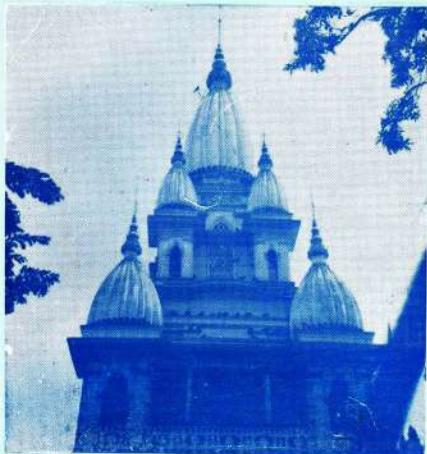


Guardian Of Devotion



1986
**SHREE CHAITANYA SARASWATA
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GUARDIAN OF DEVOTION



*Om Visnupada Paramahamsa
Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva
Goswami Maharaja*

ALL GLORIES TO SRI SRI GURU AND GAURANGA

GUARDIAN OF DEVOTION

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*Commemorating the
Fifth Centenary Celebration
of
the appearance of
Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu
and praying to
Sri Gurudeva
for your full blessings
upon us.*

The Appearance Of Sri Gaurasundar

by Sripad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaja

Within the sacred land of India, the holy footprints of the Lord and His devotees are a place of pilgrimage for the whole world. The seven auspicious places in India which are said to award liberation, are all found within those footprints. Among those holy places is Sri Mayapur which is situated in Sri Nabadwip Dham. It is non-different from Mathura mandal. Srila Vrindavana das Thakur has written, "There is no other village in the world like Sri Nabadwip, where Lord Chaitanya Gosai has descended". Truly Sri Nabadwip Dham is the best of all, and there is no other place like it, since the most magnanimous mercy-personified Sri Gaura Hari appeared in this part of the world. He indiscriminately distributed to all persons, whether they were qualified or unqualified, the highest perfection of love of God which is difficult for even the demigods to obtain. He has so generously distributed this highest gift even to the most fallen. Therefore Sri Nabadwip is incomparable in the world.

Center Of Learning

Nearly 500 years ago Sri Nabadwip city was reknowned throughout the world as the center of learning and knowledge. The science of logic which was brought from Mithila, was cultured by the intelligentsia of Sri Nabadwip, and its fame was spread all over the world. From Benares in Northern India, and from many other places *sannivasas* and the class of professors who were well read in *Nyaya* and *Vedanta* all came to Nabadwip for learning. From Kanchi in Southern India, and other places too, many students desirous of becoming well educated, all came to Sri Nabadwip. "Persons from different places all go to Nabadwip, for one who studies in Nabadwip he gets the taste for knowledge. No wonder there were hundreds of thousands of students and professors

there". (*Chaitanya Bhagawat*). Truly speaking "Even a boy can argue with a Bhattacharya," if he studied at Nabadwip. Everyone considered himself a great scholar if he studied there. And there was no chance of getting recognition from the scholarly community if one did not study or teach in Sri Nabadwip.

Glories Of Sri Nabadwip

Nabadwip was noted for its opulences which, by the grace of Sri Lakshmidevi, were shared by all the people there. On one bank of the Ganges, the greatest place of all learning, the most sacred Sri Mayapur was situated. Many wealthy persons from different parts of the world all came to settle there. Srila Vrindavana das Thakur writes, "Who can describe the opulence of Sri Nabadwip? Thousands of people go to take bath there, because Lakshmidevi glances over that place. Everyone lives there in great happiness. The Lord, knowing He would appear there, had arranged everything very nicely for His descent". The whole atmosphere was surcharged with auspiciousness, with many wealthy and learned persons coming from distant places to reside there in that holy place of pilgrimage and seat of learning. There is no need in mentioning the glories associated with such a place.

The Age Of Ritualism

But the pain within the hearts of the pure devotees knew no bounds. In the midst of all this grandeur and beauty they could see that everyone was simply wasting their valuable time in persuing materialistic objectives. Seeing this how could they be happy? Everyone was simply mad for wealth, mad for physical beauty, mad for acquiring followers, mad for knowledge and intoxicated with the empiric specu-

lations of materialistic science. Their mad attempt for profit, adoration and distinction looked like a frenzied dance, and in the midst of such things the devotees were perplexed. How to save them? Running madly after the flickering happiness of this world, the conditioned soul judges everything from the point of view of sense gratification, and uselessly waste their time with futile talks within that plane of existence. These things are all intolerable for the devotees. Sri Varndavana das Thakur writes,

"The whole world is devoid of real love for Rama and Krishna. As was predicted in the scriptures for Kali yuga, people only know about ritualistic ceremonies. They stay up the whole night singing the glories of some demigod. Some of them proudly worship Visahari, who removes the effect of snake poison. Others set up idols and worship them with great wealth. They spend money lavishly on their sons and daughters. Like this, everyone simply wastes their time. They never care to engage in Krishna kirtan which is the yuga dharma, or only religious practice for this age. They prefer to speak ill of others rather than say good things about them. Even from those who are puffed up with their detachment and renunciation, we never hear the chanting of the holy names from their lips. Some others think that the time of bathing is the only auspicious moment for chanting the names Govinda and Pandurikaksha. Those who recite the Bhagavatam for the education of the people, do not have the devotional serving mood in their tongue. Thus the Lord's energy produces the worldly illusion. This causes the devotee's unhappiness to increase without limit. Seeing the whole world devoid of Krishna bhakti their hearts are burning within. Some of them feel such intense pain that they want to leave their bodies. Others simply sigh and produce the name Krishna in their exhaling. Their food no longer tastes good in their mouths. When they see the activities of this material world they become exceedingly unhappy".

Sri Advaita's Promise

Sri Advaita Acharya was glorified by everyone, even among the society of non-devotees as he was representative of all the vaisnavas. Sri Advaita Prabhu was residing in Mayapur and for the welfare of the world was engaged in worshipping the Lord and preaching His glories. The miserable condition of the living entities who were all forgetful of Krishna was



Sripad B.S. Govinda Maharaja (right) describes Sri Sri Sridhara Maharaja (left) as, "The Infinite is coming down through him."

giving pain to his heart. He would arrange daily meetings for the devotees at which they would all express grief and profusely shed tears over the dreadful world situation. The Acharya, who was an ocean of mercy, found the miserable condition of the living entities to be unbearable and He decided resolutely within himself, that He would call the Lord, Himself, to descend and save the situation. "I will meet Vaikunthanath and bring Him here. Dancing and singing I will deliver all living entities". The glories of Advaita Acharya were not unknown to the devotees. All were pleased by hearing the promise of Advaita Acharya and they all engaged in His service having full faith in Him.

Sri Nityananda's Appearance

With this promise fixed in His mind, Advaita Acharya meditated on offering Ganges water and Tulasi leaf to the Lord constantly calling to Goloka Behari again and again. The Lord's throne was shaking. The devotees, who were also engaged in calling the Lord, abstained from all comforts and material enjoyment, and to relieve the devotee's unhappiness the all-merciful Lord prepared to descend to this world. Needless to say, when the Lord descends He comes with all His paraphernalia and associates, therefore before the Lord's descent the all auspicious

Nityananda Prabhu, who appeared in Radha desa, came first to make all the necessary preparations to receive the Lord.

Mayapur : Sri Jagannath Mishra's Home

Sri Mayapur is the center of Nabadwip Dham and is called Antardwip. Sri Jagannath Mishra lived at this place, Antardwip. He was a vastly learned and generous person and the resort of the purest souls. Srila Vrindavana das Thakur has written,

"Nabadwip is the place of residence of Jagannath Mishra. He was as devoted to his religious duties as Vasudeva, Himself. His magnanimous character was as unlimited as Brahman. No one could compare with him. Formerly he was Kasyapa, Dasaratha, Vasudeva and Nanda Maharaja, and now, as Jagannath Mishra, was the combination of all. His wife, named Sachidevi, was completely devoted to her husband. She was the emblem of Krishna *bhakti* and the mother of the whole world".

Transcendental Ray

This very pure, divine couple tragically lost eight daughters, but after that they begot a son named Visvarupa who had uncommonly beautiful features. They always worshipped the Lord in great transcendental ecstasy. Day by day Visvarupa, who always satisfied his father and mother, grew like the bright half of the waxing moon. This dark world got the strength of the auspicious planets. In 1406 Saka there was a special day because Sri Jagannath Mishra saw a brilliant transcendental ray make its way into his heart, and again from his heart it entered into the heart of Sri Sachidevi. Feeling thrilled, Mishra was overwhelmed with joy, and from that day Sachidevi became transformed into a wonderful embodiment of that transcendental ray. Mishra told Sachidevi all these things he had observed, and when Sachidevi confirmed that she had also experienced the same things, it only caused Mishra to increase his wonder.—"I see in the sky as if many heavenly beings are making hymns in praise of me. The whole atmosphere has become delightful with many enlightened persons coming and going from this place". Noticing all these things, Mishra said with joy, "From these things I can understand that a great personality will be born." With great attention this divine couple were always performing Visnu worship.

Where Did They All Come From ?

On 1407 Sakabda, Phalgun, full moon day, at evening time, the Lord Sri Gaurachandra was born. On this pleasant spring evening, the day of the full

moon, there was also a lunar eclipse. The banks of the Ganges and the roads of the city leading to the Ganges were all filled with throngs of people—a very thick crowd—and all were struggling along the way. Seeing this great crowd of people, one felt as if the whole universe had come here leaving the rest of the fourteen worlds vacant. Everyone was filled with ecstatic bliss. The sound of Hari filled up and resounded throughout the fourteen worlds. It was as if all the auspicious signs of the universe were rising at the same time, the splendor of Nabadwip was so brilliant. An unprecedented vibration of the name of Hari resounded from the many devotees gathered on the bank of the Ganges. The flood of Harinam made all inauspicious signs disappear on this occasion of the lunar eclipse, and instead brought boundless joy to everyone. As they stood on the banks of the Ganges, everyone was thinking, "Where did so many people come from ? Previously there were so many eclipses, but so many persons, and such a great vibration of the sound of Hari, we have never seen or heard any thing like this before, and we are all overwhelmed with joy !". They were all filled with intense happiness but they could not understand the cause. This was going on, and all without exception were feeling very good. Even fallen persons were laughing in the company of the Hindus, relishing the chanting of Hari, Hari. "There was pleasure in all ten directions, and even the river water was feeling pleased".

It was a very favorable evening indeed, "Lion *rashi*, Lion *lagna*, highly placed planets, the six planets, the eight signs—all auspicious signs were visible." Everyone was well dressed and decorated for the Lord's appearance and singing songs. "At that time, the life of the whole world, Sri Sachinanda na appeared".

The Spotless Moon Appears

In Sri Jagannath Mishra's house, there was no limit to the joyful atmosphere found in Sri Sachidevi's room. The whole world was inundated by the flood of Harinam, as the spotless full moon appeared today. And that is why the moon in the sky covered his face out of shyness (in the lunar eclipse). Why shouldn't he cover his face ? The moons on his toenails give such a brilliant, merciful light that they outshine millions of moons, and it is that same Gaurachandra who appeared today. Everywhere, on all sides flowers were raining from the sky. The sounds of millions of conch shells, beating drums, and dancing of divine personalities all began at that time. The whole earth resounded with "Jaya Jaya," and the

entire universe became liberated. The news of the appearance of Gaura Hari was thus announced. The devotees directly felt within themselves full satisfaction. The sweet sounds of the conch, bells, mridanga, and kartals became sweeter still when mixed with the chorus of, "Jaya Sachinandana Jaya Gaura Hari."

Only The Fortunate Can See

Everything connected with Gaura Hari is eternal. His name, form, qualities, pastimes, associates, paraphernalia, etc. are all eternal. His appearance is eternal. For those fortunate persons who are pure in heart, the eternal Lord resides in their hearts always. These things can not be understood by our tiny brains. So the Lord is *acintya bheda bheda* appearing in the form of Acharyadev as the highest conclusion of this principle. Only by the grace of *sadhu* and *guru* are we able to know the glory of Sri Chaitanya Deva who is the eternally pure, fully liberated Ultimate Reality. At that time, those fortunate persons who have received the mercy of the *sadhus* can understand that Gaurachandra appears as Sri Krishna in the mood of Radharani. They feel great ecstasy within their hearts and they are able to understand, "Today also Gaurangaraya was performing His pastimes and only a few fortunate persons were able to see".

adyapiha sei lila kare gauraya

kona kona bhagyan dekhipara paya

cnarpitecharim chirat harunaya vatinrah kalai

samarpayitermunnto jvalarasam svabhaktisgiyam

harib puratsundaryuti kadambasandipitah

sada hridaya kandare sphuratu nah sachinandanah.



Perfect Conclusions of The Scriptures

by Mahamandaleswara Sripad Bhakti Anand Sagar
Maharaja

Prema pumartho mahan :

The highest perfectional goal of human life is to attain divine love of God. This was especially taught by the Supreme Absolute Truth Personality of Godhead Sri Krsna when He appeared 500 years ago in Bengal as Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Lord Chaitanya is Lord Krsna Himself, the Supreme Predominating Moiety, enriched with the nature and lustre of the Supreme Predominated Moiety, Srimati Radharani. Although *Gauda Desa* refers to a geographic location of Bengal in India, all the devotees of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu the world over are known as Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The principal followers and associates of Sriman Mahaprabhu were the Goswamis of Vrndavana. Goloka Vrndavana is the original abode of the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord and His associates, which is manifest in this mundane sphere as *Gokula* Vrndavana. That divine plane can be perceived only by one who primarily attains the platform of a *goswami*, or one who conquers the dictates of the senses, viz. speech, mind, anger, tongue, stomach and genitals by progressively following the regulative principles of devotional service. The primary regulative principles are (1) accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master (2) obtaining initiation from him (3) rendering service unto him, (4) enquiring from him about the principles of true (non-sectarian) religion and (5) following the path chalked out by the great devotees.



His Holiness Sripad Bhakti Anand Sagar
Maharaja Mahamandaleswara offers praise
to Srila Sridhara Maharaja.

In these present estranged days, the fashionable, gluttonous ravishing to the limit of fleshy indulgence within the hellish kaleidoscope of steel, rubber, plastic and glass mechanization, hastens the modern Western man-animal to his sordid grave, only to accept repeated births in lower abominable species of life such as pigs and dogs. Illicit sex, animal slaughter, intoxication, gambling and feverish pre-occupation in amassing wealth are the five residences of the devil of this dark age, known as Kali. According to the injunction of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, these grossly sinful activities are strictly forbidden for the king, public leader, the religious persons and the spiritual master.

In India there are a thousand-and-one so-called religions. But the sincere and thoughtful must embrace the highest path of all, the path of Gaudiya Vaisnavism, which teaches, simultaneously from the

standpoint of ontology as well as fulfilled theism, the attainment of divine love based on the science of faith. The ignorant materialists are engaged in exploitation in the plane of misconception. Above them the scholars, poets or literateurs are engaged in the spiritual darkness of renunciation of this misconception, which merely leads them to the non-differentiated marginal condition. But the Vaisnava path is the path of pure dedication, unalloyed by spurious provincial or vested interests and culminating in divine love which is very rarely found within this world. This is completely free from artificial, rigid indoctrination and psychological conditioning.

The Almighty never needs to be a slave to our puny austerities and rituals, even if we could move the heavens and earth by them. He never needs to be a captive in our fist of suspicious analytical scholarship, grammar, or curiosity seeking. But if He chooses to graciously bestow His mercy upon any fortunate soul, be they either learned sages or sons of dog-eaters, none can impede the flow of such divine grace, divine love proper.

It is indeed unfortunate for the world that in the very name of such divine grace so many imposters have sprung up, and just like businessmen they rally the ignorant, who are like cattle in a stable waiting to be sent to the slaughter-house. Such imposters are helpless to save themselves from the vicious cycle of birth and death, to say nothing of their blind followers, and what to speak of delivering the supreme perfection of divine love ?

Still the rarity of a genuine thing does not suppose its absence, and we are confident that the sincere aspirants of progress in the devotional line of perfection will hail the message of His Divine Grace Om Visnupada Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja; he is the treasure-house of the *Gaudiya siddhanta*, or perfect conclusions of devotion according to the authorised scriptures as promulgated by Srila Jiva Goswami, and the embodiment of the sublime teachings of Srila Rupa and Raghunatha. He is the affectionate grandfather and greatest living authority of the Sri Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaisnava Sampradaya in the world today.

(Adapted from "The Truth About Guru", 1983.
translated by Sripad B. A. Sagar Maharaja.)

Universal Conception of Guru

by Sripad Bhakti Sudhir Goswami Maharaja

Sri Chaitanya Charitamrta, the post graduate study for Gaudiya Vaisnavas begins with the invocation *Vande gurun*, "I offer my respectful obeisances unto the spiritual masters". Therein, Srima Krishna dasa Kaviraja Goswami reveals that the fully blossoming spiritual conception comes to embrace a plurality of gurus.

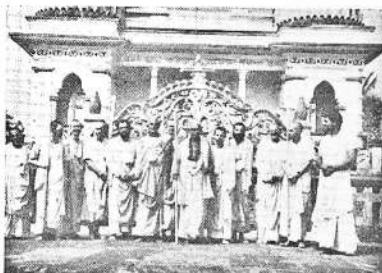
The scriptures in general present a very broad and universal conception of Sri Guru, laying stress on the spiritual substance—that divine current of nectar that flows down to this plane from the highest domain through the inspiration that is found in the heart of a real Vaisnava. To deny divine revelation through another agent in the name of being chaste to one's guru can be offensive and even suicidal.

As guru is the functioning principle of Divinity revealing Himself in this world, according to our different stages of realizations, he may appear in different forms. The chastity of a disciple is demonstrated in recognizing the divine presence of Sri Guru wherever it is found, and bowing his head at the lotus feet of the agent through whom Divinity is so kindly revealing Himself.

The true chastity of the Vraja *gopis* was shown in their answering the flute call of Sri Krsna in the dead of night, although apparently abandoning their husbands to do so. So while some are sleeping in the bodily conception of Sri Guru, others are awakening to the inner dimension of his divine personality. His Divine Grace Srima Bhakti Raksha Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja writes in *Sri Guru and His Grace*, "We must not identify our guru with the appearance we perceive with our physical senses. Our inner identification of Him will be clarified according to the growth of our vision. When our vision increases and takes shape from material to transcendental, His look will also change accordingly. Otherwise, what we see will be based on a material conception. And to force the material conception onto Divinity is a crime, it is ignorance, it is erroneous. We have to free ourselves from the snare of identifying reality with the physical form presented to our senses. By eliminating the external conception, we have to enter into the internal, and that will be all-important to a progressive disciple, if we want to go to the inner world of substance."

In proportion to the depth and intensity of our inner hankering for a connection with Divinity, our

conception of guru will expand. In separation from Sri Krishna the *gopis* began approaching even the trees and enquiring, "Where is Krishna?" Srima Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura writes, "The reflected form of the lotus feet of Sri Guru in different receptacles constantly reveals many new matters for our instruction." For those whose divine eye is awakened, they will find traces of Divinity everywhere and in everything.



Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Vaisnava Sannyasis

Vaisnava Siddhanta: Serving the Vaisnavas

by Sripad Bhakti Madhur Ban Maharaja

With *sharanagati*—surrender to the Lord as one's guardian, we finally come to know who is who, and who to really love and serve. Full surrender of body, mind and words establishes us in our real position and then our God consciousness becomes Krishna consciousness. This is the Vaisnava conception, which is able to gradually cure us of our diseased material condition. Once we are healthy then we are really in a higher plane of living, the plane which is beyond the jurisdiction of all misconceptions. The plane of devotion is where there is full dedication of the whole to the center, who is the only proprietor of everyone and everything in existence. But serving His servant, and his servant, and again his servant is the real teaching of Sri Krishna Chaitanya who is none other than Sri Sri Radha and Krishna combined. He is dearest to the Lord who follows this divine path of love devoid of any self interest. And this is our most fortunate position, our *sanatana dharma*, which can bring real satisfaction to the heart.

Exploitation, Renunciation, Dedication

Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja

Modern science is only increasing the circumference of this world, the world of exploitation. According to Newton, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. We must be conscious of the fact that all acquisition is ultimately nullity, because like a boomerang reaction will come back again to produce zero. This is actual scientific knowledge. But modern scientific progress is no progress, or progress in the wrong direction. It is like borrowing money. Taking a loan is not money at all. Whatever we take from nature will be extracted from us to the *paise*. So there is no gain. We are within the circumference of the exploiting world. Every object we take from nature is like a loan. But the loan *must* be cleared, rest assured.

The Quest Of Life

The first principle of any living being is to live, to save himself. That should be the starting point of our whole endeavor for progress or knowledge. In the Upanisads we find *asato ma sad gamayo, tamaso ma jyotir gamayo, martyam mam amrtam gamayo*. This indicates what should be the primary tendency of our quest in three phases. First, I am transient and mortal, make me eternal. Next, I am ignorant and in nescience, take me from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light. Then, I am in sorrow and misery, guide me to *anandam*, joy and a fit life there. These should be the real goals of life, and any research must begin here only. *Sac cid anandam, satyam shivam sundaram*. These should be the subject matter of our research, the line of our approach : to save oneself and save the world, to remove the darkness of ignorance and get the light of knowledge, and to remove misery and get the nectar of the sweet, sweet life. Scientific knowledge which avoids or ignores this is simply false, wild goose-chasing. And it is self-destructive or suicidal. Very soon atomic researchers are going to prove that their science devours itself. The civilization already created by it sucks its own blood. Modern man is feeding on the flesh of his own friends or of himself. Material science and knowledge means only this. But this is not knowledge. Real knowledge must absorb yourself and others in eternal life, full knowledge and peaceful existence. This is our conception. This is what guru-deva has given to us. Our Guru Maharaja came to spread this sort of knowledge and we came hankering. Hungry we felt ourselves looking for such things. Still I am engaged in that sort of quest, and that

should be the real life for one and all who are in this mundane world. There should not be any other quest or any other engagement. There should be nothing of the kind. Then that will be real life.

Return To Zero

And renunciation is not the remedy. That is the next point. The Buddhists and Shankarites say, "Yes, renunciation is the remedy, leave everything." But the vaisnavas come with a third proposal. They know it is temporary living in the land of exploitation, but one cannot exist without engagement. Only renunciation means withdrawal, to return to zero. That is not desirable. So the vaisnavas say that there is a land of dedication, and that is normal, where every unit is a dedicating unit. And dedication must be towards the center. Our inner *atma*, not mind or mundane intelligence, but transcending all these things our real conception is the soul which has some relationship with the subtler realm. The land of dedication begins with Vaikuntha and ends in Goloka.

Retirement Is Hell

Vaikuntha is the land of calculative dedication in terms of constitution and bound by law. But Goloka is the layer of spontaneity. It is desparate, careless of its own self—so intense. That is the highest, and by the work of dedication of all it becomes a very heavenly area. All dedicating, none extorting, so happiness of the highest degree is to be found there. Everyone is enjoying there. If all are idle men and they meet together that will be like hell. But if all the working men co-operate together there will be immense opulence. Because everyone is dedicating to the highest degree, opulence or bliss is flowing everywhere. There is no want. All Krishna consciousness, pure beauty and love reigns there. The king is that of beauty and love, where there is no force of labor, but all is a labor of love. Beauty and love are controlling, not power. That is Goloka. This is Gaudiya vaisnavism. And Mahaprabhu and His followers carry the banner of such creed.

Idea Behind The Sound

And where do we start ? Through *nama*, divine sound, it is easy to begin the spiritual quest. The most subtle thing in our experience here is sound. And it is cheap, much easier than *dravya*, *yajna* and so many other things which are to be gathered. Sound comes freely and without any expense. So our

research can begin with sound, but that sound must be of divine characteristic.

Just as the medicine in a homeopathic globule cannot be shown by the outer figure, so also only when sound, the name Krishna comes from the proper person, then Krishna will be there within. In other words, Krishna from the mouth of a *sadhu* and Krishna from the mouth of an ordinary person is not one and the same. Just like the potency of the homeopathic globule depends on the medicine within. The idea behind the sound, from where it comes, whether from Vaikuntha, Goloka, or some particular *rasa*, to that place the sound will gradually assert itself and take you there. The sound, *Vaikuntha nama grahanam*, must come from the infinite world, Vaikuntha, not from any mundane origin. So the inner potency is to be discerned and detected. To a certain extent I am able to give some idea.

Sacrifice To The Center

What is the meaning of dedication or sacrifice ? *Yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra loko yam karma bandhana*. Work should be done only as a sacrifice. All other work is mere energizing force. And *yajno vai Krishna, aham hi sarva yajnaman bhokta ca prabhur eva ca*. The Lord or Guardian says that it must be devoted towards Me, to My satisfaction, otherwise it is not *yajna*. Sacrifice means that it must be for the Absolute center, and not for any provincial interest, sectarian purpose or anything else. It must go to the Absolute and then it will be real *yajna*. Other *yajna*, *devata upasana* (demigod worship) will go up and then come down. So *devata upasana* is *saguna*, and My *upasana* is *nirguna*. *Saguna* means under the influence of *maya*, the good and bad of this world. And *nirguna* means that of Absolute characteristic, which has value everywhere. Just as the standard of money is not currency like the dollar, yen or ruble, but gold, so *rasa* is the standard of realization of the Absolute. Provincial ideas, sectarianism or anything like that won't do. Such provincialism will be *devata upasana*, not worship of Myself. The attempts of the little-brained persons will certainly be futile—going up and coming down. *abrahma bhuvanal lokah punar avartino 'rjuna*. "I am the only enjoyer of everything, and I am friendly to all. When you can realize that I am all in all and that I am a friend to you at the time, then all misgivings will disappear in you." My guardian is the Absolute all-fearful power. My interest is represented in Him. I may not know of my own real interest, but He knows it better. So I don't have to be afraid that the management is with Him. Absolute good is an autocrat and that is the



Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara deva Goswami Maharaja, at 91 years of age, is the greatest living authority on Gaudiya Vaisnavism in the world today.

best arrangement. The absolute good must be concentrated there in the autocrat. He must have complete freedom, then everyone will be benefited because He is all good. So there should be no misgivings, no apprehension, then one's heart will be filled with peace only.

Friends Everywhere

Sreyan dravya mayad yajna. By sacrifice and yoga also, dedication is promoted. By dedication we live and grow, and by exploitation we die and go down. By renunciation we become zero and stand still like in deep slumber. So both exploitation and renunciation must be given up and dedication to the center and to all in connection with the center, must be taken up. I shall not exploit anything, at the same time I must not dismiss anything. Everything is friendly to me. One should see with this vision. In Gita, Krishna says *yo mam pasyati sarvatah sarvam ca mayi pasyati*, "I am everywhere. Only see in that connection, with that angle of vision. Try to find Me, and everything in Me. Then you will be out of danger. Otherwise, that which is non-God will take you otherwise. If you can see the connection of God everywhere then you are safe. No one will be your enemy. You will have no foes, you are in the midst of friends. He is everywhere and everything. He is not lost in My sight, and I am not lost in his sight". In *Bhagavatam* it is also mentioned. *srava bhutesu yah pasyet bhagavad bhavan*. One

F A I T H

by Srla Bhakti

who can always see My connection with everything, and accordingly see what will be his connection with Me, is properly adjusted. He can adjust with everything. He can see things perfectly, otherwise he cannot avoid punishment. Yamraj, the punishing judge, won't allow us to escape.

Sacrifice For Krishna

One who performs *yajna* towards Krishna with this sort of knowledge, is the real type of *yajna*. But other types of *yajna* mentioned in the Vedas, for propitiating different gods or demigods is not *yajna* proper. One who performs such *yajnas* does not know the purpose of the scriptures. Only when it is done for Krishna, then the *yajna* is performed in truth.

One's conception of Krishna must also be proper. The *mayavadis* and others also recognize Krishna, but they see Him as a part of *maya*. This is not correct. We must have the view of *nirguna* Krishna. Such vision will depend on our faith which is acquired by previous *sukriti*. Faith is necessary. Intellectual approach based on false ego will not help.

False Ego

The false ego means the ego who is receiving and transmitting false information, false knowledge. The ego is like a *yantra* or machine. Like a computer the false ego is receiving false news and transmitting false news. It is engaged with what is unwholesome and what is opposite to our real interest. Our innate tendency is to live. This is our inner nature or inner necessity. But if that is not being transmitted, it is working against my interest, and that is false. The ego is like the computer, but because it is dealing with falsehood it is called false ego. False information means that one is not acquainted with reality. There may be false duality or real duality. Everything may be real, but if our conception is false then everything will be false.

Connect With The Infinite

Tarko pratista. Argument alone cannot bring us to the conclusion. *Sraddha* is necessary, for discussion alone cannot give birth to any fruitful thing. The conclusion is so high that only *sraddha* can reach it, and nothing else. The electromagnetic ether can reach the sun, moon and stars, but not the air or other media. So to approach the infinite world, the knowledge or experience of this world will not help, but only *sraddha* comes to our aid. The intellect or knowledge is like the *vayumandal*, the air around the globe. What is learned through the experience of the earth cannot pierce through the domain beyond. Only the ether connects everything. So *sraddha*, faith, can connect us with the farthest quarter and take us there. Faith is the basis and by dedication to Krishna we can reach the highest platform of perfection.

Faith in Krishna, the Absolute Truth, is innate in every soul. Faith is coexistent with the soul, but at present it is covered by *maya*. *Maya* means miscalculation, misunderstanding, and wrong interest. Because our faith is covered, we cannot trace it out, but it is there within us. Only when we have come in connection with a real saint will our inner faith awaken. Faith is within us but at present it is suppressed, and so we give more importance to some local and temporary interest, ignoring our eternal interest. This is the condition of the soul in bondage. Our eternal interest within has been covered by the local, temporary interest. So, because we have forgotten our eternal self-interest we have to suffer.

Any self-interest is limited. Local means limited. The Rupee, which is valuable in India, won't have any use outside of India. The Rupee is a local currency. On the other hand, gold has value everywhere; gold is the central basis of all local currencies. In the same way service to the Supreme Lord is the Absolute interest, without which all local interests are valueless. So, we are all servants of the Supreme Absolute Center and His service is our eternal interest.

Universal Interest

As a servant of the Absolute, I may assert His interest wherever I may be posted. By serving the Absolute interest, all local interests are automatically served. But a servant of India has different interests than a servant of Russia, a servant of America or a servant of Japan. These are all local interests. So, these local interests must be given up. We must learn what is the Universal interest and awaken to our inner plane of life, which is fully in harmony with that Universal interest. We must follow that path, for that is higher, more tasteful and more reasonable in all respects. That is a perfect life. Serving the Universal interest is the real meaning of religion and the ultimate religion is *Bhagavat Dharma*. If we serve any partial interest then another part will revolt. We must serve the Universal interest which is already within us; that will be useful and successful everywhere.

Absolute Faith

Anyone may say that they have *sraddha* or faith, but faith has its criterion. If someone asserts that his faith in some local interest is as good as his faith in the Universal interest, it will not pass the examination of the experts. They will examine him. They

In The Absolute

Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami

know the symptoms of real faith, its criterion, its jurisdiction and its characteristics. Apparently, there are so many different kinds of faith; Christianity, Islam, Yoga, and so many other religious creeds. If a person has some religious creed, he may assert "This is my faith". It may be a particular creed, but Absolute faith has its separate existence. Only Krishna consciousness represents those who have Absolute faith.

Some people say, "Krishna is a particular form with a human figure. How can that be a universal representation of the Absolute truth? Krishna consciousness is also a local, narrow type of belief. You say that Krishna is the Absolute but He has a particular figure. We don't say that the Absolute is limited to a particular figure. He is beyond the range of our eye and ear experience, our mental and intellectual experience. He is all-comprehensive and all-pervading".

This is the *Brahman* conception of the Absolute. *Brahman* means all-comprehensive. Everything is contained within that. *Brahman* means the broadest knowledge, which can complement all possible parts of knowledge. Above that is the *paramatma* conception. *Paramatma* means the all-pervading, smallest of the small. Beyond the atom is the proton and the electron, and the smallest of the small: *paramatma*. *Paramatma* means the smallest of the small, and *Brahman* is the biggest of the big.

Krishna is All Attractive

Bhagavan is of a different type. *Bhagavan*, or the Supreme Lord Krishna, is He who attracts the attention of everyone. He is neither the biggest nor the smallest, but He who can attract all attention. That aspect of the Lord in its most extreme form is Krishna, and He is so sweet that He can attract everything. There may be so many atoms both big and small, but gravity attracts them, gives them some form and they become the cosmos. In the highest sense, attraction means not only physical attraction but wholesale attraction in body, mind and soul.

The center of the highest attraction is Krishna. Krishna means 'One who can attract everything and give the highest satisfaction in return'. Although He may come within our visualized experience, that experience has no connection with this world. He is Transcendental Krishna can play in the *rasa* dance, and appear simultaneously at the side of every *gopi*.



His Divine Grace Srila B. R. Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja. "A vaisnava is a light tower of faith in this world."

by expanding Himself into innumerable doubles, so that, by the side of each *gopi* there is one Krishna. Brahma stole Krishna's calves and cowboys, but by His will everything was kept up. There was no loss to Krishna, so infinite is He in character. But because we are finite, He approaches us in an easily comprehensible way, in a way that we can visualize Him. Otherwise, our eyes are useless in trying to perceive the infinite. If something is very dazzling we cannot see it. Our eyes have their limits. If a light is very intense we cannot see it, or if a light is very dim we cannot perceive it. We can only perceive the middle part of the spectrum. Similarly, if a sound is very loud our ear cannot grasp it, and if a sound is very soft also, our ear cannot catch it. Our ear can function only within the limitation of a certain sound range. Everything which is above or below our sense perception is of no use to us, and so Krishna appears to us in the middle, in so many ways. He appears to us in a certain colour, a certain figure. He appears in sound as the name Krishna; He appears for the eye experience as the Deity; for the ear experience as the name Krishna; for the tongue experience He appears as *prasadam*. In different ways our senses can have a corresponding relationship with Him.

Once, I went to preach in Karachi, in 1935 or so. The president of the Arya Samaj came to see us and

his first remark was, "If the finite can know the infinite, then He is not infinite. You are worshippers of dolls, idols; you say that you can know God, but you are a finite soul. The infinite can never be known by you". That was his argument. "You *vaisnavas* preach doll worship, idol worship. Your transaction is only within the limited world. You don't know anything about the unlimited". With this basis, he attacked us. But I immediately replied. "If the infinite cannot make Himself known to the finite, then He is not infinite". So, in the *vaisnava* creed, or in any other creed, we should always keep in mind that everything depends on Him. He can come down to our level, but we cannot go up to His level. We can only attract Him to come down to our level by improving our negative tendency. We should pray, "O Lord, I am so mean, I am the most fallen of the fallen, the lowest of the low. Without Your help, I am nothing. Please be satisfied, be propitiated with me". That is possible only through *sarangati*, self-surrender. Through *sarangati*, we can attract the superior plane to descend to the lower plane. He has the power. He can take me to His domain. He is all-powerful, but we cannot force our entrance into that domain. We have no natural right to do that. We are made of lower stuff. He is *adhoksaja*, transcendental. *Adhoksaja* means that plane of existence which can keep the world of experience in a lower position. The world of experience is pushed down by the *adhoksaja* plane. That subtle plane of existence can come down to us, but we cannot go up. Only if He takes us there, can we go up. With a passport, we can go to the verge of our jurisdiction, to the border, but if we have a visa, if a visa is allowed, then we can enter into the domain of another land. So, the human mind and intellect can have no touch of the *adhoksaja* realm.

Elusive Flying Saucers

A few days ago, there was a rumour of flying saucers. It was thought that from a more civilized land, they came in a small plane and wandered over this world. From earth, the airforce gave chase to the flying saucers, but they disappeared. Where they have gone, no one can trace. They returned disappointed. The flying saucers can descend here, to connect with this planet; the airforce can follow them to some extent, but the flying saucers disappear beyond their vision. The *adhoksaja* or transcendental plane is something like that. There is a subtle plane that can come down to our gross mind and intelligence, but we cannot go up there.

Something Wonderful

The *mayavadis* and the Buddhists say that we

can withdraw from this world of experience and dissolve into the world of soul. They say that the non-differentiated spiritual plane is the ultimate end. But Ramanuja and the other *Vaisnava acharyas* say that there is another plane of existence, which is more subtle, more efficient and more powerful. The soul, which we may think of as the sun or moon, is a gross thing in comparison to that realm. Just as the flying saucer can come here, the transcendental plane can descend to the plane of the soul, and then the soul can have experience. But if it withdraws from our experience, then the soul cannot do anything, but the recollection will be there. He will remember that something wonderful, some wonderful experience came to touch his heart. Again, how can he have such an experience? When Mahaprabhu was coming from Gaya, he suddenly saw Krishna with His flute, and then Krishna disappeared. But Mahaprabhu's heart was fully captured by the sweetness and the extraordinary impression of His appearance. He said, "I can't stand it; I can't live. Oh! my friends, if you want me to live, then show me that land of beauty. The beauty that I suddenly experienced when I was coming back from Gaya; how sweet it was! It captured all the nerves of my soul. I can't stand to live. Oh, my friends, if you want me to live, then show me that land of beauty".

Knowledge Searches After Beauty

So, he managed anyhow to again show that sweet figure. It is so sweet. That is the impression, that is the consciousness, that is the thought, that is the idea. That area is superior even to the soul, it is most fine. That is a plane of concrete reality, but we are only chewing the cover; we are not getting a touch of the spirit within. What we experience by our eyes, by our ears, by our tongue, is only the cover and not the spirit within. (*na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum*). Prahlada Maharaja says that we are making much of the outer cover of the world, of the universe, but the sweet substance that is within, we cannot have a trace of that. But the grace is coming down by the will of that Almighty; that supreme knowledge and beauty is the uppermost. Beauty and harmony are the highest. Even knowledge searches after beauty. One who wants knowledge wants to be the gainer by calculation. He wants to gain something, but what is that something? What is it that knowledge is searching after? He is searching after sweetness and beauty, for harmony and ecstasy. And that is present there in the highest sphere, the highest layer that can come down. Now, we are in a neglected position, we are so weak; how will it be possible to attain that plane? How will it be possible to get permanent nationality there? How

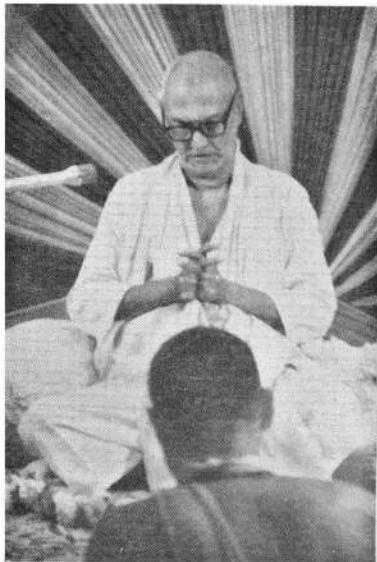
is it possible? We must begin in a particular process.

The Agents Are Coming

The agents are coming. Contact with them and watch the light. Find out what is necessary to live in that country; prepare yourself. Above all, you must accept the interest of that plane as your interest. There, in that plane, everyone wants to serve Krishna, to please Krishna. He is the center. We must try to be trained, so that if you are taken there, you will know what to do. So, the agent is necessary. He will teach us. From Him, we will get the knowledge, and in this way we will train ourselves and then the correction will come and we will be able to go there. By their grace, we will go there and we will be utilized there in the service of the Lord. So, self-abnegation is necessary. First, we are all self-aggrandizing units. So, self-abnegation is necessary. Then self-aggrandizement should be banished, self-seeking must go, local interest seeking must be given up and the universal interest, especially in the plane of Krishna's satisfaction must be taken up. How will we get such a training? Through the saints, the scriptures and the guru. By following some regulations, we shall gradually be able to secure some service in that plane, and we shall be taken there. It is a reality; it is not a concoction. It is not imagination.

Dissolving Worlds

Why should we run after a phantasmagoria? It seems that apparently we are searching after something imaginary, leaving behind the concrete world, but this world is not the concrete reality. That is the defect. We see in our everyday experience that everything is vanishing here. We do not want this; we want to live eternally. It is our nature to live eternally. But, although it is undesirable, still, we have to die. It is inevitable. So, in the vision of a sober judgement this world is not concrete. It is all disappointing. It is all cheating; *maya*. *Ma-yā*; that which is not. *Maya* means to be engaged with a particular thing that is not. That thing which is not what we conceive it to be. So, this world is not concrete; first we have to understand that. We have to understand that this is not substantial. Everyone is here for some time and then they are passing away. So, if we want to conquer death, then we have to seek that inner world where this body may not go; this mind will not be utilized there. Within, there is the soul, and within the soul lies the unique function to serve the sweetness, Krishna. That should be evolved, awakened and with the proper agent of the Absolute, the spiritual master, that aspect of our inner eternal self will be taken to the plane of infinite resources and our hearts' fulfillment will be reached.



The Spiritual Master And The Disciple

Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami

One should approach the spiritual master for general guidance, to get the proper standpoint in life. That is the most important thing we can get from guru. The standpoint we get from our ordinary lives may come from anywhere and everywhere, but that may mislead us and misguide us. So we must be very particular about getting the proper direction. That direction is given in *Bhagavad Gita*, *tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya*.

The Lord has given us this general guidance of where we should try to get the standpoint or measure through which we are to understand. The standard by which we come to measure truth, untruth or anything must come from a real plane, not a vitiated plane, an ordinary plane or vulnerable plane. It must come from that plane which has two qualifications: *jnani* and *tattva darsi*, the conception of the thing and also the practical benefit. The proper standard will allow me to measure what is right and

what is wrong. Also the qualification of the seeker of truth is given. His attitude must be of this type: *pranipat, pariprasna and seva*. *Pranipat* means surrender to such knowledge. The knowledge we are approaching is not an ordinary class of knowledge. It is a subject which we cannot make an object to our subjective self. We must understand it to be a supersubjective thing, which is superior to me. So *pranipat* means I must surrender to that superior thing. I want Him. He is not an objective thing which I can make an object with myself as subject. This sort of attitude must be there. *Pranipat* also means that I have finished my interest in the outside world of experience. I have no charm for anything in the world where I have already traveled. I am offering myself exclusively at Your altar and I want to have Your grace. In such a mood we shall approach the higher knowledge.

Then *pariprasna*, honest inquiry is always allowed, but not with any tendency for discussion or in the way of argument. All efforts should be concentrated in a positive line, leaving aside the state of doubt and suspicion. With all attention we shall try to understand because it is coming from a higher plane with which I am unfamiliar and which is ever new.

Bottle and the Bee

But the most important thing is *seva*. Not that I am going to get knowledge, that I shall get the help of that plane and use it for the persons living here. Higher knowledge won't come to serve the interests of the lower plane but I must pledge to serve that plane. With this attitude I shall approach that plane and that knowledge. I shall serve Him and I won't try to make Him serve me or my lower plane. That idea won't allow me to enter that domain. Rather, I shall have the fullest tendency that if I get that knowledge I must serve. I must offer myself to be utilised by Him, and I shall not try to utilize it in my way, to satisfy my lower animal purposes. With *seva vritti* I shall seek the plane of real knowledge, to have the standard from there of what is to be understood and to have a proper estimation of the environment we are in. *Pranipatena, pariprasna sevaya*—this is Vedic culture. It is always imparted by this submissive process and never by intellectual approach. Srimati Bhaktisiddhanta Prabhupada used to give this analogy. The honey is in a bottle and a bee is sitting on the glass and trying to lick the bottle. Some foolish person may say the bee is licking the honey. In the same way the intellect cannot approach spirit. I may think that I have got that by such approach. But is it possible? A barrier is there, like a glass barrier. So intellectual under-

standing is not real achievement of the higher knowledge or higher plane. Only through faith, sincerity and dedication can we approach to be member of that higher plane. Only if we are admitted, if we get the visa, then we can enter that country, the plane of higher, divine living. So the candidate shall approach with these three qualifications: *pranipat, pariprasna and seva*. Then he can approach the truth which is the higher plane of reality. It is always found in the *Gita* that we should approach with this sort of attitude—humility, sincerity and dedication.

No Other Way

In *Bhagavatam* a particular passage is given: *sabde pare ca nisnatam brahmany upasamasrayam*. In the Veda and Upanisad also we find *srotirom brahma nistham guru evabhigacchet*. *Guru eva* means that we must certainly approach the spiritual master. *Abhigacchet* means that the approach should not be haphazard or hesitatingly. One should go with a clear and honest, full heart. Our Gurudeva used to say, "You have not come here cutting any return ticket." I have seen, I have got full experience of this mortal world. I have nothing to aspire after here. One must have this clear consciousness that there is no other way to live. No one can live in the mortal plane whereas the innate tendency everywhere is to live. There is no means to live here, but I only want to live, to save myself. So I am running to take real shelter, and this is my earnest desire and utmost necessity.

Samitpani means that the necessary materials will be taken by the disciple. He won't go to trouble his own guru. With his own bed, baggage and everything he requires he will go to the spiritual master, not to show some kindness to him, that I have come to give you some name and fame, etc.

Qualification of Guru

And what will be the position of guru? *Srotirom brahmanistham*. *Srotirom* means that he will be well-versed in the *sruti sastra*. This is not ordinary knowledge but revealed truth. Revelation in many shades has been spread throughout the world from the higher plane. Guru must have some spacious, graphic and extensive knowledge about revealed truth. And he should already be practicing the real life. *sabde para ca nisnatam* means that one should be well-versed in revealed truth, *sabde sastra*, or *sruti sastra*. Not only the precepts of the revealed scriptures; but one should be in contact with and conversant with the very object of the scriptures. One should approach an experienced person who is established in that plane of consciousness if he wants to get relief and to understand what is the highest benefit in the world and how to

attain it. His activities are all with *brahman*, not with the material world. *Brahman* is the plane which can accommodate everything. It is the most fundamental, *vyoma* or basis or everything. Guru is always leading his life in relation with that plane and not with any mortal mundane reference. He is always doing everything in connection with that plane. Whatever he does is only in that consciousness. That is *brahmanis-tham*.

Highest Good

Tasmad gurur prapadyeta jijnasa sreya uttamam. Everything around me is mortal. It will all vanish, and it is all a source of deception. We are living in the midst of misconception (*maya*). Whatever conception we have got about the environment is based on misconception of things in the absolute sense. All our conceptions are relative since it is only our provincial selfishness which has been imposed on the environment and we are living under that. Within such circumstances we shall feel the necessity of approaching guru, the guide or preceptor, with the purpose of inquiry (*jijnasa*). And what is our inquiry? *Sreya uttamam*. What is the highest good for us? We shall approach the guide with this inquiry.

Fossil Fatherism

These things are necessary. We are approaching something real. It is not imaginary only. It must be sought in a real way, and that may be difficult. But we must face that, otherwise we shall go in a wrong way and then we will say, "Oh, there is nothing." That will not happen if we go according to the real process. Then we must come to have experience of the divinity.

Scientists think that the subtle aspect of nature is coming from the gross. But their idea is upside down. We must realize that everything is coming from the higher to the lower, from up to down. It is not fossil fatherism but soul or God fatherism. The scientists say everything is upward moving, but it is just the reverse. Everything is coming down. In *Bhagavad Gita* it is mentioned *urdhva mulam adhahsakham*. One who knows the real purport of the vedas is one who can understand that the material conception is upside down. One who can understand this has got some conception of the Vedic knowledge. Matter does not produce soul. It is rather that the soul contains within its negligent portion the conception of matter. This world exists like an eczema or a disease in a wholesome body. This is the Vedantic *vicara* (understanding). So we must observe everything with this attitude, that everything is coming from up to down. In this way we must approach knowledge with a submissive attitude and then we will understand everything in truth.

SHARANAGATI

Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami

We must try to cast ourselves at the divine feet of the Lord saying, "I am the lowest of the low. I am willing to believe that I am the most helpless. I want the shelter of your lotus feet. Please take charge of me. I am unfit to take any responsibility for my own good." This should be our humble attitude. We should feel that, "I can't tolerate this life of independence any longer. I can't go on. I am disgusted with my life of independence. I want slavery. *jivera svarupa haya krsnara nitya dasa*. Others may think themselves fit, but I do not think myself sufficiently developed to take responsibility for myself. I am the most reckless, mean, worthless and useless. Please accept me and give me any service at your feet. I can no longer rely on myself. I have come to take shelter of your holy feet. You are my Guardian." This is *sharanagati*, to accept Krsna as one's absolute Guardian.

No Perfection Without It

No process of service can be perfect without *sharanagati*, and certainly there can be no entrance into the higher domain. As such, *sharanagati* is the very life and essence of devotion. It must be present in every form of service. Without *sharanagati* our devotion will only be an imitation of service, not devotion proper. It will only be a lifeless activity. Therefore *sharanagati* is the first condition.

Give Yourself Fully

If one is unable or does not have the opportunity to perform different types of service in the beginning, but he has only *sharanagati*, he will get everything in the near future. *Sharanagati* will give us everything. It is the most basic and fundamental substance in the devotional world. The whole structure of devotional service is based on *sharanagati*. Prahlada Maharaja says that the whole of Vedic knowledge is based on *atma nivedanam*. You must give yourself wholly.

Foundation Of Bhakti

You must give yourself to the Lord. The substance of all devotional activity is to give yourself in surrender. Sridhar Swami in his commentary about *sravanam kirtanam visnu smaranam* has said, that if everything is dedicated to Him then all these things

can be recognized as *bhakti*, otherwise it is all bogus. If I hear, chant, etc. to fulfill my own purposes then it is no longer *bhakti*. Whatever I shall do, it is for Him. Then whatever will be done will be accepted as *bhakti*. It is the foundation on which *bhakti* stands.

Slave To The Lord

Without *sharanagati* all *karma*, *jnana*, *yoga* will not be *bhakti*. *Bhakti* means that the result will go to the Lord. I am a slave to my Lord. I have got no independent personality to keep any independent property. I am wholly His servant. Whatever I shall acquire, everything I own is His. He has got the right to do anything with me that He likes, according to His sweet will. With this feeling, whenever we perform *kirtan*, or *smaranam*, etc. that will be devotional activity. When that is withdrawn, everything will go to hell. Just as when the stage, where the dancing is performed, is drawn away, then the whole thing comes down.

No Separate Interest

Sharanagati means self-dedication. Then the activity of the dedicated self will be *bhakti*. He must do everything on behalf of Krishna, keeping Krishna in sight, having no separate interest. Consciousness of separate interest has made us separate from Krishna. Only when the common interest of everything is with Krishna, then it will be *bhakti*. *Sravanam*, *kirtanam*, etc. are mere forms, not life. In order to have a living devotion *sharanagati* must be there.

Self-Abnegation To The Extreme

Exclusive connection with Krishna means exclusive identification with the interest of Krishna. Since Krishna is not seen there must be connection with guru and vaisnava. First there must be self-abnegation to the extreme and then, according to the degree of surrender one will be benefitted. There are particular characteristics of each level of surrender according to the different *rasas* such as *santa*, *dasya*, *sakhya*, etc. And in each of these there will also be subdivisions. But

without *sharanagati* all are mere formal activities, devoid of the very life therein, and they will be something other than *bhakti*, other than self-dedication. The land of dedication is what we want, not the plane of exploitation or renunciation.

Sun, Lotus And Water

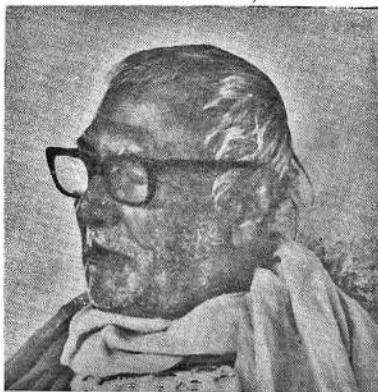
The criterion is found in the *sastra* that if we satisfy our Gurudeva we will satisfy Krishna. And if Gurudeva is dissatisfied with me then Krishna is surely dissatisfied. In the Puranas we find a good example written there. Lord Krishna is the sun, the lotus is the disciple, and guru is the water around the lotus. If the guru withdraws then the sun will dry and burn the lotus. The lotus will be happy as long as the water is supporting and protecting the lotus. The sun's rays will cheer the lotus, help it grow and give vitality to it. So the position of Gurudeva has been depicted nicely here.

The guru may be seen in different *rasas* of different types, but not much should be made of the differentiations. According to the situation of my heart his infinite potency may be seen in changing moods, figures, etc. Guru is always there, my guide to the absolute.

One And Different

Krishna is there within Narayan, but there is a difference in their functions. Similarly Guru is there but with a different function. Thus in Narayan, Lakshmi, *gopis*, etc. we find distinction and non-distinction. The *gopis* when they are in the form of Lakshmi they serve Narayan. And Lakshmi, in her inner heart, has got the position of the *gopis* who are serving Krishna in a particular way. So there is a continual connection between them all, distinction and non-distinction. Both should be maintained simultaneously. We should have respect for the differences, but we must not ignore the inner substance. The relative and the absolute must be taken together. In this way we always have to harmonize both these great teachings—*sarva dharman parityajya* and *sva dharma nidhanam sreya*.





The Central Importance of Sadhu Sanga

by Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami

Sadhu sanga krsna nama. The holy name must be taken with the attitude of service to the saints. Serving means die to live ; to throw oneself wholesale for the higher existence. Mr. Gandhi risked his whole life at every point of action. His attitude was, "Whatever I told to others, I am to maintain that throughout the whole of my life." What am I taking the name for ? To have some fame as a sadhu ? No ! That should not be our objective. *Kanak, kamini, pratishta* —not for money, not to attract women, and never to attract popularity. Rather I should be ready to sacrifice myself fully for whom I am serving, for whom I am taking the name. It is not a limited thing, but complete surrender, then the whole thing is guaranteed. My pursuit, my attempt should be backed by my whole energy, whole prospect and everything. This is the attitude I should have to search for a drop of Vai-kuntha nectar. Otherwise our effort will be useless.

Die To Live

Die to live means sacrifice or *seva* (service). *Seva* means death. *Seva* means to give one's own self for a particular cause, for Krishna. That this mad, mundane concocted self should be saved is not a very laudable thing. It is a mortal thing, and the depot of many reactions. So one should get rid of this center as soon as possible, and enter into the land of confidence, goodness, fairness and sweetness. Try

to enter that land with a sincere and wholesome attitude. Your campaign must be wholesome not partial. Taking one step forward and three steps back won't do. There should be no such hesitation. You are finite and you want to get the advantage of the infinite ? You are so small, and do you think that by sacrificing only a part of your smallness your aspiration for the whole can be fulfilled ? Is it reasonable to expect such ? No, it is not so easy.

Krishna Has To Come Down

atah sri krsha namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih if only our superficial senses are engaged in Krishna cultivation, as if it is nothing, then you cannot produce the name, but only mundane sound, *Sevon mukhe hi jivadhou svayam eva sphuraty adah*. Your tongue can produce mundane sound, but that is not Krishna. For the name to be Krishna, Krishna has to come down. Don't be self-deceptive, thinking that, "Taking the name, I am a great sadhu." It is not like that. Krishna has come down to you in the form of sound and He is spiritual, transcendental. So *seva mukhe* or your complete surrender to Him will attract Him, and He graciously descend to save you by His name. In your *archan*, in performing your duties, at every step He will come when you are giving yourself to Him, then He will accept you. He will come and embrace you. He'll be within you and without you,

everywhere. But only those whose eyes are clear, and are not captured by any prejudice from selfish end or ordinary things can see Him. Those who are not captivated by any prejudice, in whom all prejudice is cleared, can directly see the highest power or highest principle, underlying all.

The Dust Is In Our Eyes

Our own tendency for exploitation and renunciation creates so many units of this plane, like so much dust to blind our eyes so we can't see Him. *Kanaka pasyanti kamini mayayo jagat*. Those who are lustful try to find out where is a beautiful lady. *pasyanti dhana mayo jagat*. The greedy people always busy their minds with the thought, "Oh, there is Birla, there is Tata, there is Ford," who are the moneyed men in this world. They only think about moneyed men because they love wealth the most. *dhara mayo jagat* and *khira prayanti narayano jagat*. Those who are liberated from the outer external influences may find, "Oh, I am in the kingdom of Narayan, who is the support and guardian of the whole world. We see His hand everywhere. Without His direction nothing can move." They may boast that, "I have got such power, I have got such beauty, I have got wealth," but it is all a false show. The real backing spirit is Narayan, the all pervading, all knowing, all good principle. And the temporary external plane is the killing aspect of existence. It is only our prejudices of so many types that have captured us.

The Whole Thing Depends On Sadhu

So by whatever process we approach the Lord the tenor of our movement should be, if we want a guarantee that it will actually be for the satisfaction of Krishna, that my whole effort depends upon the genuine character of the agent through whom I am rendering my services. If the agent is a false man then my whole energy is wasted. But if he is a real agent then I must be the gainer through him. If I connect with Vaikuntha through him then my actions will be valued. Otherwise we may be the loser, *aparadha* (offender). *Nama aparadha, seva aparadha, arachana aparadha*—there are so many *aparadhas*. It is also written in the scriptures that if service is not done properly, then we are sure to commit some offenses against the Dety. Either we will get satisfaction or trouble. *Aradhana* is the proper thing, and the hateful handling of the holy things is *aparadha*. It all depends on the satisfaction of whom it is we are serving. So we must be careful.

Handle With Care

We must not be overconfident of our previous acquisition—so much I have acquired, my progress is so much. I must not be satisfied with my self-certificate, self-satisfaction, the certificate of my own making. Mahaprabhu Himself said, "I am taking the name, I am showing so many tears in the name of Krishna. But why? It is all a false show! *na premā gandho 'sti*. My crying is only a show to canvas others to see what a great devotee I am." So much you are to disbelieve your own self that you are a devotee. In this way we must be very careful, very, very careful.

Both Sides Gone

kotis vapi maha mune. Krishna das Kaviraja Goswami and Narottam Das Thakur were seeing, "The whole world is absolved from sin, but I am neglected, I am left as the only exception. I am so low and ill fated that I am rejected from that most benevolent infinite *lila*. I alone am rejected. I could not utilize this great fortunate wave." This should be the real tendency of a genuine vaisnava who has actually come in relation with the infinite. Whenever the finite comes in touch with the infinite his temperament cannot be otherwise. "I am empty, I don't get anything," that should be the temperament. I feel emptiness within me. I can't get the goal. My life is frustrated. Neither do I get a drop of grace from the Lord, and the world, of course, I have left. So both sides gone. I have no alternative, O Lord. If you don't accept me then I am undone. Please, just make me the servant of the servant of the servant. Give the remotest connection to me. Graciously give the most distant connection of Yourself to me. Don't leave me, My Lord. I can't tolerate the craving for you. This heart-felt, heart rending prayer must come to the vaisnava devotee of the Lord. Onlookers will find that he has got a peep of the fortune. The charm for the world outside is fully eliminated for that person, from the core of his heart. And in the near future his heart will be filled with the nectar of the grace of Krishna.

Noble Lady Of Devotion

Bhukti, mukti sriha yavat pisaci na nivartate. The desire for enjoyment, and also for renunciation or *mukti*, no engagement, are compared to two ghosts (*pisaci*). So how do you dare to express that *bhakti*, real love for Krishna, will descend in your heart? Those two demons are there, and do you think the noble lady of devotion will come and sit on the same bench

with those demons ? How can you expect that ? Have you freed yourself from all those nasty things that you dare to invite the lady of *Krishna bhakti* to come ?

Krishna Bhakti And Varnashram

Krishna bhajan is independent of any external form of life. Mahaprabhu says *na ham viro na ca narapat na vaisya na sudro .gopi bhartu pada kamalayor dasa dasanu dasa*. *Varnashrama dharma* is just the beginning, then gradually improving we are to go up to the absolute service of Krishna. Without consideration of any law or form, thinking only of service, whatever we do or think or speak, everything should be done for the service of Krishna. That is the standard of real devotion. And mere form may be a little favorable, but not always. The spirit, even crossing every formality, is what is required of us. Our absolute attraction for the service, the beauty does not allow law to have any status. In the beginning they have got some sort of utility. But when a little advanced they do not care for anything. Only *sadhu sanga*, adherence to the saint of similar type and a little better. Those who are on the path of *raga bhajana*, divine love and attraction, find that the only way, the only thing which can guide us is spontaneous desire, *lauiyam atram mulyam ekalam*. The only price is earnest desire and nothing else. *Krsna bhakti rasabavita mali, murti kriyatam yadi kuto pi labhyate*. Ramananda Raya says to Mahaprabhu, "Anywhere you find it, try to purchase it at any price." The pure inclination towards the service of Krishna, the innermost tendency to want Krishna, to get Him, the earnest desire to have Him—a drop of that desire for the divine attraction, anywhere you find it, one must try to purchase it at any price. You may acquire it anywhere. It may be from a *brammana* or from anyone. It does not matter about the form.

Just Try To Jump

kiba vipra kiba nyasi sudra keno haya, yei krsna tattva vetti sei guru haya. Wherever there is a drop of that divine love, try to get it. And what is the price ? Earnest desire for it. No other price but earnest desire, *lauiyam*. It is not to be purchased by any money, or anything else which is acquired by so many formal practices in cores of births. Substance is necessary and not form. Form may be adopted only as much as it may connect me with that higher thing. So, *svarga dharman parityaga* all phases of duty you perceive as perfect, give up. At once try to jump in Me, into the ocean of nectar. I am the ocean of nectar. Try to jump. That is the direct

teaching. So our addiction to this or that, to *vana-prastha, sannyasa, or grihasta* has got very negligent value. But the earnest desire, that is to be acquired by any means. That is *bhakti* proper.

Rain From The Almanac

Others try to know about Krishna from the scriptures (*sastra*). Ramkrishna once remarked that in the almanac it is written that this year so much rain is expected. But it does not mean that if we please the almanac a drop of water will ooze out of it. So the *sastra* is something like that. The *sastras* say do this and do that. But that does not mean the *sastra* will give us the result too. They give direction, and as much as we practice we get.

Direct Connection With Krishna

So, helplessly, when one is searching by this method or that method, when he practically comes in contact with the service of a *vaisnava* he gets real benefit. Then the service of *vigraha* and *sastra* all becomes superficial. The more real thing we find in the *vaisnava*. In his heart, the Krishna conception, Krishna as He is, knowledge or love, whatever we may be searching for, we will find in a living condition in the heart of a *vaisnava* who is regulating all his activities towards the service of the Lord. In the *vaisnava* it is animated more than in the *vigraha*, than in the *tirtha* and than in the *sastra*. Direct connection with Krishna we can find in the consciousness of a *vaisnava*. From what plane is he regulating all his activities : To what plane is he withdrawing himself from all worldly attraction ? What is that which guides him towards some direction which is unknown and unknowable ? He is moving towards that direction which is not to be traced in any loss or gain of this world. What is that thing ? *naman tisthami vaikuntha yoginam hridayesu va mad bhakta yatra guyante tatra tisthami narado*. "I am not even in Vaikuntha, not even in the heart of the yogis, but where my devotees are singing with pleasure about Me, I am there." I am owned by them." *mac citta mad gata prana, bodhayantah parasparam kathayantas ca mam nityam tusyanti ca ramanti ca*.

Someone Is Watching

In the Ramanuja *sampradaya* there is an incident regarding three Alwar devotees, *nitya parsada* devotees, who were contemporaries. One night they went to a temple perhaps for some occasion. They did not know one another. In the darkness one was

talking, another hearing. It was also very sweet to him. Then the third also joined. They were talking although they did not know one another. They might have heard the names of each other, but this night they have met together. Natha yogi, Bhuta yogi and someone talking between them. Then one questioned, "We three are here. Do you feel the presence of a fourth one?" One told, "Yes, I feel the presence of a fourth one". By this it is meant that the Lord, about whom they were talking is present. In their talking, in the conversation He has come and is hearing the talk. So, only attraction, pure spiritual attraction, and nothing else can be pleasing to one but Krishna, Radharani, the *gopis* all this, the very innermost part of the heart is taken possession of by the thought of Krishna and his associates, His lila. His name, and His paraphernalia. That is what is necessary.

Love Me Love My Dog

*man mana bhava mad bhakta
mad yaji mam namaskuru*

Krishna says, "You Arjuna, you are My most favorite devotee. I promise you at least, I won't deceive you. So I say that I am everything. I tell you clearly that at least I won't deceive you because you are my friend. Always mind Me, become My devotee and serve Me. If you sacrifice anything, do it for Me. Or at least you may show respect to Me. So you are sure to enter Me, to come to Me. Myself alone you will come to. This is the truth, I promise you. You are My favorite. The truth is this, do everything for Me, attend Me, always think of Me and you are sure to come to Me." The thinking, the engagement, the very life of engagement is attraction for Him. Attraction for Him, but how to get it? How to seek shelter from the devotees? Superficially we can get something from the *sastra*, but substantially from the devotee. The influence you catch from the devotee, what they hold within their heart, within their endeavor, pervading through all their activities, that particular attraction is the divine thing that I want. That most subtle of the subtle, the nerve structure within, that can move the bodily activities, that can help the body to do its functions is what we are after. That inner energy of the devotee, that makes him do what we do not find in the world, with no attraction for sense pleasure, fame, name, money, etc. but for something else, for Krishna. We must follow their path. "Who comes to serve Me directly are not my real devotees. But who is the devotee of My devotee, they are My real devotees. If you love Me, love My dog. His love for Me is so intense that

wherever he finds any external connection with Me he engages himself fully there".

Take The Name

vaisnava seva, guru seva, vigraha seva and nama seva are all recommended, but in Kali yuga especially, the service of the name has been given as the most general approach. It is mentioned *sadhu sanga Krishna nama ei matta jai*. We must climb up to the real plane where we can take the name proper, *vaikuntha nama graham asesagharam haram vidu*. It is true that, an infinite magnitude of sin may be removed by one name, but that must be *vaikuntha nama*. It must have the characteristic of *vaikuntha*, the unlimited plane of eternity, not only the physical sound. So *sadhu sanga* is necessary. The name must be taken from *gurudeva*, and with the company of *sadhu* the name must be taken.

Preach The Name

Nama sankirtana means to preach the name, what the name is, and the ten offenses against the name. There are also four *abhasa* or shadowy expressions of the name. They should also be eliminated and the real name which is one and the same with the Lord should be taken. The greatness and magnanimity of the name is so charming, the Name is the Lord Himself. In this way, by taking the name, *nam bhajan* or *kirtan*, we can be saved from the external contamination of the forces of the world of *karma* and *jnana*, exploitation and renunciation.

Withdrawal From The Negative

These are the two great enemies of devotion, *bhukti mukti sriha*. The tendency to exploit and its opposite, the tendency to renounce, neither the negative nor the renunciation of the negative can be a real positive. A third thing is necessary and that is constructive, full in itself and perfect. Positive is not mere withdrawal from the negative side. The positive has got its own characteristics, so we must come in connection with the positive: *sat cit ananda, satyam shivam sundaram*. We must connect ourselves in all phases, whatever is possible for us.

Grihasta Vs. Sannyas

griha va vante thake ha guranga bole dake. It doesn't matter much whether one is a householder or a *sannyasi*. How much he has intensely engaged himself in the service of the Lord, that is to be seen,

A *grihasta* may even be above a *sannyasi*. During the time of Mahaprabhu, so many *grihasta* devotees were there, but the real spirit is all Gauranga. We found in our young days when we joined the non-cooperative movement of Gandhi that there were so many volunteers who had left everything. But when the police were coming they were fleeing for fear of their life. Still we found that a *grihasta* like Chittaranjan Das and others, with all their family members, were giving resistance to the police attack. Although a *grihasta*, he sends his son to the prison and his daughter and wife to police custody. Gandhi remarked, "I envy your situation." As *grihasta* he was living like a fully attached man. But in the real work of supporting the cause, he is not less than one who has left everything and dedicated himself wholly. As a family man he is not afraid, whereas others may be afraid. So service is necessary. In whatever position he may be it does not matter much. When the necessity will come, even a wordly minded householder may sacrifice the whole for Krishna.

Substance Not Form

In the case of Haris Chandra, for example, he was a king for the truth as he could conceive of it. He left everything for the cause which he loved. So wholesale dedication, the internal hankering, the fire within is the real necessity. It may not be found in a *sannyasi*, but in a *grihasta*, *vanaprastha*, *brahmacari* or anyone. We want the substance and not the form so much. The burning fire of separation from Krishna is the real wealth, Just as with Sri Chaitanyadeva, His separation from Krishna is so intense, that he can't sleep or take food. His separation is so intense that at night He is trying to get out of the house, though it is all closed. So he jumped the walls of the house, practically unconsciously, and fell in front of the Jagannath temple and fainted. What degree of separation is found in Him! It is not possible for us to conceive the degree of feeling that there was. Sometimes he was rubbing his face against the walls because he could not get out and go to His Lord.

Pain Of Separation

A *shaki* is representing to Krishna the pain of separation which Radharani feels for Him. Previously, she explains, a continuous flow of tears was found in her eyes, but it is not there anymore. Somehow she has managed to distribute them to her friends. Now they are weeping like anything, but no trace of

tears can be found in her. She had some temprature in her body, but now that is also gone. That she has transferred to her intimate *shakis*. Her attendants are now saying many things. Undesirable talks of mourning are found among her attendants. Previously all those things were found in Srimati Radharani, but somehow She managed to leave them all with Her friends. She had also been absorbed in deep thought. What will be Her fate? May be Krishna will never come again. He is doing this and that. So many thoughts were within Her, but now we find no trace. But Her superiors are burdened with those deep thoughts. "O, the girl won't live. She will pass away very soon. What will be the fate of Braja? If She passes away Krishna won't come here again". What little is left in Her we see in the form of hard breathing and beating heart. In a day or two that will also disappear. Now, Krishna, You may remain happy here for your misdeed. Your misdeed is the cause of all these things, but She has managed to relieve you. No complaint will come against you any more. Silently She is passing away keeping You safe while You remain here and enjoy Your own friends.

Be Prepared for Torture

Prahlada was requested by his father, "Please tell me what progress you are making in your gurukula study. What have you learned to be the best thing in life?" Prahlada answered *sravanam kirtanam visnu smaranam pada sevanam archanam vandanam dasyam sakhyam atma nivedanam. Iti pumsarpitam visnu bhakti avalkanam*. "I think the best study is this: to hear, chant, and serve—all in relation to Visnu. That is the best utility of time for everyone in the world. *Tat sadhu manye sura varya dehinam*. This is what I consider to be the best thing I have learned". Prahlada's trouble began from here. His father replied, "Visnu is my enemy eternally, and who has taught you that to cultivate love for Him in different ways is the best understanding of human life?" The torture began. We must also be prepared for that torture. Torture will increase our enthusiasm in an indirect way. Anything may come, anything may go on. Wherever that impetus, that intense tendency to serve Krishna is to be found, there we must go. But it is nowhere, it is unknown and unknowable, and in this way transcendental.

Aurobindo Failed To Construct Shiva

For Aurobindo it was the supramental plane. In fact he was constructing the figure of Shiva, Mahadeva, who belongs to that plane. But instead we see

that he has wrongly constructed the figure of something other than Mahadeva. Again, when Bhakti-vinode Thakur said that India is the best place in the world, and within India, Bengal is the best; then in Bengal, Nabadwip Dham is the best, the highest of all. Aurobindo imitated him saying that India is the best in the world, and Bengal is, of course, the best in India, and the Hooghly district is the best in Bengal. Then I thought, why has he selected Hooghly eliminating Nabadwip? The recollection then came to me that it was the birthplace of Raja Ram Mohan Raya, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj. It was my conclusion that it was only for that reason he had selected Hooghly to be the best.

Servant Of A Vaisnava

Chitaranjan Das may be as good as Raja Ram Mohan Raya and Rabindra Nath Tagore, and although his father was a Brahmo, he, himself, returned to Hinduism telling his friends, "If you write something about me, then please describe me as a servant of a vaisnava". That was his temperament. He was a good and sincere man, but not a vaisnava of the *ghosha*, or pure type, but only the ordinary type who had respect for the vaisnavas. Vipin Pala, who was a revolutionary, extremist and the first in violence, could not accommodate the Gandhi movement, but he was closely connected with C. R. Das. Vipin Pala was in fact engaged as the editor of the magazine published by C. R. Das called "Narayan Patrika". When, as a college student, we read the "Narayan Patrika" we found Vipin Pala's explanation of *Bhagavad Gita*, etc. and a lecture he gave in the Viraha meeting at University Hall, Calcutta. In that lecture he mentioned that "Sri Krishna Samhita" written by Bhakti-vinode Thakur had taken his faith back to vaisnavism, although he had been a pure Brahmo type when he first read the book. We appreciate that he has acknowledged Bhakti-vinode Thakur's writing to such an extent. Bhakti-vinode Thakur's conception was very scientific, as well as deep, simple and fervent. It was accurate and modernized as well. We find many excellent qualities in the writings of Srila Bhakti-vinode Thakur.

Eternal Associate Of The Lord

The high type of realized conception Bhakti-vinode Thakur has given us should not be conceived as having been acquired by him in his present life, though it may seem to come from the ordinary events of his life. Rather we should assume that this is the natural growth of the *jnana sunya bhakta*. It is be-

cause of fashion that Bhakti-vinode Thakur had some other tendency in his married life and all these other things. They should not stand in the way of the fact that he was an eternal associate, servitor of the Lord. Otherwise, such intensity, such depth of feeling cannot come abruptly. So Bhaktisiddhanta Prabhupada has seen him as a facsimile of Gadadhar Pandit, and Gaura Kishore das Babaji as Swarupa Damodara. Sometimes he saw Bhakti-vinode Thakur as Radharani because his vision was so graphic, spacious, and all comprehensive, filled with deep knowledge and experience. It is impossible unless we consider him to be at least *shaktivesha*, that is, inspired by the Lord Himself.

I Can't Stand To Live Any More

Bilvamangal Thakur says *anartha bandhu karanika sindhu*. "How can I pass these barren days, my Lord? These unfortunate days are impossible for me to pass. Without having a peep of your sight, I can't stand to live any more. But you are a friend to the helpless, and you are an ocean of kindness and grace. Please consider it my Lord, how can I pass my days without You". The normal temperament of a devotee will be like that. Separation, of course, will be encouraging. If we find a person is always feeling separation from the Lord that will be appreciated, whereas anything else should be considered abnormal and dangerous.

Relative And Absolute Consideration

Sometimes there may be some confusion about the relative and absolute consideration. The absolute consideration is our own internal Krishna consciousness, and the relative refers to the environment. One must not be influenced by the environment of the mundane world. But that does not mean he won't seek an environment of the spiritual realm. That is found through *sadhu sanga*. In the spiritual plane the environment contributes much. Even Radharani says that Krishna alone cannot satisfy Her without the environment, so she doesn't want Krishna as such. For instance, in Kurukshetra when She met Krishna, She wanted to take Him back to Vrndavana where their meeting could be more intimate. The devotee also says, "Only Krishna, that is nothing to me if we do not find Radharani at His side". So the environment has a great contribution to make in that realm. Everything there, every minute particle of the environment will help promote my attention towards Krishna. That will be very desirable. But here in the mundane plane, just the opposite is found, the perverted re-

fection. Everything comes to take me away from Krishna in this plane, and there everything pushes me towards Him. So there in the plane of dedication everything will be healthy. But in the plane of exploitation and renunciation everything is just the opposite, taking me away from the center, *asat sanga*.

Other Errands

Sadhu sanga means promoting towards my cause. The mundane plane is the perverted reflection, but just above that it is the real plane which is just the opposite of this. So we must not be maladjusted. *Asat sanga tvag ei vaisnava achar*. The practices of a student of vaisnavism is only one—to renounce the environment; but that does not mean that the *sadhu* is eliminated also if he is found. *Stri sanga eka sadhu Krishna bhakta ara*. There are two types of *asat*. One is *stri sangi* or *yoosit sangi*, those who are attached to sensual pleasures. And the other is *Krishna abhakta*, one who has no attraction for Krishna but is engaged in other errands, *bhukti kami siddhi kami*, who have other desires such as for liberation or material perfection. They should be eliminated. We should be careful, cautious about these two. One may be a scholar, a yogi, a *tvagī*, and all these things, but if he is not a devotee of Krishna he should be eliminated.

Will-o-The Wisp

Anyabhilasa karma jnana. Those who have the desire to reach for something, for fruitive activity, to plan for some result, and those who are busy to know Krishna to measure Him, and finish Him by their analysis, these are to be eliminated. *Jnana* means to always want to measure Krishna or the environment. *Jnana* means to know, to be master, and to be aquainted with everything. That is *jnana*, the false errand that I shall be the subject and everything else should be the object of my knowledge. Such wild goose chasing is impossible. It is running after a phantasmagoria, in the words of our Guru Maharaja. Another expression is will-o-the-wisp. It is impossible to know everything and be master of everything. *Ivam aham veda sarvani na tvam veta parantapa*. It is not your business to know everything by your constitutional position. It will be folly to bring everything within your consciousness. *Jnane prayasam utapasya*. Here *uta apa asya*, where *asya* means throwing hatefully, and *uta* means far away. These two adjectives are given for dismissal of knowledge. Only through faith, with the nature of submission can the truth be known.

The Number One Enemy

Mahaprabhu has taught *trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna amanina mana dena*. It is very difficult



Srila B. R. Sridhara Maharaja,
"Only Krishna, that is nothing
to us if we do not find
Radharani at His side."

to conquer one's fame, or prestige. *Pratistha*, one's love for position is very difficult to give up. It is easier to give up attraction for females or money, but hankering for one's own position is most difficult. Prestige for position is our innermost enemy. So long as that remains we cannot offer ourselves in the service of a vaisnava, I may accept somewhat hesitatingly the service of God, but to serve a vaisnava would be like coming to a lower settlement. In fact, to become the servant of a vaisnava would actually be the be all and end all of my life. But how can I accept that idea? I may accept service under the Supreme Lord, that I may anyhow manage. But to become the servant of the servant of the servant—what is this? What is the fun? Should a man stoop so low as this? Therefore, *pratistha*, position, the consciousness of prestige, is the greatest enemy of the conditioned soul.

Radha Dasya: Become A Slave

Radha dasyam means to become a slave, to embrace the ideal, the hope of becoming a slave. To classify oneself as the slave of Krishna is not the end. One must be willing to become the slave of the slave of the slave. "This is the most ludicrous thing. Let them accept this mean settlement; I wont. So *ham*. I am the biggest of the big. So *ham*, *Shivo ham*. I am the master of *maya*, *Shiva*. *Shivo ham*". This is the point where the false, separate existence from God begins

The Land Of Beauty : Above Shiva

Transcending mortality one comes to the plane of *mangal*, auspiciousness, which is good in comparison with the plane of mortality. The first reach beyond the limit of mortality or *mrityaloka*, is Mahadeva, Shiva. But from Shiva we have to pass to *sundaram*, the land of beauty. Shiva is only the middle position or *mangalam*. But this mangalam is not differentiated in its fullest characteristics at this point, only it is out of danger. To be out of danger is nothing positive, but it is the highest safe position. However, one must not only be safe, but engaged in the most desireable thing. The safe position is relative Shiva. Above that is Sada Shiva and the plane of positive engagement.

The Only Thing We Have To Do In Life

Once there was one god brother named Kumar Surendra Narayan Raya, an M. A. graduate of Punjab University. He was a rich man whose annual income was three lakhs. He took Hari Nam from our Guru Maharaja. That gentleman went with him to Celon on one occasion. When Guru Maharaja was passing in a car, Surendranath Narayan Raya, who was out for a walk, met him on the wayside and immediately fell flat in the road offering his obeisances in the mud, since at that time it was the rainy season. Then Prabhupada asked, "What are you doing down in the mud? What are you doing? He has got a rich dress but it is all smeared with mud" Then Surendranath said, "We have only one thing to do in life—to make prostration to the vaisnava. We can't do anything else. Should I be a miser only there? *pranam* is our only wealth, everything. If I be a miser there then what will be my fate? *Pranam, pramananta eva*, that is our only aspiration".

Eternity Is Ever Blossoming

Mahaprabhu once had a talk with one Mathura brahman, Raghupati Upadhyaya, on his way back from Mathura, perhaps in Allahabad. In their talk we find one *stoka* mentioned. What is the highest conception of figure? The answer was Shyamasunder. *Shyama eva param rupam*. What is the highest place

of worship? Mathura mandal is the highest place to worship Him. What should be the best age befitting for our service? Kaisora, or new youth. And in what sort of *rasa* should we try to serve Him? We should try to serve in the mood of *madhurya rasa*. Mahaprabhu told him that you have taught Me a good lesson. We want to worship Kaisora Krishna, we are not going to worship old Krishna. There is Mathura and Dwarka, but we are fond of worshipping Krishna in Vrindavan, where He has a new, youthful life. His companions are also new youths. The highest point is beauty. The idea of eternity is like that, *navayavana*, new, youthful, progressing not full blown, but blossoming.

We Adore Youth

We should not be afraid of our youth, we should adore it. Not that youth will be engaged in pleasure seeking, but in supplying pleasure to the Lord. Utilization, not renunciation is our end. Utilization is the highest good. We want to have our energy in its fullest command. All are youthful in Vrindavan, but well planned, managed, well aimed, and well idealized. Why should we worship anything that is fading or dying? We are worshippers of the full energy to the extreme, but it is absolute good. Our Guru Maharaja said that there is a proverb: when there is fire in the shed, the cow or bull come out because of fear of fire, seeing the red colour there. And when the cow sees the red colour in the sky he again becomes afraid thinking that there is fire and it will come to attack me and burn me. In the same way the *mayavadis* are suffering from that disease, because they are afraid of energy and opulence and thus they take to renunciation. Wherever there is opulence, youth or beauty, they are afraid, because they are worshippers of the negative side. If they go to enjoy, the reaction will come to get them. But vaisnavas know how to utilize everything for the service of the Lord. So they are not afraid of anything good. All good, attractive, beautiful things, everything they will utilize for the service of the Lord. If our association with the environment is *sadhu sanga*, with real beauty and love in truth, then everything will come to help us in our search for Krishna, Reality the Beautiful.

The Magnanimous Nature Of Sri Nityananda Prabhu

Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami

Sri Nityananda Prabhu is supposed to be the incarnation of Baladeva in Vrajamandala. Narottama dasa Thakura says *Balaram haila Nitai*. Sanatana Goswami also mentions Nityananda Prabhu as the incarnation of Baladeva in Vrndavana, but some persons within the Gaudiya Sampradaya preach that Nityananda Prabhu is the incarnation of Radharanai. So, a vehement protest is given from the side of the Gaudiya Math and we cannot recognize them as the true followers of Gaudiya Vaisnava faith and Mahaprabhu. Nityananda Prabhu took His birth in the district of Virbhum on the Western side of Katwa, north west of Ekachakra, where the Pandavas in disguise lived for sometime. Nearby is also shown a tree where the Bakaraksasa was killed by Bhimasena. In Ekachakra near Garbhavasa and many other places, we can trace the pastimes of Nityananda Prabhu. Nityananda Prabhu's son established a temple nearby, and Srimurtis were installed by Him. About two hundred years ago there was a great storm in that area and many ancient arrangements were devastated. A big Zamindar and devotee of the Gaudiya Sampradaya came and restored the puja, the worshipping arrangements at Virachandrapura. All were desolated at that time.

Give Your Son

Nityananda Prabhu's mother's name was Padmavati, and His father's name was Hadai Pandita, Ojha was their title although now we do not find any such title. When Nityananda Prabhu was about 12 years old one *sannyasi* came and begged Hadai Pandita for his son, "I want your son". The *sannyasi* came and begged for the child, only one son, and a son like Nityananda Prabhu who was very charming. It was almost impossible to live bidding goodbye to such a son, but what to do? A *sannyasi* has come and asked for him and begging they could not avoid; they could not avoid the *sannyasi*. they had to give their only son to him. We are told, that *sannyasi* was no other than Sri Madhavendra Puri, the guru of Iswara Puri, Advaita Acharya, and Pundarika Vidyadhirji. That *sannyasi* came and took Nityananda Prabhu away from his house when he was only 12 years old; and Nityananda Prabhu wandered with him through the whole of India, visiting all the holy places.

Mahaprabhu did not visit so many holy places. He generally travelled through the south of India, not

northern India entirely, only Vrndavana and Prayaga. Dvaraka and Badrinarayana were excluded by Mahaprabhu, but Nityananda Prabhu visited all the holy places that exist in India. After Madhavendra Puri disappeared, he was wandering in the holy places. In the meantime Mahaprabhu coming back from Gaya began his Sankirtana Lila in Navadvipa.

Searching For Each Other

Nityananda Prabhu was wandering here and there and lastly he went to Vrndavana. He was searching for something because of His inner identification with that of Baladeva. When Krishna came he was feeling some tendency of attraction towards him. In the last period, he began searching in Vrndavana very scrutinizingly but did not find that. Then he got some inspiration, "Where to find Krishna?" "He's now in Nabadwip". "I shall go there," with this inspiration in his heart he came to Navadvipa Dham.

Mahaprabhu had already begun his sankirtana movement, and he had a dream at night that someone came in a chariot and at the peak of the chariot there was a palm tree; and he is searching, "Where is Nimai Pandit's house? Where is Nimai Pandit's house?" Someone then said, "Here is Nimai Pandit's house". Mahaprabhu then told to the devotees. "A great personage has come here to Nabadwip Dham last night. You (Srivasa and others) try to find out that great person". The followers tried their best, they searched in every nook and corner but could not find Nityananda Prabhu. They reported to Mahaprabhu, "We tried our best but could not trace any noble person, any saint, or any big man". Then Mahaprabhu told, "Let us try with the followers". He then went straight to the southern side of Nandana Acharya's Bhavan. Mahaprabhu went directly to a particular house which is known as Nandana Acharya's house, and there they found a new gentleman, stout and strong, and godly in appearance, sitting on the veranda of that house. The devotees of Mahaprabhu could then understand him to be the man of whom Sri Gaurangadeva was telling about. He was sitting there in red robes, all others were white dressed. Someone then chanted some *Bhagavata* sloka, and so many spiritual symptoms gradually appeared in His body. They could then understand what a great man he is for he was filled with divine love. He was the agreed personage and gradually coming in intimate connection with him they could understand that

he was Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Outwardly his movements were not like a scholarly person, or an ordinary man; he was surcharged with a high type of energy and divinity coming forth from his complexion.

Mahaprabhu gradually began preaching. Haredasa Thakura and Nityananda Prabhu were both given orders. "Go from door to door and request them to leave everything aside and take the name of Krsna. Whomever you may meet going from door to door, approach and ask them to take the name of Krsna leaving aside everything else."

The Tantric's Trick

At that time Nabadwipa Dham was mostly filled with tantrics, that is the worship of Sakti Devi and Maya Devi. The tantrics say, "This Maya is disturbing us, so we must take shelter under her feet. When she will be propitiated and satisfied then she will loosen, open the door and we will get out and become *Shiva*. By nature, by birth, *jiva* means *Shiva*, *Shiva* means the master of *Maya*. We are now in the clutches of *Maya*, misunderstanding. When the goddess of misunderstanding is satisfied with us, she will then withdraw and we shall find a door out: we shall go to the other side. There are so many liberated souls there and we shall join them. They are all enjoying the position of *Shiva*, the master of *Maya*. *Maya* cannot force them to do anything and everything as she wills rather she serves her masters. *Maya* serves *Shiva*, the liberated souls. *Maya* serves them though in the relativity of *Maya* but they cannot control so they render some service to the liberated souls and they are known as *Shiva*. *Pasa baddho bhave* *jiva pasa mukta sadasiva*. When within bondage he is *jiva*, a fallen soul, when he is outside the bondage of this *Maya*, this misunderstanding, then he's always *Shiva*. He can then move here and there at his sweet will and *Maya* cannot force him, rather she will come to serve him, and that is liberation. We shall then serve *Maya devi* and the tantric process invokes something, in this way she will be satisfied." They use many things, they may drink wine and eat meats. They offer them to the deities *Maya*, *Sakti* and *Kali*. They also enjoy the women in different moods. They think that the application of mixing with ladies is such, that they will get liberation from the charm of the ladies. In this way in their process, they approve of the wine, the meat and the ladies it seems to be very harmful to us but these are the underlying principles of the tantric upasana.

"In our method, our process of approaching these things which we feel temptation for, we shall get liberation from them. They come to attract us towards

them but by a particular process we shall handle them. We shall be masters of those poisonous things."

Positive Alternative

At that time Nabadwipa was filled with such tantrics. Mahaprabhu Sri Gauranga began his preaching, attempting to convince everyone to give up every thing and take to chanting the name of Krishna, Narayana. He then said, "Not only will you be out of *Maya* but you will attain positive life in Vaikuntha in *Brindavan*. That is higher attainment, and what is to be attained by worshipping the *sakti* in the method they are following, that is reactionary and sometime again they will have to evolve." This is mentioned in the *sasstra*, but not very extensively. If you are very particular then you will have to see that the relativity of this negative world is not safe. You must enter the positive world then you will be safe. That is not only mere liberation, emancipation from the opposite forces, but practical participation in the serving line, which is very pure. Not to be non-selfish, but one must be God-centred, God-serviced. The positive world is there and that is full of pervasive happiness, and that we can attain only through service. Here we are an enjoying unit, an exploiting unit, but it must be given up to get out of the reactionary tendency of life. But we must not wait on the fence, for that is not a safe position.

Automatic Stage

Then again, that is not saying much because withdrawal from the negative side is not enough. There is a positive world and that is meant for a real high form of life, and that can be attained through service. Service is great, to sacrifice one's own interest, not for any part but for the whole, the absolute good, that is great. Nothing can be compared to that. It is not calculative but automatic. To reach the automatic stage of service with love is high pay: so give up all these habits and these former engagements with a lower standard of worshipping, penance and all these things. "Die to Live." A radical change must be welcomed in life. Life is worth living, life is worth living and it is only open to the human section. In other species it is impossible to get a glimpse of such high light and to begin that way of life, for there are only a very few human beings in the creation. What are the number of human bodies, very small compared to the whole of creation, and that is the door to heaven so you must try to have a positive life. He is Krishna. He is all attractive. He is beautiful, He is the highest reality. He is all accommodating and most charming. Our life will receive its fulfillment if we can approach that Lord, especially by taking His holy name. In this age of *Kali* a special sanction has been

given to us that by taking the holy name with *satsanga*, with the real saints, then we can make progress, enter and approach that high line of preaching.

Jagai And Madhai

Nityananda Prabhu was a dynamo of energy and Haridas Thakura could not follow, a little trouble to carry out the order of Mahaprabhu, what to do ? One day there were so many *gunda* type persons, they came with an attacking spirit. "You are disturbing us, we are not religious and you have come to preach religion to us : what right have you got ? Why do you come to disturb us ? As a big society we are following a particular creed, and you are so bold as to blame us for not being religious men. You have come with a new idea of religion and we are to accept that, you fools ! If again you come here you will be taught a good lesson". In this way they were threatened, but Mahaprabhu still says you must go. Then one day they met Jagai and Madhai, Jagai and Madhai were from *brahmana* birth but they did not have any care for religion. They were also entrusted with some administration in the Muslim Government. They had some connection with the Government and they themselves were *gundas*, also *brahmanas* by birth. They used to take anything and everything, they were a notorious pair of *gundas*, Jagadananda and Madhavananda.

We Are Not To Use Force

Then one day they met him "Oh ! you rogues we have heard of you, you have come to create a new religion here—Never ! If we find you again on the street you will receive a licking and will have to weep". Anyhow, they were given such warning. Nityananda Prabhu had to report every day what progress they had made in their preaching campaign and he almost challenged Mahaprabhu. He said, "Our life was saved today from the worst pair in the whole of Navadvipa Dham, but if you can deliver them, then I shall think that you have really come to render some service. They are the greatest rogues ever found in this area and must be converted. If you can do that then we shall say that you have got some power with some objective, and you will be able to do something". Mahaprabhu felt, "If it is Krishna's will then everything will be possible." They again went out preaching and they met those two *gundas*, Haridas Thakura coming back and Nityananda Prabhu stood courageously. There was an earthern pot caste away after use on the side of the way. It was taken and thrown on the head of Nityananda Prabhu and his forehead was cut, blood oozing, Nityananda Prabhu standing. Some person came to Gaurangadeva saying that Nityananda Prabhu was wounded by the rogues.

Mahaprabhu very enraged and excited came there. There was blood oozing, "Who has caused this wound on the body of Nityananda Prabhu ? I shall finish the whole town, come forward, Mahaprabhu was besides himself. Then Nityananda Prabhu came, "No ! No ! Don't be excited my Lord. In this incarnation we are not to use any force. Remember It".

Mental Transformation

In the meantime there approached another and told "No, no ! They are red-clad mendicants what fame is there is striking them. They are not wholly established rich men or party men, only red-clad *sannyasis*, there is no credit by killing them or beating them," and they took Jagai and Madhai away. Nityananda Prabhu then appealed to Mahaprabhu. "What to do, this is not proper. In this age, in this time, at this juncture what have we come to do, use force ? Never". In the meantime Madhai came to hit Nityananda Prabhu but Jagai saved him by just opposing him and Mahaprabhu turned around suddenly, "You Jagai, you have protected my Nityananda." Mahaprabhu then embraced him and Jagai fell at his feet and began to cry "Hare Krishna". Mental transformation came in Jagai. Then Madhai who was standing said, "For this deed we two are such great sinners yet Jagai's condition is now such". In that very atmosphere his transformation also began.

Nityananda's Recommendation

Then Nityananda Prabhu come to recognize that in the same place with similar persons, one will gain and the other will fail and so he thought Madhai must also be saved. Then Mahaprabhu said, "Nityananda Prabhu himself is pleading for you, and so you Madhai, you should also be absolved. Mahaprabhu then embraced him, he also fell, began to weep, and take the holy name Krishna and there was wholesale conversion of these two great demons. There was within minutes an uproar in the town. "Who is this Nimai Pandita ? A scholar, so far we can understand but he is endowed with supernatural power. These two great demons, whoever they came across, or whoever would see them would enter their homes and close their doors, such demoniac persons they were, and they were converted by Nimai Pandita within one hour, what miraculous power." So in this way Nimai Pandit got some footing there. Nimai Pandit is not an ordinary man, he is not merely a scholar but he is endowed with some supernatural power, original power. Nityananda Prabhu was famous from that time. Although he was hit on the forehead and blood oozed still he had so much of an extraordinary, patient, forbearing and affectionate heart, that he recommended that *gunda* who had caused him mischief.

Nityananda Prabhu's position was very safe and very high, a divine position from that time. Nityananda Prabhu has neither an exploiting nor enjoying mood. He is wholesale given to Krishna.

Perfect Servant

Santana Goswami has given this in his commentary: In the *rasa lila* of Krishna, Krishna was enjoying all the *gopies*, at that time Balarama also had his separate *rasa lila*. It is also mentioned in *Bhagavatam* and other puranas, that Krishna had his *rasa lila* and that Baladeva also had his *rasa lila* but Sanatana Goswami has given the meaning. That is very fine, very subtle and very difficult to understand. Baladeva continued *rasa* externally, but in his heart he was making Krishna to participate in that *rasa*. He was not the party to enjoy the *gopies*. He is aloof, he is aside, he is only performing, managing the *rasa lila* with the *gopies* and Krishna. He is not only indifferent but with so much serving tendency and wholesale serving attitude.

United In Service

In Vrndavana mandala in *vat-salya rasa* and *sakhya rasa*, they also have marriages, they have their sons, but not in any enjoying mood. There is union of men and women but not in an enjoying mood, or then they will have to be left here in the material world. Both parties meet and are united in a serving mood, that is particularly another type of mood, never an enjoying mood, or then they are not to be allowed to enter that domain.

They will be thrown here in the land of exploitation. When they go through the door of emancipation, liberation and enter Vaikuntha, from there also the exploiting tendency is eliminated, what avoidance! They are outwardly participating but internally in a serving mood. It may be impossible to think, but it is such, not only the human form but also the birds and beasts, they are also apparently mixing in an enjoying mood, but really their mood is of service attitude. Such a wholesale transformation has to be effected in one's heart, mind and body, before wholly attempting to enter into that domain. So Hegel said, "Die to live". If you really want to live in that plane then you will have to die wholesale as you think you are in this life as flesh blood and bones. It is of opposite type, the purity is there, it can be measured; it is not non-scientific but it is really scientific. It is the process of die to live! And love is there, the dying tendency for the object of love, that is love proper, otherwise imitation, it is hypocrisy, it is conspiracy to one's own attainment.

The Last Gift

The pure thing is that if we have got faith for

such divine conception of life then we should come to *Bhagavatam*, the last gift in the *sastirc* world of vedic literatures. Vyasaadeva's last gift in the world of vedic literatures is *Bhagavatam*. The *Bhagavatam* is so high, so high, *prithi vite yata katha dharma nam chole*. Our Guru Maharaja's translation of *dharma-hrdaya-jnana-kaitava* explains that of all the words and tales that are running in this world in the name of religion, *Srimad Bhagavatam* says that all is false, all is false, all is tampered with and not pure, not pure! The pure type of religion is not yet spoken. It is there, all self-centered, the current is towards the centre, not only selflessness but self-sacrificing, self-forgiving, self forgetfulness, in that way we are to start, we are to start, we are to go."

Rolling At The Door

Sri Nityananda Prabhu came and appealed, "Come to Gauranga, He is the depot, He is the dynamo to send you there very easily. He sang these names of Gauranga on the banks of the Ganges, *bhaja gauranga, kaha gauranga, laha gauranga nam je jan gauranga Bhaje se amar prana*; all you people come and take refuge under the divine feet of Gauranga, give up everything and come fall at the feet of Gauranga, give up everything and come fall at the feet of Gauranga. Take His name, remember Him and throw yourself wholly at His disposal. He is my own life, I consider Him to be my life, my soul, my everything." Nityananda Prabhu saying this began to roll at the door of the householder, "Householders! you must do this." He is rolling and crying, "Accept Gauranga, you don't know what great benefit you will receive by doing this." He is rolling in the dust at the door of the householders with such an appeal. He came to the ordinary masses to give them shelter at the lotus feet of Gauranga, that is Nityananda Prabhu. He came to give Mahaprabhu even to Jagai and Madhai and he appealed to all from door to door to accept Gaurangadeva. You do not know what will be your prospect in life, the highest prospect in life!

Nityananda's Mercy

Nityananda Prabhu is our only hope, He is so benevolent, so generous, so gracious, that very easily we can draw his attention and we can get his recommendation. Gauranga deva will not be able to disregard his recommendation, and when we have got the grace of Gauranga then the Radha-Krsna *lila* is within our fists. Nityananda Prabhu's grace means to get Mahaprabhu's grace within our clutches and to get Mahaprabhu, means to get Radha-Govinda, Vrndavana, and then everything is within our fists.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Vani

The Worship of Sri Murti

by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur

There are some who startle at the theory of worshiping Srimurti! "Oh", they say, "It is idolatry to worship Srimurti! Srimurti is an idol framed by an artist and introduced by no other than Beelzebub himself. Worshiping such an object would rouse the jealousy of God and limit His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence!" We would tell them, "Bretheren, candidly understand the question and do not allow yourself to be misled by sectarian dogmas. God is not jealous, as he is without a second. Beelzebub or Satan is no other than an object of imagination or the subject of an allegory. An allegorical or imaginary being should not be allowed to act as an obstacle to *bhakti*. Those who believe God to be impersonal, simply identify Him with some power or attribute in Nature, though in fact He is above Nature, her laws and rules. His holy wish is law and it will be sacrilege to confine His unlimited excellence by identifying Him with such attributes as omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience—attributes which may exist in created objects such as time and space, etc. His excellence consists in having in Him mutually contradicting powers and attributes ruled by His supernatural Self. He is identical with His all-beautiful person having such powers as omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, the like of which cannot be found elsewhere. His holy and perfect person exists eternally in the spiritual world and is at the same time existing in every created object and place in all its fullness. This idea excels all other ideas of the Deity. Mahaprabhu rejects idolatry as well, but considers Srimurti worship to be the only unexceptional means of spiritual culture. It has been shown that God is personal and all-beautiful. Sages like Vyasa and others have seen that beauty in their soul's eye. They have left us descriptions. Of course word carries grossness of matter. But Truth still is perceptible in those descriptions. According to those descriptions one delineates a Srimurti and sees the great God of our heart there with intense pleasure! Bretheren, is that wrong or sinful? Those who say that God has no form either material or spiritual and again imagine a false form of worship are certainly idolatrous. But those who, seeing the



Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharva Govinda Sundar,
the deities at Sree Chaitanya Saraswati Math
Nabadwip Dham

spiritual form of the Deity in their soul's eyes, carry that impression as far as possible to the mind and then frame an emblem for the satisfaction of the material eye all meant for continual study of the higher feeling, are by no means idolatrous. While seeing a Srimurti do not even see the image itself but see the spiritual model of the image and you are a pure theist. Idolatry and Srimurti worship are two different things, but my brethren, you simply confound one with the other out of hastiness. To tell you the truth, Srimurti worship is the only true form of worship of the Deity, without which you cannot sufficiently cultivate your religious feelings. The world attracts you through your senses and as long as you do not see God in the objects of your senses, you live in an awkward position which scarcely helps you in securing your spiritual elevation. Place a Srimurti in your house. Think that God almighty is the guardian of the house, the food that you take is His prasad, and the flowers and scents are also His prasad. The eye, the ear, the nose, the touch and the tongue all have a spiritual culture. You do it with a holy heart and God will know it and judge you by your sincerity. Satan and Beelzebub will have nothing to do with you in that matter! All sorts of worship are based on the principle of Srimurti. Look into the history of religion and you will come to this noble truth. The Semetic idea of a patriarchal God both in the pre-Christian period of Judaism and the post-Christian period of Mohammedanism is nothing but a limited idea of Srimurti. The monarchic idea of a Jove amongst the Greeks and of an Indra amongst the Aryan *karmakandis* is also a distinct view of the same principle. The idea of a force and *Jyotirmaya brahma* of the meditators

and a formless energy of the *shaktas* is also a very faint view of the Srimurti. In fact the principle of Srimurti is the Truth itself differently exhibited in different people according to their different phases of thought. Even Jaimini and Comte who are not prepared to accept a creating God, have prescribed certain phases of the Srimurti, simply because they have been impelled by some inward action from the soul! Then again we meet with people who have adopted the cross, the shaligram shila, the lingam and such like emblems as indicators of the inward ideas of Srimurti.

Furthermore, if the Divine compassion, love and justice could be portrayed by the pencil and expressed by the chisel, why should not the personal beauty of the Deity embracing all other attributes be portrayed in poetry or in picture of expressed by the chisel for the benefit of man? If words could impress thoughts, the watch could indicate time and sign could tell us a history, why should not the picture or figure bring associations of higher thoughts and feelings with regard to the transcendental beauty of the divine Personage?

(From Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Life and Precepts)

The Significance of Mahaprasad

by Srita Bhaktivinode Thakur

The system of Mahaprasad is not only emblematic of the superior life of the viashnavas, but it is a part of the worship which ordinary theists cannot fully understand. The ordinary men are very much inclined to preserve the superiority of Reason over the intuitive feelings of man towards the God of Love. We must now proceed to show with healthy arguments that our intuitive feelings want us to offer everything we eat to the God of our heart.

We must first examine the arguments of the antagonists. The Rationalist holds that God is infinite and without wants, and consequently it is foolish to offer eatables to such a Being. It is a sacrilege to offer created things to the Creator and thereby degrade the Divinity of God into humanity. These are reasonable arguments indeed, and one who has heard them will certainly be inclined to declare to others, "Down with the Mahaprasad". These conclusions, however reasonable, are dry and destructive. They tend to separate us from all connections with God in the form of worship. When you say that the Infinite wants nothing, you forbid all contemplation and prayer. The Infinite does not want your grateful expressions or, in other words, flattery. Utter a word to the Unconditioned and you are sure to degrade Him into a conditioned Being. Hymns, prayers and sermons are all over! Shut your temple

door and the church gates, because our Rationalist has advised you to do so. Believe a creating principle and you have done your duty! Oh! What a shame! What a dreadful fall! Theists, be ware of these degrading principles!

Now the Rationalist appears in another shape and admits prayers, sermons, psalms and church going, saying that these things are wanted for the improvement of the soul, but God does not want them at all. We are glad that the Rationalist has come towards us and will make further approaches in course of time.

Yes, the progressive Rationalist has admitted a very broad principle in Theology, viz. whatever we do towards God is for our own benefit and not for the benefit of God, who is not in want of any such thing. But the Rationalist is a Rationalist still and will continue to be so, as long as he will seek self-interest. We know for certain that religion promises to give eternal felicity to man and it is impossible to conceive of any religion which has not at its bottom self-interest. This view however, smells of utilitarianism and can never claim to be theistic. We must love God for God's sake however unreasonable our action may be. Our love must be without any object whatever that concerns ourselves. This love must be a

natural emotion to the Deity as our Lover without inference or experience. Salvation, dear as it is, should not be the object of this love: what then about other shapes of felicity? "Love of God" is its own reward. Salvation as a concomitant consequence, must be a hand-maid of Love, but we must not look on it as its main object. If the Rationalist be prepared to believe this, he becomes a Theist of the vaishanva class; but the mere assuming of the name is of no consequence. Though fully aware that the unconditioned has no conditions whatever, yet our holy and sweet principle of love takes a quite different view of the matter. Reason says one thing but Love prescribes its contrary. Reason tells me that God has no sorrow, but Love sees God in tears for those of His sons that are misled to evil. Reason tells me that the strict laws of God reward and punish me in a cold manner, but Love reveals that God slackens His laws to the repentant soul! Reason tells me that with all his improvements, man will never touch the Absolute God; but Love preaches that on the conversion of the soul into a state of spiritual womanhood, God, the unconditioned as He is, accepts an eternal marriage with the the conditioned soul of man! Reason tells me that God is in infinite space and time, but Love describes that the all-beautiful God is sitting before us like a respected relative and enjoying all the pleasures of society. As a father in his amusements with his young children, God is spreading all sorts of delicious food all over the earth and expecting that His sons could gather all the scattered blessings and, without the exercise of reason in consequence of a strong feeling of love, offer all the blessings to the Father whom they love more than their lives. The Father again, in reply to their kind feelings, gives back the blessings to the children and tells them these kindlier words, "O! My children! These are blessings intended for you! Out of your natural love you bring them to me for my enjoyment; but I have naturally no wants to supply. But then I have accepted that part of your offering which corresponds with me, viz. your unmixed love and disinterested affections for which alone I am exceedingly anxious. Take back these sweet things and enjoy them". This process of disinterested love, which dry reason can never brook, sanctifies the food we take, and leaves us to harmless enjoyment for all the days of our natural life! This is a system of sincere worship which theists of a higher class alone can act upon. We cannot express the joy we often felt when we took the holy Mahaprasad in the temple! The holiness we attach to it is its sweetness and often pray that all men may enjoy it".

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