough; it is more than enough to clean the *citta-darpaṇa*, the mirror of my *citta*. *Manah* (mind), *buddhiḥ* (intelligence), *ahaṅkāra* (false ego) and *citta* (the heart) are the four sections of the subtle body. The *citta* should be cleaned first. Without cleaning our heart, we cannot accept the highest *prema*, we cannot understand it and we cannot be in the position to attain it. It is not at all possible.

We are always thinking of the pleasure of our senses. How can the pleasure of our divine masters and the pleasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His consorts – the *gopīs* and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī – be secured in such a *citta*? No, it cannot be. First of all it should be cleaned by the process

What was Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's special gift to us? This is stated in the first of His *Śikṣāṣṭaka* ślokas, wherein He has explained:

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam
 bhava-mahā-dāvagni-nirvāpaṇam
 sreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam
 vidyā-vadhū-jivanam
 ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam
 prati-padam pūrṇāmytāsvādanam
 sarvātma-snapanam param
 vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*
Śikṣāṣṭaka (1)

Let there be supreme victory for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which cleanses the mirror of the heart and completely extinguishes the blazing forest fire of material existence. *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* diffuses the soothing moon rays of *bhāva* which cause the white lotus of good fortune for the *jīvas* to bloom. The holy name is the life and soul of transcendental knowledge, since Vidyā (Divya Sarasvatī-devī, who awards divine knowledge) is Śrī Nāma Prabhu's consort. It continuously increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, enabling one to taste complete nectar at every step. The holy name thoroughly bathes and cools the body, mind and soul.

of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu has very carefully explained this process from beginning to end:

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratāni pīnaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatāni karotu vā
yahā tathā vā vidadhātu lampato
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparah

Śikṣāṣṭaka (8)

Let Kṛṣṇa tightly embrace this maidservant who is attached to the service of His lotus feet, and thus make Me His very own. Or let Him break My heart by not being present before Me. He is a debauchee and can do whatever He likes. Even if He cavorts with other lovers directly in front of Me, He is still My *prāṇanātha*. I have no one other than Him.

This is the conclusion. Who can attain this stage without cleaning his *citta*? First of all it is necessary to clean this *citta*, but only this *saṅkīrtanam* will do that. It is the best and only suitable process to clean the heart, to get rid of this worldly thinking, this worldly enjoyment – the material enjoyment of our senses.

When will *prema-bhakti* be attainable? Will it be possible to attain it when the mind is engaged in material happiness, in material pleasures? In that mind can we understand anything of *prema*? So while we are in this class we should not try to understand *prema*. It is useless as long as we are in that position. Moreover, we think that imitating the situation and behaviour of the *premi-bhaktas* will make our *citta* clean, but it is not prescribed. It is not mentioned in these teachings. Our hearts will become clean by *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* only.

Second it is said, “*bhava-mahā-dāvāgni* (the blazing fire of material existence).” Do we feel material existence to be a fire? Unless and until we feel it to be a fire, we will think, “Why should I try to get out of it?” We are burning in this fire and dying in this world. Are we really aware of this? Do we have such realization? We think that we are in a good situation here. We have money, a home and nice things to eat, so who will endeavour for Bhagavān, for *prema-bhakti* to Him? First of all let us understand and realize that we are burning in the birth and death system. We are suffering perpetually. But as long as we think this world to be very fine and full of happiness, why should we try to leave it? Why should we give up that habit?

“*Bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam*.” Who is realizing that we are suffering in this *dāvāgni*, this

blazing fire? It is so dangerous for us to take birth in this world. *Bhava-mahā-dāvāgni* – when we will realize that we are burning in this world, then only will we try to get out of that fire. But by what means can we relieve ourselves? *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* can rescue us from this *dāvāgni*, from this fire. We can then understand that relief will come by this *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* only.

When we are free from this bondage of *māyā*, free from *dāvāgni*, and rescued from it by this chanting, this chanting will reveal His joyful, all-pleasing feature to us. This *saṅkīrtana* will appear like the very sweet and soothing rays of the moon – *śreyāḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam*. Those rays belong to *parama-maṅgala*, our highest good. Our highest good is compared with the moon. The moon of *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* is so smooth and pleasing that our supreme auspiciousness will be realized then.

“*Vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*.” Wisdom is *vidyā* (transcendental knowledge), and that is the true result of *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*. That *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* is the life of transcendental knowledge, who is His consort – *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*. By that knowledge we can understand that *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* is the best. If by some knowledge we do not understand that *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* is the best result, then that knowledge is not knowledge. It is not admirable knowledge.

“*Sarvātma-snapanaṁ*.” One’s self will become thoroughly immersed in that *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*, or in the ocean of joy. One will sink in that ocean by this *saṅkīrtanam*. “*Ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam* – the ocean of pleasure, or joy, is increased by this *saṅkīrtanam*.” *Ānandāmbudhi* – the ocean of bliss swells. Whose bliss? My *gurudeva* once said, “It is Kṛṣṇa’s bliss that swells.” *Ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam*. “*Prati-padaṁ pūrṇāmr̥tāsvādanam* – in every stage one can realize *pūrṇa amṛta* (complete divine nectar).” The sweetness of *saṅkīrtana* is tasted at every step.

Let this *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* be praised in the highest way.

vāñcā-kalpataru bhyaś ca
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namah

I pray to the Vaiṣṇavas: you are like wish-fulfilling trees, you are oceans of mercy and you are the salvation for the most fallen; please accept this surrendered soul. 





The True Meaning of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Spoken on the eve of Śrī Guru-pūrṇimā
and the Disappearance day of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī
in Śrī Keśavajī Gaudīya Maṭha, Mathurā, 16 July 2008

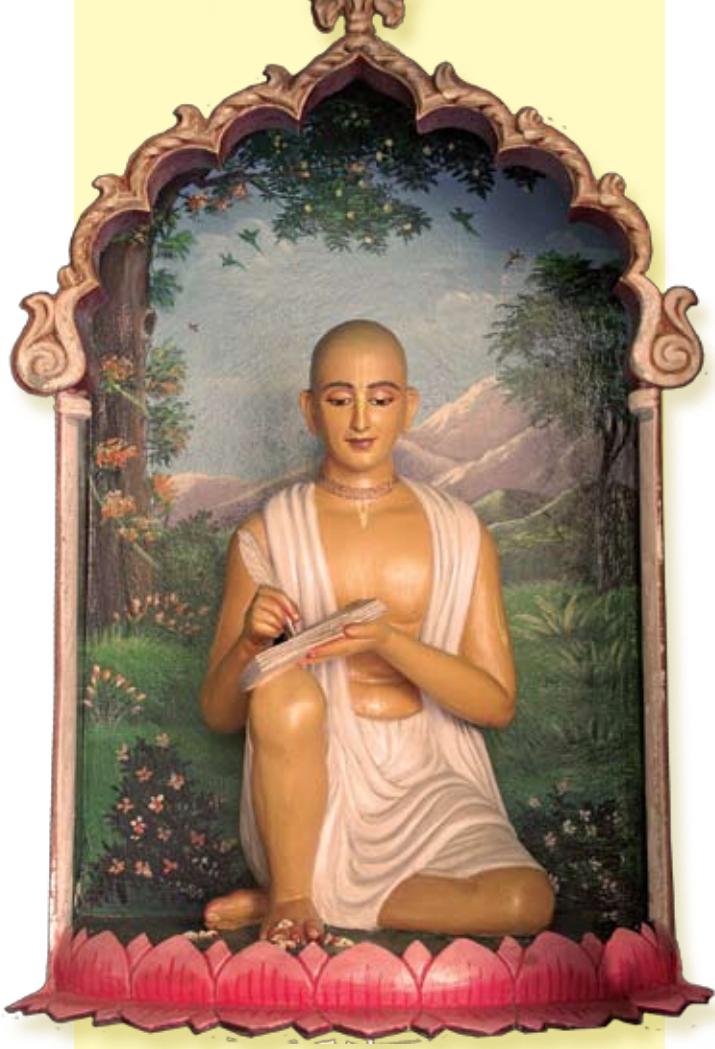
Śrīla Vyāsadeva, who is an incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa, was born on the full moon day of the month of Āṣāḍha. In India, everyone worships their spiritual master on this day, which is celebrated with great honour and reverence as Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, or Śrī Guru-pūjā. It is essential, however, that we understand the true significance of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. Merely placing a garland on the neck of *śrī guru* or offering at his feet a few flowers and fruits, some money, sweets or cloth does not mean that real worship of the *guru* has been performed. The real Vyāsa-pūjā is to surrender oneself completely at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva and to fulfil his desires.

This means that one should completely offer one's independence at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru in the mood of surrender: "O Śrīla Gurudeva, I am offering everything that belongs to me at your lotus feet." At the time of His initiation from Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said:

*ei āmi deha samarpilāna tomāre
krṣṇa-pāda-padmera amṛta-rasa pāna
āmāre karāo tumi—ei cāhi dāna*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 17.54–55)

O Gurudeva, I have surrendered My body and everything that is Mine at your lotus feet. I shall follow your every instruction. My only wish is to receive your merciful benediction by which you kindly make Me drink the transcendental nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.



“All of the *sādhakas*, or practitioners of *bhakti*, coming in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu should first become acquainted with the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and the principles of *guru-paramparā*, and then they should preach to others.”

If a person can selflessly surrender in this way, it does not matter whether or not he worships his *gurudeva* with flowers and so forth, for such worship is just a symbolic act meant to instruct the common people. Real *guru-pūjā* cannot be performed until the mood of selfless surrender at the lotus feet of *śrī guru* appears in one's heart. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī relinquished not only his home but also his post as prime minister, his abundant opulence, his servants and so on, specifically so he could fulfil the desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He approached Śrīman Mahāprabhu empty-handed, and feeling “Now I am Yours” he completely surrendered himself to Him. This alone is real *Vyāsa-pūjā*.

What is truly the most desired goal in the world? It is service unto the lotus feet of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Serving their lotus feet is undoubtedly our only purpose in life. Although it is extremely rare to achieve this, if one secures the shelter of the lotus feet of a genuine *guru*, this otherwise almost unattainable goal can be attained. In other words, if we surrender unto the lotus feet of the bona fide *guru* and practise serving the Divine Couple according to his teachings, instructions etc, we can attain the transcendental loving service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, very soon.

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the origin of *bhakti*, *śrī guru* is His incarnation, or manifestation. Therefore, unless a person sincerely and selflessly serves he will not attain *bhakti* even if he makes millions of endeavours and even if Bhagavān Himself bestows mercy upon him. It should be understood that *śrī guru* is non-different from Bhagavān:

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

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23)

The true import of the scriptures (Śrutis) is revealed in the hearts of those great souls who have equally the same unflinching *bhakti* for their *guru* and the Supreme Lord.

The people of Bhāratavarṣa (India) are indebted to Śrīla Vyāsadeva. Śrīla Vyāsadeva first divided the Vedas and thereafter compiled their essence in Vedānta-sūtra. After that he manifested the Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata*, yet his heart still remained dissatisfied. Later, in *Śrī Bhāgavat Purāṇa* (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam*), by the mercy of Śrī Nārada Muni, he described the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and narrated them to Śrī Sukadeva Gosvāmī. Śrīla Sukadeva Gosvāmī's worship of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, his father and spiritual master, was the first *Vyāsa-pūjā*. Śrī Sukadeva Gosvāmī was later worshipped by Śrīla Suta Gosvāmī. This was the second

Vyāsa-pūjā. In this way, the tradition of Vyāsa-pūjā began. Therefore, Vyāsa-pūjā, or *guru-pūjā*, has been practised since ancient times. Worship of the *guru* is performed even before the worship, or *pūjā*, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Our great fortune is that we are coming in that very *paramparā*, or succession of bona fide *gurus*, that is comprised of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda and my *gurudeva* (Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja) and his god-brothers. Only in this succession of bona fide *gurus* is the conception of service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, especially as a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, acknowledged as the topmost goal.

The son of Śaci-devī, Gaurahari Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa but with the mood and complexion of Śrī Rādhā, appeared in this world to bestow this most auspicious gift. Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself did not preach this doctrine but inspired it in the heart of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and manifested it in this world through him. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's gift is service to the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, in pursuance of the moods of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is solely what He came to give. Although we are so fortunate to be in this *paramparā*, to truly imbibe the concepts of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī requires sincere and honest effort.

Many people who come forward to perform *sādhana-bhajana*, to lead a life of devotional service, become trapped by the illusory potency of the Lord and become attached to *māyā* in her feature as a woman. In this way they entrench their life in misery. We should be ever alert to this. The Gauḍiya Maṭha is not an establishment intended to facilitate this. What is the purpose of the Gauḍiya Maṭha? It is to sincerely and purely follow the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. The Gauḍiya Maṭha's very existence is based on one objective alone: to follow the instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī by becoming acquainted with their teachings and performing *bhajana* accordingly.

One who leads such a life by remaining under the shelter of a genuine *guru* actually performs Vyāsa-pūjā. Such conduct alone signifies fitting worship of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and our entire *guru-paramparā*. If one wishes to perform *sādhana-bhajana* by following such rules and regulations then one may stay in the *maṭha*, but there is no place in the *maṭha* for those nurturing worldly (*asat*) propensities.

You all should clearly understand that the *maṭha* is not a place for arranging and celebrating marriages. If one wants to practise *bhajana* in its purest form, then one should reside in the *maṭha* and serve Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, even though one may receive chastisement from them. Śrī Nārada's curse upon Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva proved to be extremely beneficial for them. In the same manner, the chastisement of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas is also highly auspicious. If a person tolerates their chastisement and continues to reside in the *maṭha*, then he alone can truly understand their mercy.

This Āṣāḍhī Pūrṇimā also celebrates the disappearance day of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. For

us, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is like an incarnation of Śrī Vyāsadeva because he has written a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and has manifested the great gem-like scripture, *Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāṁṛta*. Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāṁṛta alone is the main foundation of all the scriptures written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rāghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and so on. In other words, all the other books of our Gosvāmīs manifested from this one book alone.

That is why Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is even the *guru* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. On the other hand, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has accepted Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as his *guru*. Such are the considerations of *guru-tattva*. If someone feels proud, thinking, "I have become *guru*," then he is not a *guru* at all. A *guru* never makes disciples; rather, he transforms others into *guru*¹. One who is a real *guru* does not even try to become a *guru*.

“Although we are so fortunate to be in this *paramparā*, to truly imbibe the concepts of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī requires sincere and honest effort.”

¹ The Sanskrit word *guru* (spiritual master) literally conveys "weighty with significance".

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya-janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 9.41)

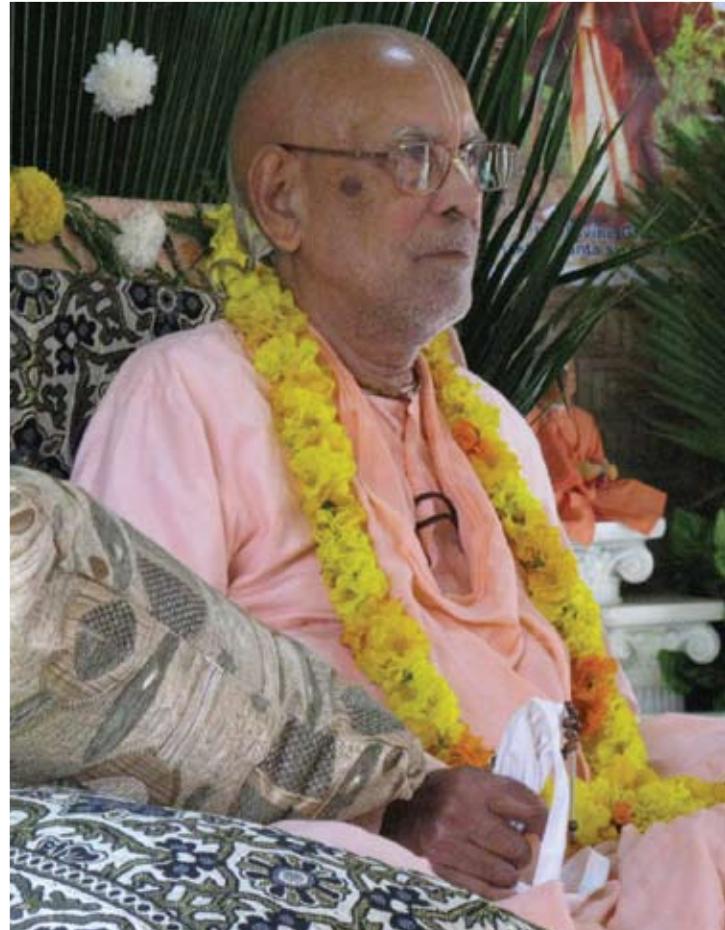
One who has taken his birth as a human being in the holy land of India (Bhāratvarṣa) should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people. In other words, he should himself perform the *sādhana* of *śuddha-bhakti* by accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and inspire others to do the same. This alone is the highest form of benevolence.

All of the *sādhakas*, or practitioners of *bhakti*, coming in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu should first become acquainted with the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and the principles of *guru-paramparā*, and then they should preach to others. It is necessary to both practise and preach. And for this end, the effort of all *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* will need to be at least a thousand times greater than the effort a householder makes to maintain his home. Throughout the day, not even a single moment can be spent making any other endeavour. One will have to engage his mind full time in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

It is necessary that one understand Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's special contribution to our *saṃpradāya* and why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this world. In essence, it was to specify our life's highest and most prominent goal: to become a particle of dust at the lotus feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, to become a maid servant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā under the guidance of Śrīla Rūpa Mañjari. This is the sole cherished aspiration for all our previous *guru-varga*.

May you all be blessed with this conception in your heart and may your life thus become successful. All those who have left their homes to perform devotional service or those who are performing it at home should perform Vyāsa-pūjā after having become acquainted with these teachings and principles. In this way, one should try to please Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Gurudeva, and under their guidance try to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the original Vyāsa. This alone is the true meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā.

Gaura-premānande! 



© © Vrajavallabha dāsa / Barry Cervantes

 *m viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī
Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa
Gosvāmī Mahārāja is in present times
the sole protector of the teachings of
the śrī svarūpa-rūpa-bhaktivinoda-
sarasvatī-keśava line. He is preaching
the message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu
with great success.*

After the 2008 Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, Śrīla Gurudeva travelled to Cebu in the Philippines, where writing was his main preaching activity. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the crest jewel of all the Purāṇas, and nowadays Śrīla Gurudeva is engaged in translating Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as writing his own commentary on it.





Preaching Report

Svāmī B. V. Mādhava



In one of his discourses in the Philippines, Śrīla Gurudeva spoke in the following manner,

"Do not criticize others, or else their bad qualities will overpower you and gradually you will become degraded. Be very careful. This world is extremely dangerous, as it is sharp like a razor's edge. You should not endeavour to correct others, even if they are wrong. If you attempt to correct them without possessing sufficient spiritual strength, it will lead to your own downfall. Śrīla Gurudeva and the senior Vaiṣṇavas are the best people to correct them. This work is best left for them alone.

"Just before the Mahābhārata War began, Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*. Although He was addressing His dear friend Arjuna, the teachings He imparted to him at that time were meant for the whole world. He said, 'If someone has single-pointed devotion to Me, the Supreme Lord, then even if he performs a most abominable action he is to be considered saintly' (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30).

"For instance, it is abominable to set someone's house on fire or to poison someone, and a person perpetrating such acts will have to suffer in hell. But here the Lord is saying, 'No. If he has exclusive devotion to Me, he will soon attain sainthood. In that case, Yamarāja has no right to punish him. I will enter his heart, wash away all his sins and purify him.'

"It is mentioned in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that there are many varieties of hell within the material creation. A devotee of the Lord never has to face any of these hells, even if he is ill-behaved. One should not conclude from this that the devotee of the Lord is being encouraged to behave badly. If someone performs sinful activities, thinking that he will not have to suffer because of these words, his sins will not be pardoned.

"This is the age of Kali. By the influence of 'Kali', *kalah*, (quarrels and conflicts) arise without any reason. On top of that, this age is eclipsed by the



shadow of many forms of disturbance, making it very difficult to engage the mind in *bhajana*. Thus, even those who are inclined to engage in *bhajana* may face unfavourable circumstances. For this reason it is said in *Śrī Caitanya-candrāṁṛta* (125):

*kālaḥ kalir balina indriya-vairivargāḥ
śrī bhakti-mārga iha kaoṭaka-koti-ruddhah
hā hā kva yāmi vikalaḥ kimahāṁ karomi
caitanyacandra yadi nādyā kṛpām karoṣi*

"This verse means that in this age, the age of conflict, people have become selfish. They are only concerned with their own well-being and their own happiness and do not care about anyone else. They have an unending desire to acquire more and more possessions and have forgotten that the inevitability of death is dancing on their heads. No one knows when death will come. At that time, they will not be able to take a single dime with them, but somehow this is the least of their concerns.

"For that person who is not in control of his senses, those very senses have become his enemies. Moreover, this age has seen the path of pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*) become overshadowed by *karma-kāṇḍa* (working to procure the fruits of labour), *jñāna-kāṇḍa* (the pursuit of impersonal knowledge), pretentious renunciation and so forth. People do not understand this:

*karma-kāṇḍa, jñāna-kāṇḍa, kevala viṣera bhāṇḍa,
amṛta baliyā yebā khāya
nānā yoni sadā phire, kadarya bhakṣaṇa kare,
tāra janma adhaḥ-pāte yāya*

Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrikā (8.8)

Karma-kāṇḍa and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* are simply cups of poison. Whoever drinks them, thinking them to be nectar, must struggle intensely in different types of bodies life after life. Such a person eats all kinds of nonsense and is condemned to take lower, more

Philippines

Vasantī dāsī:

For two months Śrīla Gurudeva stayed by the sea on the island of Cebu and engaged in writing. Then, in the last three days of his stay, there was a mini-festival. The last time Śrīla Gurudeva came to the Philippines was 2003, so most of the devotees there had not met him yet. They lamented the fact that their poverty does not allow them to obtain *darśana* of him. In the last three years though, forty Philippine devotees had taken initiation from him by phone.

This short festival felt more powerful than any week-long festival I have ever been to. I had been staying on another island, Manila, where the devotees were feeling hopeless about the \$100 fare to Cebu until a kind devotee from America sponsored half their combined fares.

There were about one-hundred-and-twenty-five devotees there from the three islands (Manila, Bacolod and Cebu). The Bacolod devotees are preaching with such



The program site in Cebu, Philippines

exemplary vigour. Nothing stops them. Rādhā-mohana Prabhu is constantly preaching. He single-handedly started an entire congregation and has been able to awaken in the hearts of twenty new devotees the desire to surrender to Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus feet

Rādheśa Prabhu's land became heavenly, with all kinds of banana leaves and flowers. Most of the visiting devotees just slept on the ground at the site. Before Śrīla

degraded births, all as a result of his so-called sense enjoyment.

"To become free from the influences of this age, a person must loudly call out to the most magnanimous Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with tears in his eyes: 'O Śrī Caitanya-candra! O Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari! Where will I go and what will I do if today You do not bestow Your mercy on me? I am extremely anxious, and without Your causeless mercy I have no other way, no other means, no other destination.'

"In order to receive the mercy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, it is essential to first receive the mercy of Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu, and even before that, that of Śrīla Gurudeva. What to speak of human beings needing a *guru*, when the Lord Himself descends to this world He accepts a spiritual master, just to teach us the proper way.

"When *maryādā-puruṣottama* Lord Rāma descended, He took *dīkṣā* from His spiritual master Śrī Vasiṣṭha and learned everything from him. When *līlā-puruṣottama* Lord Kṛṣṇa descended, He received His education in the *āśrama* of Sāndīpani Muni, and before that, when He was staying in Śrī Vraja-dhāma, He had accepted initiation from Saint Bhāguri. *Prema-puruṣottama* Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu received His education in the school of Śrī Gaṅgā dāsā and accepted *dīkṣā* from Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda.

"Therefore, if anyone wishes to make his life successful, he will have to perform *bhajana* by taking shelter of a genuine spiritual master. That is why Lord Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna, "*tat-prasādāt parām sāntim* – one can achieve transcendental peace through My mercy alone."



Gurudeva came, the anticipation to see him was so high. Considering how little they have seen him, their faith is amazing. Anurādhā dāsī just wrote to me saying, "Actually, I'm not prepared for the initiation; I'm still not qualified. But my heart and soul says, 'I love Gurudeva, and I believe in Him.' "

So, after a beautiful *guru-pūjā*, Śrīla Gurudeva started his lecture by saying, "I only want one thing from you because I know you are poor – your heart and your ears." Gurudeva said he had wanted to come to the Philippines for some time now. He gave two classes, two *darśanas* and two lots of initiations. The initiations were really personal and Gurudeva was so joyful.

Śrīla Gurudeva told the Philippine devotees, "Read my books and then distribute them. This will be your service." I have heard Śrīla Gurudeva give this instruction many times, but I have never heard him say, "This will be your service."

(photo above left) Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja meets the Philippine devotees and (left) a leader of the Ananda Marga Group in the Philippines



Vyāsapūjā

Śrīla Gurudeva was in Malaysia during his 89th appearance day, or Vyāsa-pūjā festival, on the 26th of January 2009. The devotees attending were inspired to hear the many *sannyāsīs'* and senior devotees' glorifications of Śrīla Gurudeva and also to hear Śrīla Gurudeva's glorification of the principle of Śrī Guru. It was a seven day festival, and was inaugurated with a Ratha-yātrā festival, which was organized by the devotees of the Jahur Bahru Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Malaysia

Dāmodara dāsa (from Australia):

An amazing atmosphere was building up as the day of Śrīla Gurudeva's Vyāsa-pūjā approached, and all the *sannyāsīs* were talking about the meaning of worshipping Śrī Guru on his appearance day and why it is important. When the day finally came everyone was overwhelmed with happiness, and Śrīla Gurudeva, as always, worshipped his *gurudeva* and the *paramparā* by offering *ārati* to them, and then he sat down and we did *ārati* to him. He looked very sober but still so loving.

I felt so fortunate to be back with Śrīla Gurudeva again and to see how amazing he is. You could really feel his presence in the room. On that day, Śrīla Gurudeva reciprocated with each and every devotee even though there were so many devotees there. For example, when it was my turn, I handed Śrīla Gurudeva the gifts I had for him and then he pulled me really close to him and hugged me. He gave me a questioning look. "Why are



Arrival at the site of the festival in Malaysia

© Vasanti dāsī

you giving me these things?" he asked. "I want to take care of you; it is my duty. You are a *maṭha-vāśī* now."

It felt like Śrīla Gurudeva's old festivals because there were just a few people there and it was so easy to approach Śrīla Gurudeva.



© GBC Sulatā dāsī

Sulatā dāsī:

During the Malaysia festival two things really struck me. The first was how much Śrīla Gurudeva was emphasizing the need to surrender to Śrī Guru and the second was how extraordinary his disciples are, of all ages, who are really trying to surrender to him. In one way, this was more wonderful than the festival for me. I thought of Parama-gurudeva's article in *Rays of The Harmonist* called "Uttamā-bhakti" and how he said that we should always strive to please Śrīla Gurudeva by our service, because pleasing him gives us life. For example, the devotees serving in the kitchen during the festival cooked three times a day and did not even get to receive Śrīla Gurudeva *darśana* when he came back from his morning walk. Still they were satisfied, knowing that

Śrīla Gurudeva would be pleased by their service. Śrīla Gurudeva is attracted by that mood of surrender and by that desire to please him.

I was really touched by the *puṣpāñjali* offerings of Śrīla Gurudeva's disciples, which were full of affection and gratitude. I was not only moved by those offerings which were broadcast to the world, but also the sincere thoughts of those devotees who held so much in their heart and shared with each other during the course of the festival.

As I sat in the audience listening to the devotees' offerings to Śrīla Gurudeva, I felt unfortunate that this mood of gratitude had not yet manifested in my own heart. Instead of remembering that Śrīla Gurudeva has saved me from an animal-like existence, I have been absorbed in thoughts of how he is not pleasing my material senses. Being surrounded by such qualified devotees who have

developed a mood of genuine gratitude and surrender was my good fortune on that day. It made me realize that I have to correct my behaviour and take shelter of the Vaiṣṇavas, who show the neophyte devotee how he should serve Śri Guru by their own ideal example.

One thing the cameras were unable to broadcast was the deep changes of heart that took place by being in Śrīla Gurudeva's association for one week. Many devotees were once again reminded that his hand always mercifully guides us through the obstacles we face in our lives, both when we are with him at a festival and when we are apart from him in our daily life. He told one devotee, "When you think about me and meditate upon me then that means that I am there with you."

After the festival was over I was left with the thought that I should daily ponder what it means to surrender and pray to Śrīla Gurudeva. By his mercy this will shape my life.

Nanda-nandana dāsa:

I always used to wonder what Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda meant when he predicted that the Chinese would be the last to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness but that they would make the best devotees. I wondered, "Who is going to help the Chinese people, who are so low and helpless, to realize this blessing and prophecy?" This year, in Malaysia, the answer became quite obvious to me.

The day before Śrīla Gurudeva's Vyāsa-pūjā was also the first day of the Chinese new year. We had a huge *nagara-saṅkirtana* and the traditional Chinese dragon danced for the pleasure of the deities of Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā. We felt so fortunate and joyful to start the new year by doing *kirtana* for our spiritual master, our hearts full of gratitude that he was saving us from the curse of countless lifetimes of low birth. For most Chinese people, the sight of a dragon is auspicious, and we pride ourselves as its descendent – the descendants of nothing but a big snake.

Years ago, a Chinese devotee brought some snacks for Śrīla Gurudeva. "Here are some 'snacks' Śrīla Gurudeva." Gurudeva jokingly said, "Oh, you have brought me some 'snakes'." He definitely knows our old Chinese eating habits. From the pigeon, a symbol of peace, to the snake, which represents envy, we Chinese spare none. Yet our Śrīla Gurudeva is the most



merciful and munificent representative of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda. He does not see our fault of low birth, but instead inspires a graceful change in our hearts and encourages us to give up our envy of the envious and engage in the beautiful and meaningful worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Like Nārada Muni, Śrīla Gurudeva is helping us to turn the curse of low birth into a blessing. He is teaching us the songs of Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and how to pray from the lowest position but aspire for the highest goal. We have no qualification, but the combined mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva and Śrīla Prabhupāda is so powerful, causeless and irreversible that we are confident, through the prediction of one *mahā-bhāgavata* and by the grace and loving guidance of another, that the *anarthas* developed over so many lifetimes of low birth will be removed and that we may develop some *nishtha* for their divine lotus feet.

I am praying to Śrīla Gurudeva that we can be like *cakora* birds and survive exclusively on the rainwater of your promise to Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda to help all of his followers. Since we know that a *sādhu* never speaks theoretically, these words maintain us.

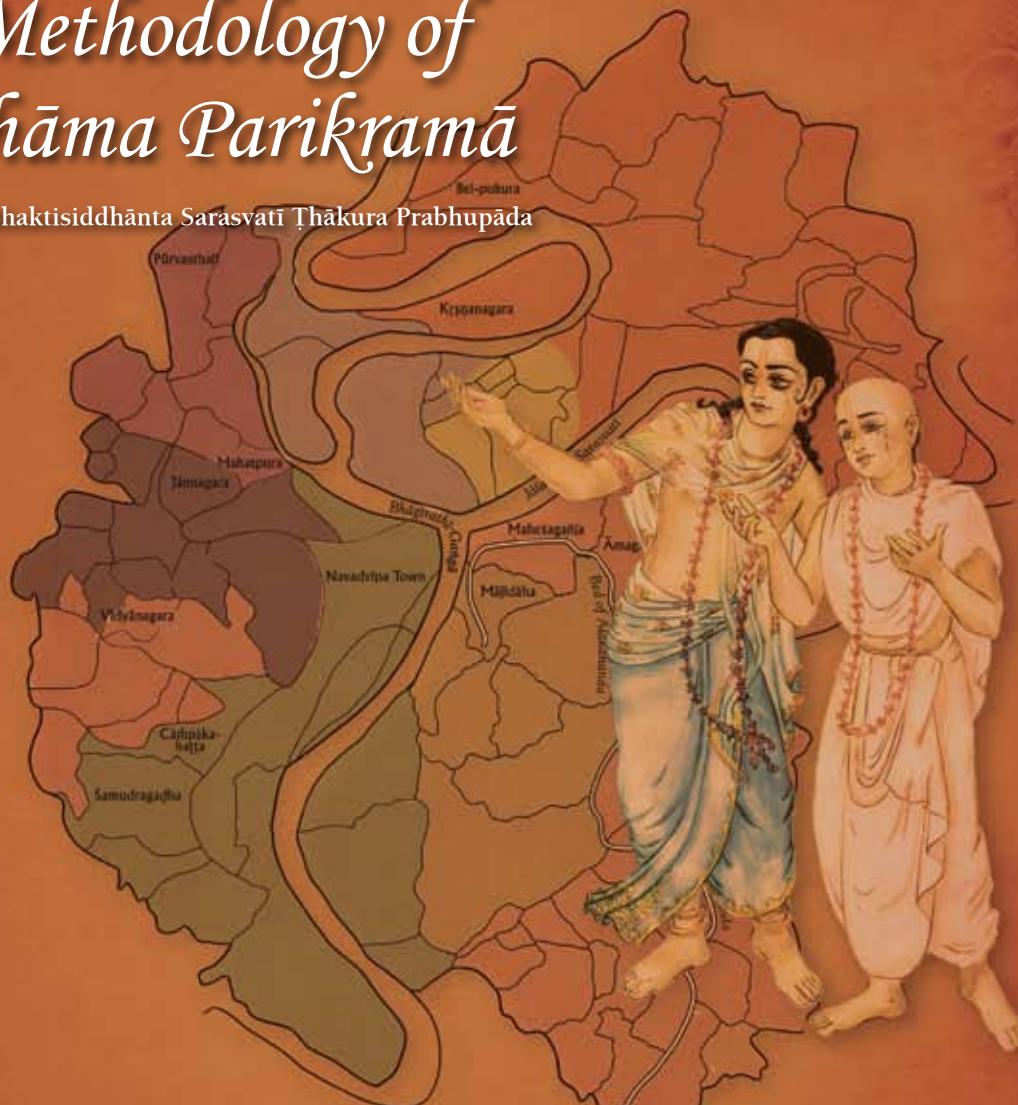


Dāmodara dāsa (Malaysia):

I can only think of one word to describe the atmosphere during the Vyāsa-pūjā festival at Desaru in Johur, Malaysia and that is "love". From the *śubhā-yatrā* to the Vyāsa-pūjā, it was a celebration of love – the love of our beloved Śrīla Gurudeva for all his children and their love for him in return. Now I'm really missing the *sāṅga* of devotees and being close to Gurudeva. There were so many hurdles for us to cross to get there, but by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa we were able to go, and we would give anything to be in that circle of love again and again and again. Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅgau Jayataḥ! 🌸

Methodology of Dhāma Parikramā

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda



"The spiritual realm is realizable in and through the words of the *sādhu*. The spiritual realm cannot be seen by the mortal eye nor touched by the hand of flesh. Neither is it the closed ear that can hear the true voice of the *sādhu*. The ear of the soul is to be opened to spiritual sound. In other words, one is to listen to the words of the *sādhu* with the conviction that the words themselves are identical with the object which they signify – that if the words are only received by the fully receptive rational impulse, the whole indivisible substantive reality will stand self-revealed."

Taken from *The Harmonist* – "Circumambulation of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma";
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By the causeless mercy of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga, the *Rays of The Harmonist* team welcomes you to this monthly On-line Edition, which features some of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's discourses.

Saraswatinode.com is the domain name of our mailing list. Sarasvatī is the name of transcendental knowledge herself and also the embodiment of transcendental knowledge Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, and *vinoda* means "spiritual bliss" or more particularly "one who increases Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's transcendental bliss". In other words, *vinoda* refers to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's illustrious disciple Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī, later known as Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja is the *sannyāsa guru* of Śrī A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja and the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

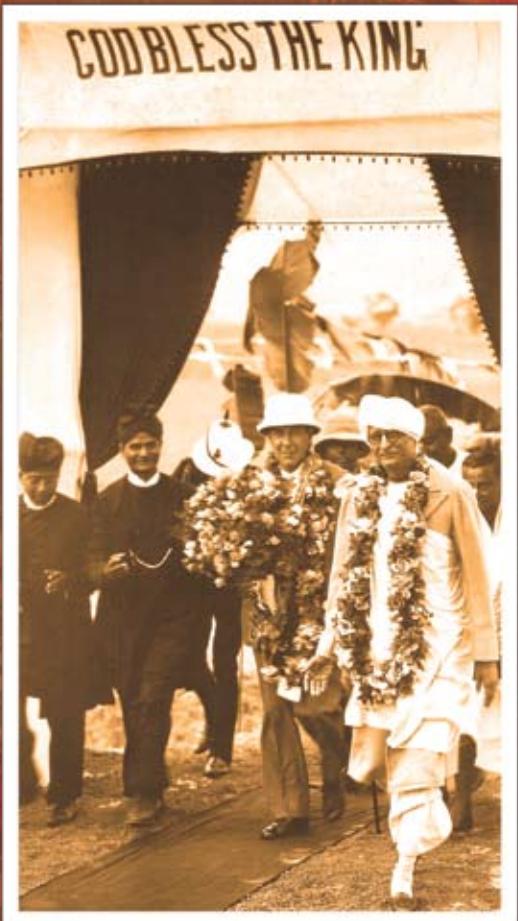
If the souls suffering in this world receive this transcendental knowledge with faith, they will experience spiritual bliss. At the same time, the aim of distributing this transcendental knowledge is to enhance the *vinoda* of Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

We hope these articles nourish you. In this way, we may all increase the bliss of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

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